

# TacoTime Express to arrive at the EMU in October

By Ed Carson  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Students arriving at the University this fall will see the EMU Fishbowl undergoing a facelift.

Reconstructive surgery is taking place in the northwest corner of the Fishbowl to make room for a TacoTime restaurant and an espresso bar. When finished, people will be able to order from a limited menu of Mexican fast food inside or outside of the Fishbowl.

A self-serve frozen yogurt machine will also be set up in the Fishbowl.

Carr said the Fishbowl will lose about 20 seats. However, umbrellas will be mounted on tables outside to make up for the reduced inside seating.

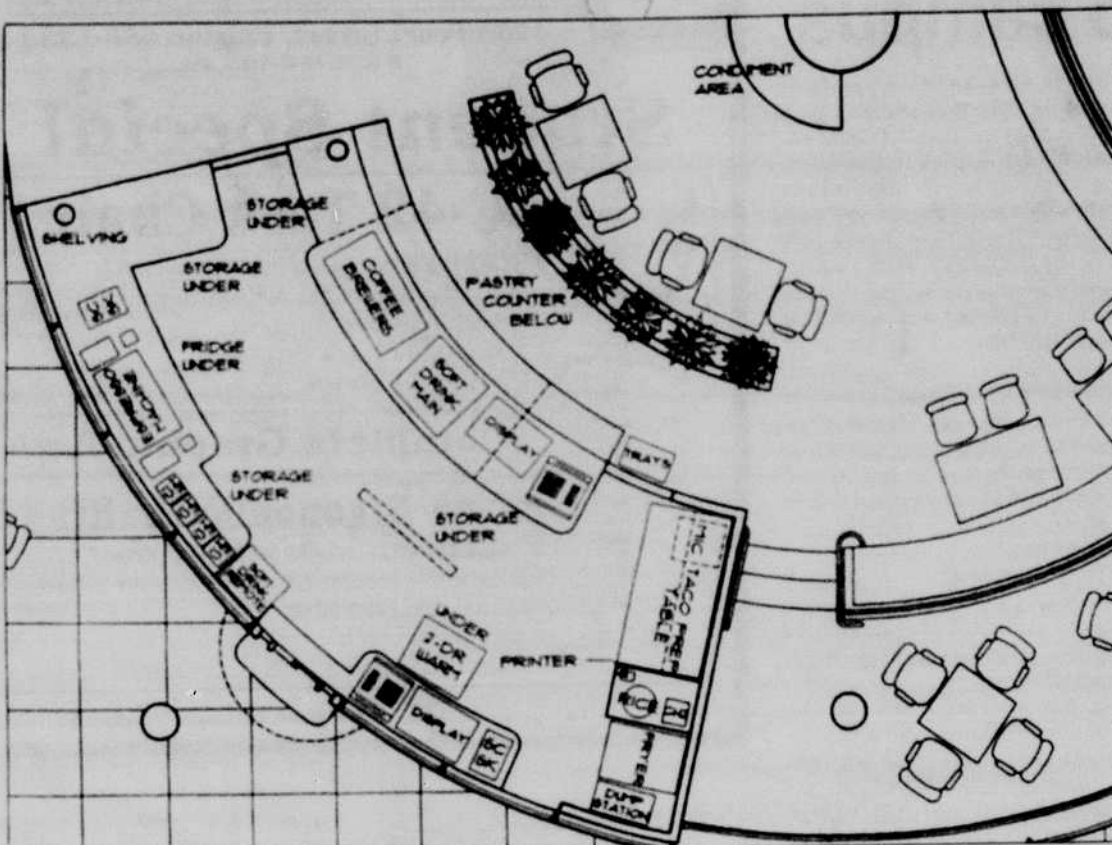
The TacoTime EMU outlet will be called the TacoTime Express at the EMU.

EMU Director Dusty Miller said construction should be completed by mid or late October.

However, until that time, students won't have to drive off campus to find a burrito because EMU Food Service Director Dennis Carr said that TacoTime will provide a food cart outside of the Fishbowl until the permanent structure is ready.

TacoTime was selected over Taco Bell to provide Mexican fast food in the Fishbowl. TacoTime is granting a five-year license with the EMU having a five-year option to renew. The tentative agreement was announced Aug. 3, but the final contract wasn't signed until Aug. 24.

Miller, who made the decision to accept TacoTime's offer, said TacoTime submitted an aggressive bid and showed a greater willingness to be flexible.



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"As we read through the proposals, it became very, very obvious that TacoTime really wanted to be on the UO campus," Miller said. "They worked to find out what was unique about our needs and then tailored their proposal to meet those needs."

One of the reasons why TacoTime worked so hard to be chosen is because Eugene is home. TacoTime's corporate headquarters is located in Eugene, and

TacoTime's founder, Ron Prædrick, is a University alum.

The EMU TacoTime will also be the first outlet on a university or college campus in the United States for the company. TacoTime spokeswoman Patricia Scarci said the company is eager to expand into this growing segment of the fast food industry, which Miller said was clear from its proposal.

"What we got was a very forward-looking response that says TacoTime is ready to enter this

market — and do it in a quality way," she said.

In contrast, Miller said that though Taco Bell submitted "a very good standard response that has proven successful on college campuses," it was not as attractive to the EMU as TacoTime's proposal.

The winning proposal contained what Miller described as "advantageous financial terms." In particular, TacoTime only asked for 8 percent of the store's gross sales, minus soft drinks, in

exchange for a license, whereas Taco Bell wanted the standard 10 percent.

TacoTime also agreed to provide substantial assistance to the EMU for purchasing equipment at wholesale prices and marketing the new venue.

TacoTime is also making concessions on its work uniform. Instead of the usual full-blown fast food attire, employees at the EMU TacoTime will only have to wear a green apron with the words "TacoTime Express at the EMU" written on it over their own clothing.

Several EMU food service employees, including Carr, will undergo two five-day training sessions at TacoTime's corporate headquarters to learn how to make TacoTime food taste exactly like food at any other TacoTime.

Carr said that if the TacoTime and espresso bar are successful, he may be able to increase student food service employment by 5 percent.

The EMU decided to look for a Mexican fast food vendor after that option scored high on a survey of students, faculty and staff conducted by a private consulting firm. The EMU Board of Directors approved the Mexican fast food concept at the end of spring term.

TacoTimes typically serve Coca Cola soft drinks in their outlets, but the TacoTime Express at the EMU will use Pepsi products because the EMU has a contract to serve only Pepsi brand soft drinks. Pepsi is the parent company of Taco Bell.



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