

Golden Corral coming to Cape Coral

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Golden Corral, with its buffet-style eating and chocolate fountain, is coming to Cape Coral.

The restaurant, which will be located at Pine Island Road and Andalusia Boulevard, could open in time for the Christmas holidays and could employ approximately 100 people.

It will be the second Golden Corral in Lee County. The first is located on Colonial Boulevard near Interstate 75 in South Fort Myers.

The franchise restaurant will be located less than a mile from other popular restaurants that have opened in the last six years along Pine Island Road, like Mel's Diner, Outback Steakhouse, Olive Garden, Chili's and Ruby Tuesday.

Cape Coral was the choice because of popular Pine Island Road, a population of 154,000 and a strong enough economic base to sustain a restaurant that piles on the food seven days a week.

"We do need constant daytime traffic," said Lori Wrench, an administrator in the development department for Golden Corral Corp., which is based in Raleigh, N.C. "We do look at demographics, lifestyle, income and age, but the main thing is the traffic count.

The restaurant chain has already submitted a site plan. It hopes to have all the permits in place by August and could open in December or January.

Golden Corral will be the first new restaurant to open on Pine Island Road in about five years.

"Obviously, this is the first new blood we have had in quite some time," said Dana Brunett, the city's economic development director. "It shows confidence that the (economy) is coming back.

Because neighboring restaurants like Outback and Steak n' Shake have led in the nation in sales in the past, Brunett sees no problem with people stepping up to the buffet line.

"We have a lot of people with money and a lot of people who come down from the north in season that do not want to cook," he said.