



The Times

Trenton area has new Houlihan's

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BY JOYCE J. PERSICO

LAWRENCE -- There's a new player in the burgeoning Route 1 restaurant scene called Houlihan's, a chain restaurant that boasts a kitchen where everything is made from scratch.

One of 92 Houlihan's restaurants in the country, the new one sits on the former New York Deli site at the rim of Mercer Mall with a Route 1 presence. Two years ago, a Champps restaurant was scheduled to be built there, but management changes scuttled those plans.

According to Stephanie Maddox, general manager of the eatery that opened yesterday, between 180 and 200 employees will be working at the sports bar/family restaurant. Seating will accommodate 239 in an atmosphere that includes wall-mounted plasma TVs.

"We're a step or two above other restaurants of this kind and everything we serve is made from scratch, whether it's our jumbo stuffed mushrooms or herb-cream cheese wrapped in Japanese bread crumbs," said Maddox.

Houlihan's, whose closest neighbor is the Sleepy's mattress store, will be open 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., seven days a week with both drink and appetizer specials offered regularly. A Sunday late-night Happy Hour is also one of the attractions at what Maddox calls a restaurant that "appeals to families and business people."

The closest Houlihan's in the area is located on Route 38 at the Cherry Hill Mall.

Houlihan's joins a group of restaurants at Mercer Mall, including Olive Garden, Chevy's, Cheeburger Cheeburger, Camille's Cafe, Harini Indian Cuisine, Hooter's, Arby's and New Szechuan Garden Chinese Restaurant.

Farther north on Route 1, a new restaurant is expected to replace the shuttered Charlie Brown's in West Windsor where a P.F. Chang, South of the Border and the refurbished Princetonian Diner are part of the eating scene.

Across the highway from Mercer Mall, a planned expansion of Quaker Bridge Mall also is expected to include new restaurants.

"The location is prime. There's a lot of housing, a lot of shopping and a ton of stuff around here," said Maddox.

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