

PHILLY

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Busciglio said. "I try to keep him sane," Froemke said with a smile. But as he nears the culmination of a goal he's had for about a decade, Busciglio is eager, and a trifle nervous, to serve his first Philly cheesesteak. "All the range of emotions," he said. "It's very exciting, and nerve-wracking," Froemke added. Busciglio said he's been preoccupied with the seemingly endless list of preparations — and not only during the day. "You just never stop thinking about it," he said. "I wake up at night and my brain keeps going."



Philadelphia's/Contributed Photo

Philadelphia's, a new restaurant in Baker City, includes a family dining area and a separate bar. The restaurant will be limited to offering takeout meals initially due to state-mandated COVID-19 restrictions.

Busciglio said on a recent restless early morning he couldn't get back to sleep until he had gone online and ordered something needed for the restaurant. Although opening a restaurant was a long-held goal for Busciglio, it wasn't

until this March that, as he puts it, "things just kind of fell into place." The Campbell Street building, which previously housed Crave A Bowl restaurant and an insurance office, was available. Then word began to spread about a virus most

people had never heard of. "Then COVID hit," Froemke said. "We were just hoping it wasn't going to last this long." The pandemic had begun to ease somewhat when the couple closed the deal on the building in late August and started remodeling. But as they neared their planned mid-December opening, the number of new COVID-19 cases rose rapidly in Baker County and across the state and nation. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown imposed a series of restrictions that first limited indoor dining and then eliminated it altogether in some counties, including Baker. But Busciglio and Froemke said they're confident their opening, even limited to takeout meals, will

be successful. Busciglio believes Baker City residents will appreciate the authentic taste of his cheesesteaks. He lived near Philadelphia for about a dozen years, during which he developed an affinity for the City of Brotherly Love's signature sandwich. "It's an influence that never really went away," he said. The sandwiches will be made with sliced choice ribeye steak. The buns will come from a bakery that's actually in Philadelphia. "It's about as authentic as you can get," Busciglio said. Burgers will be hand-pressed Angus beef patties. "We're trying to use a high-quality ingredient with all our dishes," Busciglio said.

Because all meals will be cooked to order, Philadelphia's will be taking phone orders to start, and customers can pick up their meals at a drive-thru window. Busciglio said because sandwiches and other items won't be made until they're ordered, he doesn't think it's feasible to have customers drive up, order and then wait. The couple said they've been able to find employees who have been flexible in dealing with the changes dictated by COVID-19 restrictions. "We appreciate how understanding they've been," Froemke said. "They're excited to come to work." "I think we'll weather the restrictions OK," Busciglio said. "It is what it is."

MEAT

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how there was a need for a quality meat provider in town. "We're surrounded by agriculture and livestock," she said. "We should have a better source for it." Jake spent years learning the craft of butchering by watching videos on YouTube, visiting local meat cutting facilities and attending classes offered by the University of Idaho. "I feel like he found his thing," Paige said. Hines Meat opened with the help of a couple of veteran meat cutters. In addition to selling meat, Hines Meat also cures and

smokes its own products and offers slaughtering services for customers who bring in their own livestock or wild game. Fast forward to 2019, Paige and Jake started talking with other city officials about opening a Pendleton location, but Hines Meat's plans didn't start to solidify until they found the perfect building. During a trip to Pendleton, they passed by the vacant Pendleton Grain Growers Energy building at 1210 S.W. Dorion Ave. Although the couple saw a lot of potential with the building, Paige still wasn't sure if they were ready to take the plunge. But PGG ended up being accommodating

negotiators, and talks eventually led to a lease in September 2019 and a purchase of the property the following July. Although Hines Meat now has two locations, Paige said each one will offer different experiences. Meat processing and slaughter will continue at the La Grande facility, while both will offer retail. After the holidays, Paige said the Pendleton location will look to establish its own niche by adding a restaurant that will serve prepared Hines Meat products. While Hines Meat has experimented with more exotic meats in the past, Paige said she's learned that customers tend to buy

more familiar meats, such as beef and pork. Instead, Paige said Hines Meat will mix it up by offering mainstream meats prepared or presented in an outside-the-box way. "We're at a place where we want to meet the customers where they're at and grow their palate with us," she said. Paige said the community has been supportive of Hines Meat since it held its soft opening on Nov. 13. One of those that came out to show support was Tarter, who took his family after he got off of work. Tarter said he was surprised that an idea dreamed up at work would eventually manifest itself into reality.

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