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Posted: Jan 26, 2011 at 6:00 AM [Yesterday]

Brewed Awakenings coffee shop will open March 1 at Michigan and Moon near Saline



Kim Kaster, owner of Brewed Awakenings Cafe, said work is progress on the new coffee shop space located at 7025 E. Michigan Ave. in Pittsfield Township, near Saline.

Melanie Maxwell | AnnArbor.com

Kimberly Kaster spent the last year drawing up a business plan and taking steps that would allow her to return to a much-loved job: running a community-oriented coffee shop.

Now her **Brewed Awakenings Cafe** will open March 1 in the **Country Creek Shopping Center**, located on the **southeast corner** of Michigan Avenue at Moon Road in Pittsfield Township.

Kaster is investing more than \$200,000 to establish the coffee shop, financed in part by a Small Business Administration loan.

The vision for the coffee shop started about a year ago as Cafe Dolce closed. Kaster had managed that coffee shop for seven years, first in Country Creek, and then after its move to a smaller center a bit to the east.

"When it closed, it was like losing my family," Kaster said. "I was losing my direction. I didn't realize how much the customers and the place had become a part of me."

Kaster channeled that loss after the owners closed the store into creating a business plan for her own cafe, as she and her husband, Mike, started to look for a location.

The effort, she said, "was a huge endeavor for us." Part of the reason is that she hadn't started her career wanting to own her own business.

However, with her background in accounting and the discovery that she enjoys running neighborhood coffee shops, the pair pursued the goal.

Two potential sites didn't work out. Then she learned in September that the 2,400-square-foot Country Creek space — occupied by Dominik Market for nine years until it closed this year — was coming onto the market.

Kaster recalls standing in front of the store after learning it was available, calling listing agent **Tony**

Caprarese of Swisher Commercial.

"Within an hour, he had my business plan," she said. "Before I knew it, we had already negotiated a lease."

Brewed Awakenings Cafe will have excellent visibility and accessibility from the intersection, Caprarese said, making it an anchor tenant for the center. The asking rental rate for the space was \$16 per square foot, according to marketing materials.

Interior construction on the space started Dec. 22, as the SBA loan was approved.

Now, more than halfway to the March 1 opening day, Kaster is finalizing details of how the business will operate.

Some are still taking shape: On Tuesday morning, for example, she connected with the [Young Adult Program](#) in the Saline Area Schools, talking about employing the students, who are learning job skills as part of the program for youth with disabilities, possibly as curbside servers.

Hiring will start by the weekend as Kaster fills six to seven positions. Other smaller details include identifying suppliers and guiding her son, Nick, as he designs the coffee shop's web page.

Brewed Awakenings will be one of two new coffee shops near Michigan and State roads when it opens this spring. [Biggby Coffee](#) also is opening in the former Cafe Dolce space.

The competition doesn't worry Kaster. She says both are unique, and she believes the advantage of Biggby's drive-through will be balanced by her luncheon menu, which she said will likely attract daylong business from the South State office market, about a half-mile to the north.

Kaster also is focusing on some of her community relationships, forged during years of living near Saline and sending her sons to the schools. She hopes to display art from students and create performing space for them, too.

Her new coffee shop "will be community-based," she said. "I want people to come in and hang out."

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