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Thursday, August 4, 2005

Potbelly opens in Normal

Noodles eatery right next door

By Scott Miller

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NORMAL -- The new Potbelly Sandwich Works at Main and Osage streets in Normal opened Monday, and the Noodles & Co. next door shouldn't be far behind.

IWI Ventures, which owns the Noodles restaurant, expects to open the week of Aug. 22. A firm date isn't set, said Darlene Murphy, a spokeswoman for the Madison, Wis.-based company.

The grand opening awaits minor construction, health and fire inspections and a certificate of occupancy from Normal, she said.

"We're hoping they'll all be done by the eighth (of August)," Murphy said.

Employees then must complete training before the restaurant can open, she said.

"Some of the employees are already in training at other places," Murphy said.

The restaurant serves up a variety of noodle dishes from around the globe as well as several no-noodle entrees.

Normal will be the first town in downstate Illinois to have a Noodles & Co., said Murphy. Another will open in early 2006 at the former Bombay Bicycle Club site along Veterans Parkway in Bloomington.

Champaign will open a Noodles & Co. in October, Murphy said.

Tartan Realty Group of Chicago developed the side-by-side restaurants in Normal as well as the Potbelly Sandwich Works in Washington Commons at Washington Street and Veterans Parkway in Bloomington. Potbelly features a

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range of sandwiches all priced at \$3.79 each, as well as soups and sweets.

The two Potbellies are nearly identical, said Doug Reichl of Tartan Realty, except the Normal location has outdoor seating.

"I think that was in anticipation of college students who have a little more leisure time," he said.

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