

Mass Ave. business owners encouraged by new openings

Source: Brittany Shammass, Indy.com – July 26, 2011

The “Opening Soon” signs on the doors of several previously vacant Mass Ave. shops have business owners hopeful that activity in the area — once lagging in the recession — is coming back.

At least three new businesses plan to open in the cultural district by next month, investing in the area and adding to its eclectic mix of shops, restaurants and bars. These new businesses join two others — clothing store Black Apple Boutique and Style Agency and gastropub Black Market — that opened within the past two months.

That the spaces are being filled — and that people are committing to opening a business — shows the area’s economy has stabilized, said David Andrichik, president of the Mass Ave Merchants Association and owner of Chatterbox Jazz Club. He also owns several retail spaces along the avenue.

“It’s a slow fill,” Andrichik said, “but it’s happening.”

The recent development along Mass Ave. is especially promising as the city looks into ways to redevelop a 1.5-acre parcel in the 500 block of Massachusetts into retail and residential space. The redevelopment of the site, now occupied by Fire Station 7, could fill the missing link between businesses in the area.

Recent business activity could lead to greater interest in the site, said Deborah Dorman, a Realtor and Mass Ave. resident. For the past year, Dorman said, there has always been “something new popping up” in the area. That growth, she said, will only continue.

“When you’ve got all these people that start believing in it, it becomes contagious, and everybody wants to get on board,” Dorman said.

3 new businesses

These businesses, as well as a Mexican restaurant advertised to be going into Bazbeaux’s former location, are new to Mass Ave.:

» **Crimson Tate: Modern Quilter** , *845 Massachusetts Ave.*

The designer fabric store, which also will offer contemporary sewing classes, is expected to open Monday, owner Heather Givans said. Givans, who sells her quilts and other products online and at several retail locations, is renting the space and is the shop’s sole employee. Building

improvements are mostly exterior, with the removal of a broken-down awning and addition of new paint. Givans did not disclose the amount of the investment.

She chose Mass Ave. for its artsy vibe and for the many friendships she's formed on the avenue after working at Silver in the City.

"It kind of feels like home to me," she said.

» **Bikes on Mass Ave.** , *643 Massachusetts Ave.*

The full-service bicycle shop is slated to open in mid-August with about seven employees, owner Aaron Corey said. Corey said he invested about \$250,000 in the business, including about \$25,000 in improvements to the facility, which he is renting. The store is being relocated from Fort Wayne.

City investment and the presence of longstanding businesses in the area led Corey to choose Massachusetts Ave. That, and a personal interest in the area.

"Mass Ave. seemed to be a happening place to be and a fun place to spend some time," he said.

» **Irish Ink Tattoo and Piercing** , *876 Massachusetts Ave.*

The tattoo parlor opened its third Central Indiana location on Massachusetts Avenue last week with three employees, owner Michael Harvey said. He is renting the space.

Massachusetts Ave. was an "easy choice," Harvey said.

"It is centered a little bit more around art and culture, and we felt like that would be a perfect fit for us," he said.