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The whole burrito
Big Burrito opening on the city's
east side. **8**

Arizona restaurant magnate brings Big Burrito to Colorado Springs

by Scott Prater



Renovation to the new Big Burrito location on the southwest corner of Austin Bluffs Parkway and Academy Boulevard is under way. Owner Miguel Quintero expects to receive the keys by mid-February and plans to open the restaurant by early March.

The independent owner of a successful string of Phoenix area restaurants has decided to expand to Colorado Springs.

Miguel Quintero opened his first Big Burrito restaurant in the Phoenix area during 1999.

He expanded the operation to two locations in 2003 and in the years since has opened five more Big Burritos, four in Phoenix and one in Miami, Ariz.

Quintero, president of Big Burrito, Inc., was visiting family in Colorado Springs late in 2009 when he noticed a vacant restaurant at the Southwest corner of Austin Bluffs Parkway and Academy Boulevard. He liked the location so much that he inquired about leasing the spot.

Rich Walker of First Properties, Inc. has closed the deal with Quintero's Phoenix area representative, Jasen LaFon of Cross-road Real Estate, Inc., and Quintero is planning to open the Colorado Springs Big Burrito by mid March.

The location is a former Arby's restaurant and is currently being renovated to suit Big Burrito.

"We're doing a redevelopment on that same end of the Austin Bluffs Shopping Center," Walker said. "We're talking to a national chicken chain about leasing the far west building."

Quintero said business has been so good for his restaurants in the Phoenix area that all of his expansions have been funded through profit from existing locations. Not even the current recession, with its high unemployment rates, tight credit and thrifty consumer sentiment has deterred the entrepreneur.

"He thought he could take advantage of depressed rental rates," LaFon said of Quintero. "And he'll use family members here to manage the Colorado Springs restaurant. Eventually, he also wants to expand into California."

At 3,250 square feet, the Colorado Springs Big Burrito will operate according to the quick-serve concept, will be open 24 hours, offer a drive-through and employ eight to 12 people.

Quintero says the carne asada burrito is his best selling menu item and that most entrees will cost between \$3.50 and \$5.

LaFon is unsure whether the property will resemble existing Arizona locations, but that the interior and outdoor signage here should look similar.

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