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Tuesday NEWS SENTINEL

Knoxville

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Bojangles' back in Knoxville

Cajun-style restaurant opening on Lovell Road

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After more than three years of identifying Knoxville as a growth market, the area's first Bojangles' will open Wednesday following a 15-year absence.

Famous for its Cajun-style chicken, dirty rice, pinto beans and made-from-scratch biscuits, the Charlotte-based restaurant

chain is hoping for a comeback with two franchise companies looking to expand the brand in the area.

"I knew Knoxville was an available market and decided to see what it had to offer. I was really impressed with your community," said Mike White of Statesville, N.C.-based franchise HuffBo LLC.

White was in town Monday preparing for the opening of a 3,500-square-foot store at 505 Lovell Road, just down from the

Harley-Davidson dealership near Interstate 40/75. The investment totaled upward of \$1 million.

He plans to open a second location in Powell at the corner of Emory Road and Brickyard this fall.

Chris Bailey, director of franchise development for Bojangles', said the company pulled out of the Knoxville market about 15 years ago following a

BOJANGLES'

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change in corporate ownership.

"We have gotten calls asking us to come back to Knoxville. There was never a problem with the restaurant or the food," Bailey said.

Over the years, the company has turned down a number of requests from people wanting to locate a franchise in the area, but Bailey said until recently none had good operational structures.

"If we can't put a good operator in, we won't. We are very picky," Bailey said.

A second franchisee, McBoJo LLC, plans to open four restaurants over the next four years focusing on the outlying

BOJANGLES'

- **Headquarters:** Charlotte, N.C.
- **Knoxville locations:** 505 Lovell Road opens Wednesday, opening this fall on the corner of Emory Road and Brickyard in Powell
- **Fare:** Includes spicy Cajun-style chicken, dirty rice, pinto beans, made-from-scratch biscuits, salads and sandwiches
- **Hours:** Open Monday-Saturday at 5 a.m. and Sunday at 6 a.m.; close Sunday-Thursday at 10 p.m. and Friday-Saturday at 11 p.m.
- **Web site:** www.bojangles.com

areas of Knoxville including Blount, Sevier and Roane counties, Bailey said.

It plans to open its first restaurant by year's end or early 2008.

For years, KFC has dominated the Knoxville market. Officials from Popeye's have said they are looking to relocate in Knoxville. And newcomer Zaxby's has been opening locations around the perimeter of Knoxville in the last several years. Zaxby's has eateries in Powell, Clinton and Alcoa.

But White said Bojangles' has a spicier chicken and is also known for its dirty rice. And unlike KFC, it serves breakfast and serves it all day long.

"It's a completely different flavor of chicken," White said. "It's a little bit different fare."

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