

LOCAL BUSINESS



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A pizzeria, A Taste of the Big Apple, is scheduled to open in Larson Square, 600 N. Main Ave., later this summer. The pizzeria's owners are moving the restaurant from Albert Lea, Minn.

Pizzeria opening in July

Uptown at the Falls project gets its first restaurant

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Larson Square, a historic Sioux Falls building undergoing renovation as part of the planned Uptown at the Falls project, is getting its first restaurant.

The owners of A Taste of the Big Apple in Albert Lea this week signed a five-year lease to open their pizzeria on the street level of the three-story building, which also includes two floors of loft apartments.

"It should be a real nice addition to the neighborhood," said Neil Schmid, president of Cirrus Commercial Realty and a developer in the Uptown project.

Larson Square, 600 N. Main Ave., dates to 1903 when it first

housed the Dakota Moline Plow Co. About two years ago, a consortium of four local companies bought the 30,000-square-foot building as part of a bigger project to revitalize the three-block area which runs from Phillips to Main avenues and Second to Fifth streets.

The entire mega-project could top \$100 million and might take up to 10 years to complete. The initial phase calls for erecting two seven-story towers with retail and office tenants on the first two floors and loft-style apartments on the upper five stories.

Les Kinstad, president of Legacy Development & Consulting Co., said groundbreaking for the two tower buildings, known as the Arches, could occur this fall.

But construction is contingent on the developers signing office and retail tenants, he said. "Until that happens, we won't pull the trigger on building."

Andy Meier, of A Taste of the Big Apple in Albert Lea, Minn., said he and the co-owners hope to open their restaurant in Larson Square by mid-July. The restaurant will take about 2,300 square feet of Larson Square's 10,000-square-foot first floor.

A Taste of the Big Apple has operated in Albert Lea for the past 25 years, specializing in New York-style pizza. But Meier said he and the restaurant's owners are closing shop there and moving to Sioux Falls where they see an opportunity to be more successful.

"Sioux Falls will be expand-

ing in the future and the downtown is building up," said Meier, who is involved in the restaurant with fiancée Meggan McParland, her sister Heather and mother and chief owner Karen McParland. "We are excited about being part of the Uptown project."

The developers are close to finding an office tenant to take the remaining first-floor space in Larson Square, Kinstad and Schmid said.

Renovation costs for the Larson Square are estimated at about \$4.8 million. The two-story, 10,000-square-foot Tri-State Creamery building, near Larson Square, is being renovated for about \$1.8 million, Kinstad said.

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