

Post-Bulletin

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Local Business

Heard on the Street: New store finds Peace Plaza's sweet spot

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Downtown Rochester is going to become a bit sweeter in the near future.

A specialty chocolate shop -- Demasie -- is in the works for a tasty spot opening on the Peace Plaza. The plan is to replace Sphinx Gifts in the lobby of the Kahler Grand Hotel on Second Avenue Southwest.

Nicholas Eklund and Dr. Josep Genebriera plan on offering gourmet molded chocolate by the piece and by the box, gelato ice and related gifts as well as serving drinking chocolate.



Jeff Kiger

While the look of the shop will have a flavor of Europe, the chocolates will not, says Eklund.

"The products we offer are more American versions of chocolates to be a good fit for the American palette," he says.

Expect seating in the shop that Eklund says will "be more like a living room."

The hope is that Demasie will also be OK'd for a patio on the plaza this summer.

Chocolate and gelato also are the main products sold by the recently opened Chocolaterie Stam shop, a couple of blocks away in the University Square mall.

Eklund believes the tastes will be different, clearly distinctive between the European focused Stam and his U.S.-flavored shop.

"There is not one hazelnut or praline filling in our entire line," he says.

Rochester to get a charge

The Interstate Battery store is powering up for a move from St. Charles to Rochester

Owner Kirk Sneed is moving the shop to the Insty-Prints building at 2410 N. Broadway, hopefully by late February or early March.

"Rochester has the market for us to expand more into the all battery business," says Sneed. "In this day and age with so much technology being portable, it is a good market."

Besides the 120 to 200 types of batteries -- from car batteries to cell phone batteries to AA batteries -- on the shelves, Interstate Battery can also "custom build any power source anybody needs," he says.

Timber Lodge is solid

While there has been a lot of talk on the street about Timber Lodge Steakhouse in Rochester, there is no meat to it.

"We have no plans on closing. As a matter of fact, we are kind of spicing up the menu there," says Bruce Taher, founder and CEO of Minnetonka-based Taher, Inc. "And we have our sommelier from another restaurant coming in and updating the wine list with really good wines in the \$24 to \$25 range."

Taher Inc. bought the 10 restaurants -- eight in Minnesota -- in the Timber Lodge chain in August.

Tim Cullers, vice president of operations for Taher, says Rochester has proven to be one of the better locations. So much so, it recently renewed its lease at 4144 U.S. 52 N.