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Applebee's picks Duncan for fifth location



The new Holiday Inn Express will be the backdrop for the future Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar, when it opens this fall. The hotel is scheduled to open Sept. 6, 2012. Toni Hopper/The Duncan Banner

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Applebee's to break ground in front of new Holiday Inn Express

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The Duncan Banner (<http://duncanbanner.com>)

DUNCAN — Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar is coming to Duncan.

Officially.

Plans call for ground breaking ceremonies at the 1916 Highway 81 North site just west of the new Holiday Inn Express complex sometime next week with grand opening tentatively scheduled for Nov. 26.

"The people of Duncan are extraordinary," Maggie Stine, president of Concord Hospitality Inc. of Lincoln, Neb., franchisee of the restaurant, said.

"We have felt so welcomed. We have been wowed. It's a progressive community. Our location is well traveled and our marketing analysis showed it was a perfect opportunity. We know we can provide a great dining experience as well as employment opportunities."

The 5,530 square foot, 200-seat, 100-parking space restaurant will provide between 100-120 full-time and part-time jobs, handling a seven-day operation. Applebee's will open from 11 a.m. until midnight

Sunday through Wednesday and from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Thursday through Saturday.

Carside services will be offered and a full service bar will be included.

Oklahoma native John McKinney, who has 10 years experience with Applebee's, will be the Duncan general manager, moving here and becoming a part of the community.

"We provide a local neighborhood atmosphere where people can connect and enjoy great meals at reasonable prices," Stine said. "We are truly 'neighborhood' and connect with our community in unique ways, participating in local events and contributing to local charities."

Interior building design will reflect the surrounding Duncan community with wall images of local schools, area police and firefighters and murals specific to the Duncan neighborhood.

Applebee's menus are tailored to regional tastes and appeal to all ages, Stine said. Burgers, steaks, oriental chicken salad, ribs, a 2 for \$20 section, pick n' pair lunch offerings, an Under 550-calorie menu, Weight Watcher-approved entrees and kids' meals are among the favorites.

The bar features beer, wine, cordials and spirits.

Stine, an attorney for 12 years before joining Concord, assumed the presidency in 2006 after two years as vice president. She is responsible for overall operational strategy, marketing and human resource planning and execution.

Her passion is matching the right people and the right places to ensure Applebee's contributes to its communities in everyway possible.

She was quick to praise the work of Duncan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Chris Deal, City of Duncan officials and community leaders "who have offered assistance in extraordinary ways."

She noted the new Holiday Inn Express "has been a great partner for us" and added, "we will continue to work with them and provide them whatever services are desired."

Concord Hospitality Inc. was founded in 1986. It develops and operates casual dining restaurants and a premier hotel property in a nine-state region. It has partnerships with Applebee's, Village Inn, Holiday Inn and Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que and operates in Oklahoma, Nebraska, Kansas, Texas, Wyoming, Missouri, Florida, Alabama and Mississippi.

The Duncan Applebee's will be its fifth in Oklahoma. Other restaurants are already open in Lawton, Ada, Altus and Ardmore.

Larry Bird (the but not that Larry Bird) is chief executive officer and owner of Concord, After spending 15 years in Real Estate development, he started with a Village Inn in 1986 and opened his first Applebee's in Manhattan, Kan. in 1992. He has been chairman of Applebee's franchise business council and is now on the board of Applebee's co-op.

Applebee's International Inc. develops, franchises and operates the Neighborhood Grill concept in the United States and 14 countries as part of DineEquity of Overland Park, Kan. DineEquity purchased the company from IHOP in November 2007.

The original restaurant was started in November 1980 as T.J. Applebee's Rx for Edibles & Elixirs by Bill and T.J. Palmer in Decatur, Ga.

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