

Food: Cucina! will serve fast food

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Property, defaulted on the Taste of Thai Restaurant's lease.

Michelle Hayes, district manager for Starbucks, said Bill Baker Property approached Starbucks about renting the space. Hayes said Starbucks has been looking for a campus location for seven years, but the spaces have been hard to find.

Both Washington State and Portland State universities have a Starbucks on campus, she said, and Starbucks uses the opportunity to connect with the universities, whether it be showcasing student art or even holding poetry readings.

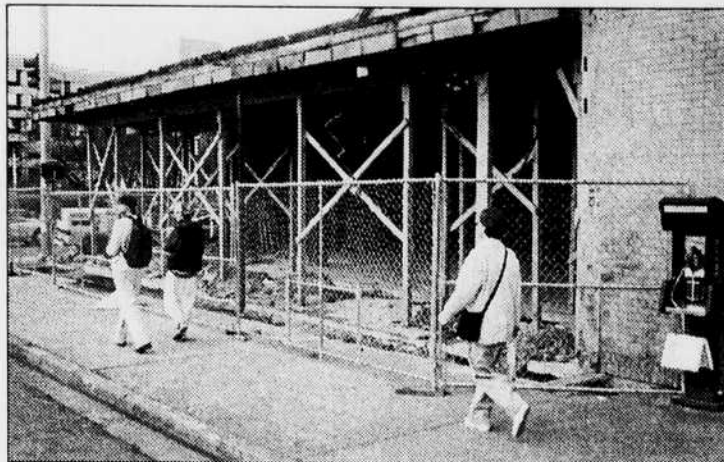
"We just want to know what students want when it's in there," she said. "We really want to make those relationships happen."

While the new Starbucks will sit on a street already filled with coffee establishments, Hayes said competition isn't something Starbucks looks for when considering an outlet site.

"There's so many coffee places around," she said. "We just look for a population that doesn't have a Starbucks."

The 13th Avenue Starbucks will join two other Starbucks already in the Eugene area, one at 205 E. 18th Ave. and one in the Oakway Center on Coburg Road.

Hayes said the 13th Avenue store will have all the "bells and whistles" that some of the main Starbucks locations have, such as comfortable chairs, couches and room for hanging out in the establishment, "as opposed to getting in there, getting coffee and getting out of there." Patrons



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

Construction continues for a Starbucks and Cucina! Presto! Italian fast food restaurant at the former site of Guido's Bar and Taste of Thai Restaurant at 13th Avenue and Alder Street.

will also be able to buy coffee beans, espresso machines and other coffee paraphernalia, including special University coffee merchandise such as a coffee tumbler.

Perhaps less well known to the Eugene area is the Cucina! Cucina! Italian food corporation. The new Cucina! Presto! is an abbreviated version of the full-service Cucina! Cucina! Italian Cafe chain.

It will offer many items on the cafe's menu but in a quick-service atmosphere, said Dori Kriner, real estate administrative assistant for the corporation. This includes pasta, pizza, sandwiches, salad, beer and wine.

The goal was to have high-quality fast food that patrons can dine in for, take out or call in. "It's quick service, but it's still really good food," Kriner said.

There are currently two Cucina! Cucina! Italian Cafes in the Portland area. Eugene's Cucina! Presto! will join a recently opened Presto! restaurant in Portland as the only two in the state.

Cucina! Presto! is just one of several business ventures run by Cucina! Cucina! Inc., which is based in Bellevue, Wash. The corporation, formed in 1993 after success in the Seattle area with the Cucina! Cucina! Italian cafes, includes a retail division selling Cucina! food items in grocery stores, as well as the Cucina! Presto! quick-service restaurants.

Kriner said the chance to be adjacent to the University, Sacred Heart Medical Center and a Starbucks made the company interested in expanding its chain to the 13th Avenue and Alder Street location.

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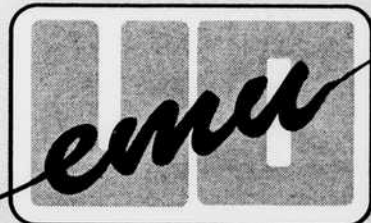
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