

Yorkers flock to new downtown cheese steak shop

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York City must have had a serious cheese steak craving.

By 9 a.m. Monday, the phone was already ringing off the hook at the Cheese Steak Spot. Customers, eager to get a jump on the lunch rush, were calling in to place orders before the doors opened at 11 a.m.

Not that co-owner Shawn Neely is complaining - he's not - but that was just a bit overwhelming for a grand opening.

"I don't even know how to describe it," Neely said about Monday. "We almost ran out of everything."

York's newest downtown eatery has been a long time in the making. Neely and his business partner, Chas Miller, had planned to open the 153 S. Beaver St. restaurant months ago but were delayed by a problem with the property's gas line.

Meanwhile, salivating cheese steak lovers could do little more than glance longingly at the colorful corner restaurant as they drove or walked by.

"Now that we are open, they are flocking by the dozens," Neely said Tuesday morning, as he prepared the Cheese Steak Spot for a second day of business.

The Spot, Neely said, is banking on Yorkers' demand for authentic Philadelphia cheese steaks - an indulgent sandwich of thinly sliced beef or chicken topped with assorted veggies and melted cheese. The menu at the Spot is the real deal, Neely said, crafted with the help of Philadelphia cheese steak vendors who divulged some not-so-well-kept secrets to the York pair.

"We knew it tastes great, but we didn't really know what kind of meat they used," he said.

On the advice of the experts to the east, Neely and Miller sell sandwiches made with rolls from Amoroso's Baking and topped with Cheese Whiz. Even the meat is of the same caliber, Neely said.

The shop will be open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 3 a.m. Friday and Saturday. Depending on demand, the hours could extend later or be cut shorter, Neely said.

Most 12-inch subs on the menu cost \$6.50. Comfort-food sides include mozzarella sticks for \$4, breaded cauliflower for \$3.50 and onion rings with crab dip for \$4.

Through the city of York's Redevelopment Authority, the business partners were given a First Food Fund low-interest loan to purchase equipment. They plan to hire a total of six people to work at the Spot, Neely said, and eventually they'd like to open satellite locations in Lancaster and Harrisburg.

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