



Captain Sundae buys former Dairy Queen

Ice cream business will now have three locations

By PATRICK REVERE

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Captain Sundae has purchased the former Dairy Queen location on 40th Avenue near South Washington in Holland and will offer an expanded menu by the end of April, the ice cream shop owners said.

Karen Van Dam, who purchased the Captain Sundae in Holland Township with her husband Tom in 1999, said they believe having a third location with indoor seating and a drive-through will help balance lost business at the established locations during periods of rainy or cool weather.

"We don't know if we're going to be going year round or not yet, but we know that it will be a location that will not be so weather-based," Karen Van Dam said.

The Van Dams said the original expansion plan was to open a location on the southside, but last year they decided to purchase the former Dairy Y, 537 W. Main Ave., in Zeeland. This year they opted to fill a gap left by the Dairy Queen owned by Les Kane.

Street construction last year cut off commercial access at many points along Washington Avenue and 40th Street, and Kane said it was a fatal blow for his business.

"We got devastated," said Kane, who continues to operate the Dairy Queen at 2825 West Shore Drive near Felch Street. "It just killed us. It cost us over \$125,000 for the year. We were coming off a cold summer and we were already in the hole, and it was just devastating.

"We had a good business and I told the city when they were coming that they were going to bankrupt me. They accomplished it. There was just no way I could refinance or go forward in any way," he said.

Karen Van Dam said the 40th Street location will offer the full variety of sundaes that has kept Captain Sundae popular for 26 years, and also will serve chicken salad and Chicago Hot Dogs.

"We'll have french fries and chicken tenders, which is something our other locations don't have, and we're also starting ice cream cakes at all the sites. We'll make all the cakes at the 40th Street location and bring them to the other two locations for sale," Karen Van Dam said.

The Van Dams said Captain Sundae is taking employment applications, and will increase the staff from 40 to 50 part-time positions this year. A third manager also has been hired.

"Karen and I will be floating between all three locations to make sure our presence as owners is felt everywhere," Tom Van Dam said. "We want to make sure that we keep touch with our employees and customers everywhere."

The Holland Township and Zeeland locations are open for the season. The Captain Sundae at 365 Douglas Ave. is open from 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., while the Zeeland location at 537 W. Main Ave. and the new 40th Street location will operate from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Contact Patrick Revere at patrick.revere@hollandsentinel.com or (616) 546-4280.

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