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Dunkin' Donuts is coming in 2010

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By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

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Dunkin' Donuts, a 59-year-old chain of coffee and doughnut shops, will enter the Owensboro market in 2010.

The Massachusetts-based company announced Tuesday that Nita Patel, owner of the Super 8 hotel franchise in Owensboro, has signed an agreement to build five restaurants in the Owensboro area in the next four years.

Gary Dennis, operations manager for Patel's franchises, said the agreement includes Daviess, Henderson, McLean, Muhlenberg, Ohio and Hancock counties. The first Dunkin' Donuts store will open in Owensboro next year, he said.

"We don't anticipate more than three of them being in Owensboro," Dennis said. "But it's going to depend on the (sales) volume. The success of the first will determine how many will be built here."

A location for the first restaurant hasn't been finalized, he said.

"Obviously, we're looking at the higher traffic areas like Kentucky 54 and Frederica Street," Dennis said.

Construction should start in 90 to 120 days, he said.

The restaurants will each employ 25 to 35 people.

Dennis said he and Patel want the restaurants to "have a comfortable environment where people can bring in their laptops. We're planning comfortable seating, Wi-Fi and flat-screen television sets."

A corporate news release said Patel is a second-generation franchisee. Her parents owned and operated a Dunkin' Donuts when she was a child, the news release said.

The company traces its roots to 1948, when William Rosenberg opened Open Kettle, a doughnut shop in Quincy, Mass. Two years later, he changed the name to Dunkin' Donuts.

At the end of 2008, the company listed 8,835 stores worldwide, including 6,395 franchised restaurants in 34 countries.

Dunkin' Donuts lays claim to being the nation's No. 1 retailer of hot and iced regular coffee-by-the-cup -- selling nearly 1 billion cups a year -- and the largest coffee and baked goods chain in the world.

Sales in 2008 topped \$5.5 billion. The company says it serves more than 3 million customers a day, "selling 52 varieties of donuts and more than a dozen coffee beverages as well as an array of bagels, breakfast sandwiches and other baked goods."

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