

Smokey Bones closes after bankruptcy filing

By Jack Dobbs
The Daily News

The Smokey Bones Bar and Fire Grill restaurant in Bowling Green, and all of the brand's other locations, have closed after the chain's parent company, FAT Brands, Inc., declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Smokey Bones' Bowling Green location on Scottsville Road, the only Smokey Bones still open in Kentucky, closed

Tuesday.

A sign was on the front door of the restaurant Wednesday letting visitors know it had closed and thanking them "for the memories."

"As of yesterday (April 28, 2026), all Smokey Bones locations have ceased operations," FAT Brands stated to the Daily News. "On behalf of Management, it has been a privilege to serve the Bowling Green community."

Smokey Bones opened

in Bowling Green in March 2002 in a building that was the former home to an Olive Garden Italian Restaurant on Scottsville Road. At the time, the Bowling Green restaurant was the 17th Smokey Bones location to open.

The location remained open through various corporate owners.

A fire tore through the restaurant in September 2015, and firefighters battled the blaze for two days before bringing it



JACK DOBBS / DAILY NEWS

Goodbye messages hang on the front doors of Smokey Bones Bar and Fire Grill in Bowling Green on Wednesday.

fully under control. The fire destroyed sections

of the building's roof and gutted the interior.

The cause of the fire was listed as "undetermined" after an investigation, but said the fire was likely due to "smoking materials" in mulch at the back of the building.

Smokey Bones reopened over a year after the fire in November 2016.

"We built our nicest location in the country right here," Smokey Bones' then-CEO Ryan Esko said at the opening.

DEVELOPMENT

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covers less than 1,000 acres. As time goes on, STNL will be required to provide the county with reports detailing infrastructure expenses, and fiscal court will review progress on the infrastructure project annually.

The Warren County Treasurer's Office will oversee the development area after it takes effect

following approval on a second reading.

Publix's location on the south end of Bowling Green is one of two locations slated to open in Warren County in the near future.

Land for the store was rezoned at the intersection of Nashville and Dillard Roads in 2025. The plan calls for a 50,325 square-foot building to anchor the property, and the company plans to bring 150 jobs to town with the store.

Publix currently operates more than 1,400 stores across the United States, six of which are in Kentucky. Construction is ongoing, although an opening date has not been announced.

A second location was announced in April. This one will sit on a triangle-shaped lot on the southeastern corner of Campbell Lane and Smallhouse Road. Like the first one, this store is expected to create another 150 jobs

once it opens up.

Publix is not the only new construction going on in the Nashville Road and Dillard Road area. A McDonald's location is expected to join it, as is a Fifth Third Bank branch, a Speedway convenience store and a more than 200-unit apartment complex.

"The role (of government) is to assist in development so we can create jobs, we can create quality life, and doing it as a partnership makes a

better difference," Gorman said.

Magistrates on Thursday were also presented with the final report from the BG2050 project, marking the culmination of a nearly three-year-long study of how Bowling Green and Warren County are expected to grow over the next quarter-century.

Members of the public responded more than 1 million times to over 6,000 ideas suggested in the study about how the

community should grow moving forward. Gorman said the study has been a great way for the county to identify the needs and desires of residents.

"I'm excited," Gorman said. "We've been very intentional about this ... (and it's) very, very encouraging."

The final report can be viewed online at <https://report.whatcouldbgbe.com/>. Fiscal court will meet again May 14.

GROUND

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he was invited to visit there about four years ago.

The husband of a retired nurse, Riley was one of a number of elected officials who worked to prioritize funding for a new campus for nursing and allied health in Glasgow.

"We have had a really good streak of wins in Glasgow and Barren County and this is among those," Riley said.

Ryan Quarles, president of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, said that Glasgow needed a facility with state-of-the-art technology for students entering the nursing and allied health



GRACE MCDOWELL / THE DAILY NEWS

Glasgow Mayor Henry Royspe speaks at a groundbreaking ceremony for Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College's new Glasgow Health Campus off Veterans Outer Loop near Bob Lewis Road on Thursday.

fields, and that this development represents an investment in health care and

affiliated industries as an area of economic growth.

"One of the good things about this facility that

sets it apart is that it's going to be modern and have the technology you see in hospitals today without the encumbrances of the old tuberculosis hospital," Quarles said. "It should be noted that this nursing program, despite its current facility, is ranked number one in Kentucky and we're very proud of that and we're going to build them a building they deserve."

SKyCTC is working with JRA Architects on designing the new campus, and Trawick said that the first classes are likely to be held at the new site in January 2029.

The facility is anticipated to also have room for some business classes, but the nursing program will be the primary beneficiary, with

Trawick saying that the access to newer technology and expanded space to learn could result in a doubling of graduates in the nursing program from 150 to 300 over the next five to seven years across both campuses.

Currently, the Glasgow campus can accommodate up to about 70 students in each nursing cohort.

"When it opens, you will see an immediate increase in the number of students we can admit and we'll be growing in faculty along with classrooms," Trawick said. "The biggest impact is going to be increasing the number of high-quality nurses we're putting out because it's already a long waiting list."

WKU

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we created is transformative for this institution. It will change our position in the marketplace. It will create an attractor instead of a hurdle that we have to overcome in the recruitment process."

MANAGEMENT

CHF will contract with Inwood Management, which will oversee operation responsibilities in a contract dependent on performance.

Management fees will be contingent on meeting national cleanliness and performance standards within the buildings, along with biannual audits and student satisfaction surveys

for facility maintenance, according to Julian Sagastume at Brailsford and Dunlavy, the consulting firm advising for the project.

The management will be governed by a joint committee comprising representatives from WKU, CHF and Inwood Management, according to Sagastume. This committee will determine the capital program for spending and budgets as well as administer the independent third-party audits and student surveys.

FINANCING, FUNDING

Whereas SLF maintained housing revenues to reinvest in the system as it saw fit, WKU in this agreement will acquire revenue throughout the

plan.

WKU anticipates getting \$125 million from this over the next 40 years out of the project's estimated \$460 million in acquired funds, according to Mark Rawlings, from the international financial services firm Baird.

WKU will collect housing rents, but they'll go to a trustee bank with Williamson Trust and pay operating expenses that aren't subordinated such as lights and maintenance, he said. After that, money is deposited into a bond fund to collect payments and ensure debt obligations are paid, he said.

Once those mandatory cash flows occur by the end of the fiscal year, and an audit certifies WKU has complied with the

coverage covenant to generate revenues covering debt service by 1.2 times, anything else goes to the university, Rawlings said.

He added that WKU's occupancy rate is about 95%, significantly surpassing the 80% required to hit the covenant to cover debt service by 1.2 times.

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Hailstorm kills emu at Missouri zoo

(AP) — Glass shards flew everywhere as Eric Gockel waited out one of the worst hailstorms to hit Missouri.

One of the softball-size hunks of ice that hit the Springfield area on Tuesday measured 4.75 inches. The hail killed an emu at the zoo, injured

some drivers, knocked out power to thousands and damaged hundreds of vehicles and even some aircraft.

"I feel blessed that I came out unscathed," Gockel, whose windshield was battered as he waited in his car along the side of

a highway for the storm to pass, said Wednesday.

Severe spring weather is plaguing the South and Midwest, and emergency management officials said the hailstorm was Springfield's worst in history, although it falls short of a state record.

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