Tacos and Tequila open on Greenup Avenue

BY MARY JANE EPLING
THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

ASHLAND A new restaurant is open for business in downtown Ashland, bringing an international flair to typical crowd pleasers: tacos and tequila.

Located at 1201 Greenup Avenue, Tacos and Tequila Bar and Grill is bringing more than 30 different types of tacos to the menu, ranging from surf and turf to Korean-inspired, but owner Mohamed "MoMo" Maarir, said the pineapple and shrimp taco might be the best in the lineup.

The menu also offers a wide variety of other international favorites, including fajitas, nachos and burritos, and, of course, Patron.

Tacos and Tequila's hours are currently set Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Maarir said he and business partner Jose Lopez are eager to be a part of a growing city.

"We thought, 'why not Ashland,'" Maarir said. "It's a growing city with a space under these beautiful bridges."

The restaurant celebrated with the Northeast of Kentucky Chamber of Commerce on Friday with a ribbon cutting, drawing in city officials for an official taste test.

"We are so happy to see another family come along and fill this space," Ashland city commissioner Marty Gute said.

City commissioner Tim Renfroe was also in attendance, telling the new owners he hoped they would see a return on their investment in no time.



MARY JANE EPLING | THE DAILY INDEPENDENT
Tacos and Tequila celebrated with a ribbon cutting on Friday with city officials and the Northeast Kentucky Chamber of Commerce on the opening of a new restaurant at 1201 Greenup Ave.

Since they were talking in banking lingo, "I will be making deposits in here frequently," Renfroe added with a laugh.

Maarir said his family and Lopez are not in the restaurant industry to try it out, either.

"We're not here to try to make it work. It's going to work because we thank God for everything first and we thank our community for everything second," Maarir said.

Mayor Chuck Charles also thanked the new restaurateurs for choosing and investing in the property.

"I recognize the work you've done. You are part of this community, and we hope everyone else comes and enjoys," Charles said.

When the lights go up in the city



MICHELLE BRAND \ FOR THE DAILY INDEPENDENT
City of Ashland parks and recreation department employees Shane Adams, William West, Curt McGraw and Noah Hodge are hard at work making repairs to a Christmas lights display in Central Park Friday afternoon. The beloved annual event's light display is set up throughout October and the first part of November prior to the Winter Wonderland of Lights opening ceremony, which is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 16, at 6 p.m.

TOP FIVE STORIES, NOV. 2-8

Rank-headline

1. Rex Cooksey a rare gem
2. Coin toss determines commission final spot
3. 2026 NEKY Election Results (Boyd, Carter, Greenup)
4. Voters of all ages show up for midterms in Boyd, Greenup
5. Biederman to take on Russell mayoral role

COACH

Elementary basketball as a youngster.

Cooksey had heard about him, though, and drafted him.

Cooksey was an assistant on Hall's varsity teams. Hall's son, Cameron, later played for Cooksey when he was a head coach before the Halls moved to western Kentucky.

"We stayed in touch," Hall said. "We were very good friends. I hate this for his family and for the area, and for everybody he came in contact with."

Hall said Cooksey's best skill was being a motivator of people.

"The No. 1 thing I learned from Coach was he never got down," Hall said. "He was never one to sit and dwell on losses very long because he always wanted the next one."

Hall said Cooksey was a fierce competitor at any sport with which he was involved. With decades of educating and coaching multiple sports at several schools under his belt, Cooksey was preparing for another season on the hardwood, assisting his sons Derek and Brett at Russell.

Russell will leave a bench seat open all season in honor of Cooksey.

However, the animated, passionate coach struggled to remain seated during action.

"If anybody needed a seat belt, it was him," Maynard said with a laugh. "He was hard on refs; he didn't care to talk to them, but he did it in such a way. I'm sure he got technicals, but I can't remember seeing one."

Tom Hobbs, who coined the phrase "Believe in the Wood" several years ago, is a staunch supporter of Fairview athletics. When he first began playing for the varsity Eagles basketball team, Cooksey was an assistant. Frustrated with playing time, Hobbs contemplated quitting.

When he informed Cooksey he was "done," Cooksey quickly fired back.

"My (rear end), you're done," Coach told him. "You keep working."

As a senior, Hobbs made Fairview's first 3-pointer after it was introduced into the high school game in 1987-88. Cooksey was his head coach then.

"He'd build you up," Hobbs said. "The values he taught me, man, they stuck with me to this day."

Hobbs would always room with Cooksey when they played an annual golf event, the Wildcat Cup.

Cooksey was an avid golfer. He played at Bellefonte Country Club on Friday.

"Because his legend preceded him, I was pumped when he took the job at (Greenup County) during my long tenure there," said Missi Baker. "Loved the guy, his energy, his humor, his antics, and his compassion. We reunited when he joined BCC where we had many typically animated conversations and sports gossip fests around the pro shop."

Joe Barker was Cooksey's basketball teammate at Fairview in 1972-73. Cooksey graduated in 1973. Barker also assisted him at Fairview from 2003-07, when Joe's son played.

