

Mayor Toasts Owners of New Restaurant Coming to Downtown

The popping sound coming from the corner storefront late last week on Sixth and Wabasha streets was not from champagne bottles, it was from the news Mayor Chris Coleman gave an audience of downtown workers, residents, business owners and managers. With restaurateurs Clark and Leslie Knutson in attendance, Mayor Coleman announced the highly visible restaurant space would become home to Pop!, the Knutsons' second venture in the Twin Cities.

"There were many people interested in this space, but the city wanted to find the right concept with creative, proven talent to open a new restaurant here," Mayor Coleman said. "The Knutsons run a successful restaurant, and what they are bringing to Saint Paul will give residents and visitors in downtown more options and a fun place to bring family and friends."

The restaurant will be similar to its sister restaurant located in Northeast Minneapolis, although not exactly the same. However, Clark Knutson said it will still carry the pop culture motif that defines his Minneapolis location, and it will still have the Knutson's signature, lengthy list of soda pop, featuring hard to find brands and flavors. The food will have a Latin flavor, a specialty Clark Knutson learned to cook after graduating from the Culinary Institute of America and a style that he considers fun, colorful, and flavorful.

The Knutsons also describe their new restaurant as casual and affordable, a niche that should fit in well in downtown for families shopping at Macy's, seeing an event in downtown Saint Paul, or visiting the Minnesota Children's Museum or Science Museum of Minnesota. They said they plan to open their restaurant in early to mid-August, in time to welcome people to the Republican National Convention.

Upon a lease-signing in front of the crowd, Bill Collins, owner of Camp nightclub which opened in downtown last year, and David Miller, general manager of the St. Paul Hotel, raised a toast to the Knutsons to welcome them to downtown and the neighborhood. They used pop from the restaurant, of course