

Transition OK'd for restaurant

Written by Mark Jaeger
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La Chimenea expected to open this week on site of Rhythm 'n Brews

When the owners of Rhythm 'n Brews restaurant and bar announced they were closing last month, there may have been some understandable fear that the Village of Saukville's developing Foster Commons entertainment corridor would be blighted with an empty building.

Those fears were put aside last week, when two village bodies advanced plans to convert the building at 150 S. Foster Dr. to a La Chimenea Mexican Restaurant.

Co-owner Chris Greene, who also owns the Germantown restaurant of the same name secured the liquor license for the Saukville location by an unanimous vote of the Village Board.

The restaurant will be managed by Hector Jimenez, who also runs the Germantown location. The Saukville location will mimic its southern counterpart's authentic Mexican menu, including a selection of 10 different Margaritas.

Before the Mexican dining spot could get the liquor license, however, Rhythm 'n Brews had to surrender its license.

The restaurant got its initial liquor license last summer before opening in September. The owners paid \$600 to renew their license on July 1.

Although the business closed in July, state law prohibits refunding any of that license fee.

With a liquor license deemed to be critical to the success of the new restaurant, Greene applied for the now-vacated license. He was charged a pro-rated fee of \$550.

The Village Board approved issuing the license to La Chimenea last week. Trustees met on Wednesday instead of their usual Tuesday date, so they would be able to attend Ozaukee County National Night Out activities.

On Thursday, the Plan Commission also approved altering the existing Rhythm 'n Brews sign to reflect its change to La Chimenea.

A replacement for the pole-mounted sign visible from I-43 won't be ready for about a month, but Greene said the electronic LED sign will be used to promote the restaurant.

With the key pieces in place, Greene said he hopes to start serving food this week.

"We are completing training this week and hope to be open by Thursday," Greene said.

La Chimenea won't have the array of entertainment Rhythm 'n Brews offered, but Greene said mariachi music is expected to be offered on Wednesdays.

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“We kept the stage and all the electronics, and I am still sold on providing live music. I have become a big believer in the amount of local talent we have in this community.” he said.