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Bitter cold, snow don't stop Crown's growth

By Samantha Schmieder

Though the weather outside is frightful, new businesses are opening all the time in the outdoor retail center at Downtown Crown.

The newest &pizza and Ted's Bulletin locations opened their doors in February and Old Town Pour House is making its East Coast debut on Monday.

"With a new restaurant, I think people take the extra journey to come on out and try it. We are fortunate in that sense," said Mike Jettner, the operations manager for the Illinois-based Bottleneck Management Restaurant Group which operates Old Town Pour House.

Jettner said the group is no stranger to the snow with its other locations in the Chicago area, and they didn't really think about the season when they were planning their opening.

"What we took into account was opening not in February," Jettner said. "March is the proverbial coming out for the restaurant industry because you have Paddy's Day and March Madness, we wanted to make sure its open for that."

The build-your-own pizza joint, &pizza has just recently been making the leap into expansion with new locations popping up in Bethesda and Germantown outside of its Washington, D.C., flagship over the last year. Alejandra Hernandez, who trains store leaders for the corporation, explained that opening out in the "suburbs" is different for the company and will cause an inherently different business flow regardless of weather because there are more people in the city walking around and coming in daily from their 9-to-5 jobs.

"We still get a lot of people coming in here from around the area," Hernandez said, adding that the weather clearing up in the spring will definitely draw more people.

As for the official restaurant opening, which occurred on Feb. 3, she said it didn't draw in a huge crowd.

"I know the store opening we had, it wasn't a busy day. The roads were icy, they weren't treated," Hernandez said.

Both Hernandez and Mauricio Molina, a manager at Ted's Bulletin at Crown, believe that once the new residential buildings, as well as more businesses, around Crown are occupied and open, business will boom.

"Most definitely when the condos get done, the townhouses, as it builds up the population will grow," Hernandez said.

Molino explained that the bad snow came after the Ted's Bulletin opening on Feb. 9 and didn't affect them very much at all.

"We've been lucky to be a hit so far. We've been doing great numbers even though it's snowy and very cold, people haven't stopped coming in," Molina said.

Ted's Bulletin stayed open throughout the storm on Saturday, and while Molina said not that few came in during the snow, many people came in before and after the storm.

"We do mean hot cocoas," Molina said with a laugh.

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