

# Cowley's On Time For Grand Opening

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After being closed since October, Cowley's Old Village Inn is on target to re-open its doors on February 24.

"It's on schedule and under budget," said Greg Cowley, co-owner of Cowley's.

Aside from minor structural work, such as tiling the floors and installing the ceilings and kitchen equipment, as well as the bar furniture, which is slated to arrive from Dublin soon, co-owner Greg Cowley is concentrating his efforts on training his new staff, booking the entertainment and making sure patrons have a place to park.

In addition to family members and some former employees, Cowley has hired about 50 new staff members whom he will start training on February 17. He also hired Mike Howell as the restaurant's new general manager, as well as Chef David Rycerz from Disney.

"My labor budget is very different," said Cowley in reference to a large increase in his payroll.

In order to avoid any parking problems, Cowley has leased the Masonic Temple parking lot and has hired a valet service company. The lot can accommodate at least 25 cars. Any overflow will be re-directed to other areas in the downtown.

"We procured the lot when we started construction," said Cowley who said that his restaurant will have a dining capacity for 75 people downstairs and 175 to 200 people upstairs. "It is something that we decided to do to make sure our business neighbors are not inconvenienced."

Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss is not concerned about parking either. He said that the Cowley fam-

ily has taken care of that by spending about \$50,000 to mitigate parking issues.

"The owners (Cowley family) are going the extra mile to try to alleviate the problem and be proactive by anticipating any parking problems that may arise. We're not going to know any results until after they open," said Goss, who added that people may have to park a little farther and walk.

"This is something that we have to sit back and watch and see how it's going to unfold," said Goss.

Goss also said that parking problems may actually prove to be a good thing for downtown Farmington as it

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will attract more pedestrian traffic.

"It's going to be a great draw for the north side of Grand River," said Goss. "It's going to induce pedestrian traffic and make it a more walkable community."

Some of Cowley's business neighbors are also taking a wait-and-see approach.

Skip Rosenthal, owner of Books Abound, who is located next door to Cowley's, doesn't think parking overflow will affect his business.

"People walk much farther when they go to a mall. Sometimes the Civic

Theatre fills up and I haven't heard anybody complain about parking. There are parking spaces around," said Rosenthal. "People who come to our stores find a way to come here."

Dennis Page, owner of Page's Restaurant, is also waiting to see how the parking situation will unfold.

"I am going to wait and see what's going to happen. I am not concerned," said Page.

In anticipation of large crowds, Cowley said that he will have a soft opening on February 24 before he heavily markets the restaurant in March. A charity black tie event will tentatively be held April 1.

The Cowley family has taken great precautions in planning every detail of their restaurant to make sure that it is as authentically Irish as possible, said Cowley.

Open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the 7,000 square foot restaurant/bar will offer fine-dining in a non-smoking atmosphere downstairs and a typical Irish pub environment upstairs.

Entertainment will range from traditional Irish music, featuring Blackthorn to easy listening, soft rock and possibly jazz and blues.

The biggest challenge in rebuilding his establishment has been space and trying to build a two story building in a cramped area, according to Cowley.

"The city has been great. Businesses have been very good to us," said Cowley. "It's been a family experience. We're taking the business to the next level. My parents are very excited and anxious to see it go to the next generation and progress... We're taking our ethnic heritage and making sure that it shows up in the product that we're providing."