

Ingredient to open in early December

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The latest culinary offering planned for Old Town in Fort Collins expects to open around Dec. 1.

Ingredient, an independently owned chain of restaurants in Missouri and Kansas, is opening its first Colorado store at Mountain and College avenues.

Ingredient chef and co-founder Steve Kerner is in Fort Collins this week supervising work at the new eatery that will feature fresh ingredients, customizable salads with about 80 different choices, homemade dressings, brick-oven pizzas, wraps and desserts, all made from scratch.

While winter might not be the time one's dining choices naturally gravitate toward salads, Kerner said "being in Fort Collins, it's a good time. In the summer, students aren't around."

The restaurant, which uses the phonetic spelling, bills itself as a gourmet, fast-casual restaurant similar to a Panera-type of establishment.

Kerner and Ed Nelson opened the first Ingredient in Lawrence, Kan., a city they compare to Fort Collins.

They chose Fort Collins above Denver or Boulder for the restaurant's first Colorado location because of its healthy lifestyle, college market and "great community surrounding it," Kerner said in a previous Coloradoan interview.

"They're both health-conscious, on-the-go communities in tune with what they're eating and the sources they come from."

More than 24,300 vehicles per day pass by the building on College Avenue, and more than 9,000 people work within one mile of the intersection, according to the real estate brochure marketing the building.

The building, owned by developer Les Kaplan, is being restored to its former 1937 art modern architecture that has been altered through the years.

With the help of \$100,000 in tax-increment

financing, the building has been restored to its days when it housed the city's bank.

"I put the storefront back where it was in relation to Mountain, put the north-facing windows exactly as they were and rebuilt the mast for the flag," Kaplan said.

Soon, the American flag will be flying again in Old Town, Kaplan said.

"This is pretty exciting to have a flag in downtown at a major intersection," he said.

The building has been vacant since City Drug relocated to 209 N. College Ave. in September 2009 and the Bohemian Foundation moved into its new digs late last year.

The National Audubon Society will occupy 1,386 square feet of the building for its Rocky Mountain regional headquarters.

The second floor, previously occupied by the Bohemian Cos., is still for lease.

About Ingredient

- > Small chain started by Steve Kerner and Ed Nelson in Lawrence, Kan.
- > Location: Southwest corner of Mountain and College avenues
- > Expected opening: Dec. 1
- > The chain includes stores in Kansas City, Mo.; Leawood, Lawrence and Manhattan, Kan.; Columbia, Mo.; Omaha, Neb.; and soon, Fort Collins
- > Seating for 128 inside; 70 on outdoor patio



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