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**Two New Restaurants coming to Williston**

WILLISTON, N.D. – Two popular restaurants announced they are coming to Williston at a press conference on Wednesday, October 14. Williston entrepreneur Pat Murphy said Slim Chickens and Pizza Ranch will be breaking ground at the new Williston Square in 2021.

Murphy, a longtime Williston businessman, helped attract the two restaurants to the Sloulin Field Redevelopment.

“I’ve kind of acted as a liaison between the City and a couple of restauranteurs that I am personally and professionally involved with,” said Murphy. “I was excited about the redevelopment project at Sloulin Field and I saw an opportunity for these restauranteurs, and I saw an opening in our community for expansion and I’m excited to help bring this growth to Williston.”

The Pizza Ranch restaurant will offer buffet-style dining featuring pizzas, crispy ranch chicken, salads and desserts. The Dickinson-based franchise owner said he was excited to bring his second store to Williston.

“The store itself will seat around 200 people,” said Jason Frederick. “It will feature a buffet style restaurant with carryout and delivery. One exciting thing, that’s new to Pizza Ranch in the last few years, is their Fun Zone Arcade. We will have a Fun Zone Arcade at this Pizza Ranch with birthday party rooms and stuff like that for kids.”

Frederick, who has owned the Dickinson Pizza Ranch for 10 years, said Williston will be the 251<sup>st</sup> restaurant countrywide. The restaurant chain is based in Orange City, Iowa.

Meanwhile, a longtime Williston Taco John’s franchisee will be bringing Slim Chickens to Williston. The fast-casual eatery is known for its fried chicken tenders, chicken and waffles, house sauce and more.

“We just really love being part of this community,” said Mike Sartwell, President/CEO of Preferred Restaurant Group. “Our company is a North Dakota company. Our home base is Minot, North Dakota and we opened our first Slim Chickens in Minot this past year and it’s been extremely successful. Slim Chickens is out of Fayetteville, Arkansas, and it’s really a big up and coming brand.”

Williston Square is located at the former site of the Sloulin Field International Airport. The roughly 800-acre site is a mixed-use development that will serve many needs and uses for Williston residents. The proposed development plan includes a Convention Center core as well a broad mix of uses that will radiate out from this core and connect to surrounding neighborhoods.

“The community has been involved in the planning and redevelopment of Williston Square for several years now,” said Williston Economic Development Executive Director Shawn Wenko. “It is exciting to see projects start going vertical in Phase 1.”

The Pizza Ranch and Slim Chickens restaurants will be part of Phase 1 of Williston Square. The restaurants will face east along US Highway 2.

For more information on Williston Square visit [https://www.cityofwilliston.com/departments/planning\\_and\\_zoning/current\\_projects.php](https://www.cityofwilliston.com/departments/planning_and_zoning/current_projects.php).