

RETAIL

Beer Barrel Pizza & Grill expanding to Maumee

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Beer Barrel Pizza & Grill, a small but growing chain that started in Lima, is preparing to open its first Toledo-area restaurant later this year at the Shops at Fallen Timbers in Maumee.

“It seemed like a really natural extension for us,” said Tony Heaphy, one of the owners of the company that operates Beer Barrel. “It was always on our list of places to go.”

Mr. Heaphy said the new restaurant will open in November ahead of Thanksgiving.

Beer Barrel will fill the place of what most recently was Tilted Kilt Pub & Eatery. That restaurant — a loosely Celtic-themed eatery featuring waitresses showing more than a little skin — closed in March, less than three years after it opened.

Renovations already have begun for the family-friendly Beer Barrel. Mr. Heaphy declined to say how much the company was investing, though he said Beer Barrel is completely revamping the interior and changing the entrance.

Beer Barrel began in Lima in 1965 and slowly has expanded across Ohio with locations in St. Marys, Findlay, and Columbus. The Fallen Timbers location is its sixth.

The chain sells itself as a family gathering spot with an extensive menu that includes pizza and draft beers.

With the Toledo-area already on Beer Barrel's radar following success in Findlay, Mr. Heaphy said Fallen Timbers' owner General Growth Properties approached them about locating there.

"We really liked the shops themselves there, the location that was available was well aligned with what we do," he said. "All our restaurants are over 8,000-square-feet. It requires a big dining room, which isn't something you can find in a lot of shopping centers or end caps."

The Fallen Timbers eatery will be about 10,300 square feet. In addition to the site of the Tilted Kilt, Beer Barrel will take over space previously occupied by the Martial Arts Center, which moved to a new spot in Fallen Timbers.

Officials said Beer Barrel will have two patios, a 250-seat dining room, a full bar with 24 beers on tap, a waiting area with a secondary bar and lounge, and a pair of banquet rooms that can accommodate up to 80 people. That will be a first for the chain.

The company expects to hire about 90 people, but all hiring will be done through the company's website. Beer Barrel's parent firm, Good Food Restaurants, also operates the Happy Daz fast-casual diner chain in West Central Ohio, and Old City Prime, a steakhouse in downtown Lima.

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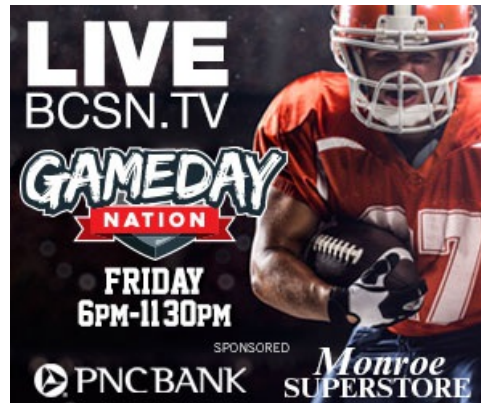
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