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Wednesday, November 8, 2000

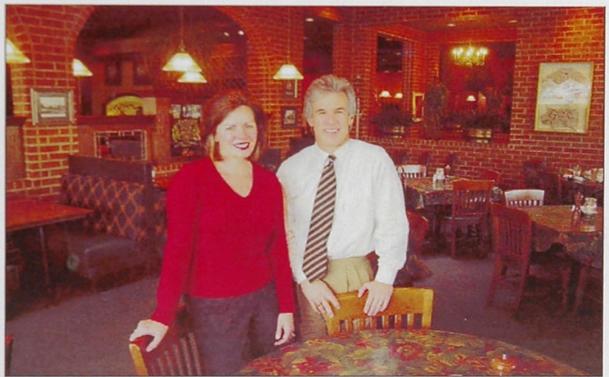
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PROPERTY WATCH WEDNESDAY

### **Expanding restaurant horizons**



Mike Connor, and his wife, Carol, will open Connors Restaurant, across from The Chop House in Sevierville. The new restaurant will have lighter fare, and should accommodate some of the crowds that are lined up outside The Chop House.

#### Regas protege branches out with Sevierville eatery

By Mike Flannagan

News-Sentinel business wiler
At a time when he professes to be cutting
back on his workaholic tendencies, Mike
Connor, president and CEO of Connor
Concepts, is undertaking a five-year plan to
expand his restaurant holdings.
Working 70-hour weeks is what made
Connor into one of Knoxville's most successful
restaurateurs. He opened The Chop House in
1992 and now has 6 such restaurants, and one
Chops Grill, in Tennessee, Kentucky and Ohio.
Connor's first new restaurant this millennium will bear his own name – Connors'
Restaurant will open in April in Tanger Five
Oaks Factory Outlet Mall in Sevierville, across
from The Chop House.
This is the greatest invention," Connor says

"This is the greatest invention," Connor says of his mobile phone. He's walking around the outside of The

Chop House in Sevierville with the cell phone pressed to his ear. Still smiling, he walks out of the sunshine into the dark interior of The Chop House.

After a quick tour of the kitchen where Chef Tony Watson is fretting over steaks with too much fat on them, Connor is bounding to the front of the eatery to help a guest buy gift

Finally taking a seat in one of the redwood booths, Connor talks about competing with himself at Tanger Five Oaks.

"There is a chance we could cannibalize the other restaurant, but we have had lines out of the door here," he said. "Connors' should complement it, not compete against it."

If the new restaurant is successful, Knoxville may get one in 2002, Connor said. Connor's restaurant career began in 1978, when he was attending the University of Tennessee and took a job as a waiter at Jolly

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#### Connor Concepts

QUALITY DINING, GUEST-OBSESSED SERVICE

ou're hungry and you're looking for a totally satisfying dining experience—a premium steak, a 14-ounce pork chop, fresh seafood, or maybe a uniquely prepared salad—your first thought should be a Connor Concept restaurant. With their philosophy of



only the highest-quality ingredients and guest-obsessed service, the Chop House, Chops Grill and Connors restaurants offer you a great range of tantalizing choices.

President and CEO Mike Connor has been in the restaurant business since the mid-1970s. After an early stint with the Steak & Ale restaurant group, Mike was co-founder and president of Grady's in the early '80s. He brought many of his top executives to the Connor Concept team, including vice president Bo Connors, Mike's brother, and Brian Keyes. Executive chef Tony Watson, who is responsible for developing the wide range of menus, also heralds from the Grady's group. Kevin Thompson, a vice president, is concept director of Chop's Grill and Regas Restaurant.

There are now Chop House restaurants in Knoxville, Kingsport, Chattanooga, Sevierville, Lexington, Kentucky, and Dayton, Ohio. In a relaxed, casual atmosphere, diners can choose from heavily aged steaks and chops, including the popular 14ounce pork chop. For information, call 531-2467 (Knoxville) or 774-1991 (Sevierville).

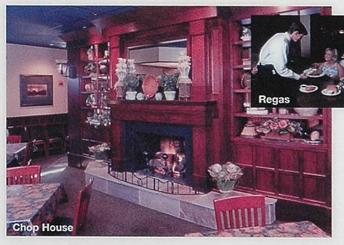
Chops Grill in Knoxville, the slightly more casual spin off of Chop House, features more sandwiches and daily blue-plate specials such as pot roast, crab cakes, and baked Boston Schrod. Like in all Connor restaurants, everything is made fresh. For more information, call 690-2345. A second Chops Grill is planned for Chapman Highway in early 2003.

The newest restaurant, Connors in Sevierville, features an extensive menu, with steaks, fresh uniquely prepared fish, chicken and salads. Choose from lobster and crab bisque, baked sea scallops, rattlesnake shrimp and grits (with Cajun sausage), a rich seafood casserole; or a half chicken roasted with Italian seasonings. Desserts at Connor's are made-from-scratch: bananas Foster, crème Brulee, and strawberry shortcake with fresh whipped cream, and made-on-site vanilla-bean ice cream.

For more information about Connor's, call 428-1991.

No matter which Connor Concept restaurant you choose, you can be sure of leaving with a satisfied smile. "We remember the good old days when food preparation and service knew no shortcuts; when fresh, natural ingredients were used in consistently preparing the highest quality food," says Mike Connor. "We have committed ourselves to creating and preserving casual-dining restaurants that exemplify these old principles in a fresh, young way. The same is true of our catering services."







WEDNESDAY MORNING, June 9, 1999

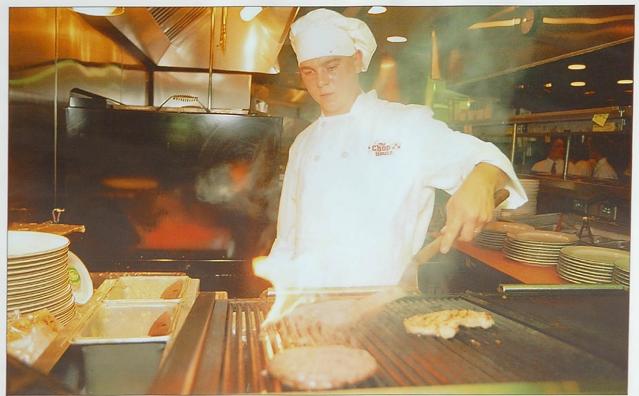
# The Knoxville News-Sentinel's EIGHBORS

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COMMUNITY NEWS

SEVIERVILLE

## Chop House 'steaks' its claim to fame - Page S2



Margaret Bentiage/News-Sentinel staff

Grill Chef Anthony Foister cooks up some orders at The Chop House at the Five Oaks Factory Outlet Mall in Sevienville. The restaurant opened its doors on Memorial Day.