"He was a great communicator, encouraged his teams, and was always very respectful of our opponents," Barker said. "In my opinion, he was underrated as a defensive coach. FHS didn't always win, but we were always prepared for who we played. More importantly, he was a kind and generous man."

Cooksey nearly won a 16th Region title as a head coach in 1990 when Mike Helton had a wonderful region tournament performance. The Eagles lost to Boyd County in the finals.

"It's hard to think of Fairview without him around," Maynard said. "He's Westwood through and through."

Cooksey and a former Raceland football coach, the late Bill Tom Ross, had a friendly but competitive rivalry in the 1980s. One newspaper football preview cover featured the two coaches nose to nose.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Rex Cooksey is pictured during his Fairview football coaching days.

"If the 16th Region had a logo, they'd have to put his face in it somehow," Maynard said. "Everybody who knew him liked him. He's a friend and a legend. He was the thread (in local sports) that ran from the 1970s to now. ... He was a coach for all seasons."

The Fairview High School Hall of Fame guided girls tennis and girls track teams to a pair of state championships.

Paula Adkins, who graduated from Fairview in 1987, fondly recalls the 1986 football season. Fairview went 9-1 under Cooksey's direction, with a narrow loss to Raceland.

"Everything we did that fall was electric," Adkins said. "Each and every game had a pep rally that topped all those before it. ... Coach Cooksey played an integral part of our formative years, on and off the field. As for us, he will live on and we will never forget."

George Stout, also as Westwood as they come, said Cooksey positively influenced countless people.

"We go awful far back," Stout said. "Whenever Paul (Reliford) hired him as the football coach, he came and talked to me about it, and I said I thought he'd be a good one."

Stout accompanied Cooksey to many Sweet Sixteens — the high school boys state tournament. He said Cooksey was instrumental in starting the All "A" basketball tournament.

Before Stout stopped attending 16th Region Tournaments, Cooksey would drive him to Morehead.

"I was really close to Rex for many, many years; and, of course, his dad, too," Stout said, referring to Rex Sr., who passed away in 2021. "I'm going to miss him. He'll be missed by a lot of people."

Caniff Funeral Home is handling funeral arrangements. Visitation is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 12, from 5-9 p.m. at Fairview High School's gymnasium. A funeral service is set for 1 p.m. Friday at Fairview Baptist Church.

Cooksey is survived by Lisa, his wife of 47 years, his children Derek, Brett and Brooke, and their spouses, two siblings and seven grandchildren.

(606) 326-2664 |
asnyder@dailyindependent.com

HOW TO REACH US

Daily Independent
1544 Winchester Avenue, Suite 600
Ashland, KY 41101-7606

ONLINE:
dailyindependent.com

Business hours:
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays

Phone:
(606) 326-2600
(800) 955-5860

Advertising:
(606) 326-2619
afletcher@dailyindependent.com

Delivery issues and subscription information:
(606)326-2674
customerservice@dailyindependent.com

Newsroom:
News: (606) 326-2664
Sports: (606) 326-2658
asnyder@dailyindependent.com

The Daily Independent, USPS Pub #33780, ISSN 0744-6837, Copyright © 2026 by The Daily Independent is published 3x Week on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday except Christmas by CNHI, LLC, 1544 Winchester Ave. Suite 600, Ashland, KY 41101. Business and Editorial Offices: 1544 Winchester Ave. Suite 600 Ashland, KY 41101. Accounting and Circulation Offices: Ashley Fletcher, 1544 Winchester Ave. Suite 600 Ashland, KY 41101. Call (606) 326-2600 to subscribe. Periodicals postage is paid at Ashland, KY 41101.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Daily Independent PO Box 311 Ashland KY 41105-0311.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
CITY OF ASHLAND
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

NOTICE is hereby given that the City of Ashland Board of Zoning Adjustment will conduct a public hearing on **Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** in the City Commission Chambers, third floor of the Ashland City Building, 1700 Greenup Avenue. This building is accessible to persons with disabilities. Special assistance or special accommodations may be requested in advance.

The Board will consider the following items:

V26-10-01, 322 52nd St., Ashland, KY 41101: A request by Hope Lavergne for a variance for a Qualified Manufactured Home to encroach 1' into the required side-yard setback on the west side of the property and 21' into the front-yard setback on the east (Apple Blossom Lane) side of the property. Additionally, seeking a variance to allow a 3:12 roof pitch rather than the required 4:12 pitch.

C26-09-01 (Amended), 4045 Winchester Ave., Ashland, KY 41101: A request by TADA ASH-KY LLC for a Conditional Use Permit to construct and operate a Data Center facility at the former AK Steel Coke Plant property, and for a variance to encroach 500' into the required 1,500' setback from residential zones.

Additional information can be obtained by calling the City of Ashland, Department of Community and Economic Development at (606) 385-3317 or visiting the office at 1700 Greenup Avenue, Room 208 during normal business hours, Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Published: November 5 & 10, 2026