

Former NFL player to open Bojangles' in Aiken

By **HALEY HUGHES**
Staff writer

Former Carolina Panthers running back Tim Biakabutuka plans to have a Bojangles' restaurant open on Aiken's Southside sometime in June 2009.

The eatery, known for its chicken and biscuits, is slated to open in the vacant building on Pine Log Road that once held Bella Cucina Trattoria. The site was also once home to a Hardee's and Fazoli's.

"Aiken is my exclusive territory," Biakabutuka said, noting he is also looking at putting a second Bojangles' on Richland Avenue in the future. "I am very excited to be here. I am impressed with the area. Aiken has a whole lot of activity. I liked the growth. Right now is a good time to get involved."

Biakabutuka recently opened a Bojangles' in the Augusta area, as well.

Bojangles' began in 1977 with a core menu that remains the same today – chicken served with fresh

Tim Biakabutuka

▶ Born in Kinshasa, Zaire, but left for Canada with his family when he was 4 years old

▶ Former running back for the NFL Carolina Panthers from 1996 to 2001

▶ Played college football at the University of Michigan

▶ Perhaps best known for his 313-yard rushing effort against Ohio State in 1995, which helped upset the undefeated Buckeyes

buttermilk biscuits and fixings like dirty rice or pinto beans. The biscuits are made from scratch and make up a well-known breakfast menu. According to its website, biscuit sandwiches



Staff photo by Haley Hughes

Former Carolina Panther running back Tim Biakabutuka, right, stands next to his business partner, Nancy Whitaker, in front of what used to be the Bella Cucina restaurant on Pine Log Road. Biakabutuka plans to turn the building into a Bojangles'.

are filled with spicy chicken fillets, seasoned sausage or steak, country ham, eggs and cheese and are served hot and fresh all day, every day. Sweet biscuits such as cinnamon biscuits and BoBerry Biscuits are served all day, as well.

A Bojangles' was open in Aiken on Whiskey Road at one time as late as 2000 but subsequently closed.

"We're going to do a better job," Biakabutuka said with a grin. "My philosophy is to get involved for the betterment of the community."