



Gannett Wisconsin Media photo by Jim Matthews

KOKO SUSHI BAR AND LOUNGE head sushi chef Cheng Yang prepares a sashimi plate inside the Bellevue restaurant Wednesday.

RiverHeath attracts local operators for two new restaurants

The RiverHeath development in Appleton hasn't been built yet.

But it already has two restaurants committed to it and itching to go.

RiverHeath is a mixed-use development slated for the east bank of the Fox River in Appleton, running between the College Avenue Bridge and Telulah Park.

It's a 15-acre development of condos, offices and restaurants that will be run by hydroelectric power on the site of the vacant Consolidated Papers mill, which will be demolished. Construction starts this summer and finishes in late sum-

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Each Friday, Maureen Wallenfang reports on comings and goings in the Fox Valley business community. Watch for her weekly Wednesday column, The Buzz Mailbag, in which she answers readers' questions. E-mail tips to mwallenfang@postcrescent.com.

mer 2009, coinciding with the College Avenue bridge reconstruction.

"We'd like to swing our hammers by June," said Mark Geall, princi-

pal in Tanesay Development. RiverHeath's developer. Phase one, which includes the restaurants, is estimated to be a \$25 million project.

The first two restaurants are both freestanding, face the water and have outdoor patios.

The first restaurant

RiverHeath appealed to Virginia Boren, who currently lives on the river in Appleton and owns the Koko Sushi Bar & Lounge in Bellevue.

When she found out about RiverHeath, she and partners Cindy Joski and Chris Hanaway knew it would be a

good spot to open a Koko Sushi in Appleton.

"I've always wanted a building on the river," she mused. "But I didn't get the chance until now."

She hopes to open her Appleton restaurant in late fall, well in advance of the rest of RiverHeath.

"The worst time to start a restaurant is the summer because people are gone, or up north at cottages," she said. She wants to accommodate private Christmas parties that she can't handle in her smaller Green Bay-area restaurant.

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The 5,000-square-foot Koko Sushi in Appleton will have a similar "urban simplicity," she said, "but this time we're using fire earth and water in the interior design."

The menu will have the same sushi, tempura, martinis and contemporary maki sushi rolls. That includes the most ordered item, the Godzilla, a \$10 hamachi tempura topped with a spicy crab mixture. "Everyone loves it," she said. "It's the Big Mac of all the rolls."

Typical dinners, including drinks, run about \$25 to \$30 per person.

The second restaurant

The next restaurant proposed for RiverHeath is Table.

Yes, just Table.

"The idea we really like is being the dining room table for the RiverHeath community," said Lanny Gile, a partner in the project with Sarah Key and chef Kyle Cross, who is currently cooking at Live Oak Market.

Cross had previously worked in several Napa Valley restaurants and the three owners decided they wanted to have that same upscale quality and level of service.

"We're trying to bring the Napa Valley to the Fox Valley," said Gile. "We're passionate about how the experience should be."

He said the restaurant will focus on locally grown produce, meat, fish and seasonal products.

"We want to showcase the best of what Wisconsin has to offer, and want to have our own garden on the premises."

Table is slated to open in the summer of 2009. Because it will have the outdoor patio, Gile said he feels the place can be an instant draw in the typically slower summer months.

Future restaurants

RiverHeath has two more slots open for a coffee shop and a pub, which developer Geall said would round out the eatery options. "The key is to create this mix. We'd like them all to be local businesses."

There's also space for some small retail shops and service businesses, he said.

"Ken Cobb Photography will have a studio. There's space for small bakery, chocolate shop or maybe a dry cleaner."

Geall, interestingly, says he once lived in the Buchanan house, the grand stone mansion across the College Avenue bridge that faces the RiverHeath property.

Open

The Pump House opened Thursday at 130 E. Main St. in Little Chute. It's a bar devoted to firefighters in theme and decor, including helmets, coats, hoses and 9-11 photos hung on the walls.

Owner Brandon Luedtke, who is also a volunteer firefighter, is particularly proud of the front of an old Pierce fire truck that was cut off and attached to the wall. "We did all the wiring so the lights work," he said.

Luedtke, age 22, expects the bar to attract a mix of ages.

Closing

Helein Jewelers ends a nearly four-year run in Darboy. The family jewelry store is going out of business and runs a closing sale through April 20.

"It's to spend more time with the family," said Amy Helein on the reason for closing. She ran the business and owned it with husband Gary.

"We actually had a very good year last year and business was up. But there are some health issues we've been dealing with and we decided that life was short and family is the most important thing."

The store is at 2100 S. Kensington Drive, across from the Home Depot.

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