



Kansas restaurant chain plans to open three locations here



COURTESY OF HOULIHAN'S RESTAURANTS INC.

Houlihan's Restaurants Inc. plans to open three eateries here, including a seafood concept called Devon Seafood Grill, in the next 18 months.

BY TAMARIND PHINISEE

Leawood, Kan.-based Houlihan's Restaurants Inc. is set to make its debut in the local restaurant market in a little over a week.

The company will open a free-standing 6,000-square-foot corporate-owned restaurant location at 938 North Loop 1604 West on the city's North Side.

The new Alamo City restaurant will feature a prototype design, which includes modern decor, indie/beachside music, an outside patio area and an inside bar. The restaurant will feature 60 indoor tables and 20 tables on the patio, with a total seating capacity of 186 people.

Menu items will include made-from-scratch dishes such as mini desserts, pasta dishes, and healthy salads.

The new Houlihan's restaurant will be the second Texas location. A franchised Houlihan's restaurant is located in Houston.

About 100 local people will be hired to work at the new restaurant.

Houlihan's has been around since 1972. It has 89 restaurants around the country, 60 of which are franchised.

The opening of the new location, say company officials, is part of a larger goal to open about 30 new locations nationwide over the next two years and some 300 to 400 new restaurants in the next 10 years.

Bob Hartnett, CEO of Houlihan's, says he's excited about the opportunity to bring Houlihan's to San Antonio.

"(San Antonio is) just a great market. ... It's a dynamite market with a sophisticated customer base, and I think we're going to hopefully fit in real well in the marketplace," Hartnett says. "We're excited to be in San Antonio and be part of the community, and we can't wait to open."



Hartnett

Two more restaurant locations are planned for San Antonio — one of which will include the company's upscale seafood restaurant chain, Devon Seafood Grill.

Hartnett says the company plans to open the second Houlihan's eatery and the first Devon location within the next 18 months.

"We are just waiting for the sites to get turned over to us by the landlord," he says.

More outlets

The second Houlihan's location and the Devon Seafood restaurant are slated for the newly constructed retail development called The Rim Shopping Center at Interstate Highway 10 West and La Cantera Parkway. Plans are to locate the new restaurants next door to each other. Devon will be approximately 8,000 square feet and Houlihan's will be about 6,300 square feet.

Devon Seafood Grill offers fresh and seasonal fish from around the world, such as Blue Fin Tuna, Chilean Seabass and Mahi Mahi. It has a cellar collection and an oyster bar and menu items include crab cakes and sweet-drop biscuits. It will have space available for private dining for business meetings and social celebrations.

The company also has its sights set on Dallas and Fort Worth, Hartnett says. One Houlihan's restaurant is under construction in Dallas, he says, and the company is looking at a couple other sites for more restaurant locations.

In addition to expanding its dining chain, Hartnett says the company is also looking for entrepreneurs interested in developing the company's franchise business.

Initial start-up costs for one restaurant are estimated at \$2 million or \$3 million.

Houlihan's Restaurants Inc. owns approximately 90 locations from coast to coast, including five sister concepts: Bristol Seafood Grill, Devon Seafood Grill, Braxton Seafood Grill, Chequers Seafood Grill and J. Gilbert's Wood-Fired Steaks.