

# Japanese sushi restaurant to open in Phoenix Building

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It's two for the price of one when a new contemporary restaurant will open in downtown Beloit.

People will get their fill of Japanese food and be able to watch as chefs prepare it, all in a relaxing environment when Zen Sushi & Grill opens this summer in the Phoenix Building on Grand Avenue.

"We want to give them, Beloit, a little Asian-Japanese culture, how we dine there and how we feel there," said the restaurant's co-owner Brian Park. "So it's not just about good food, but how you eat well, healthy."

The restaurant, which has a target opening date of July 1, will feature both a sushi bar as well as Robata grills, or Japanese-style charcoal grills, where chefs will be cooking up meats and fish out in the restaurant. Park said part of the reason for doing this was because he wanted to most efficiently use the space in the restaurant, but also because of the growing demand for restaurants like these.

"This is a very big trend in the bigger cities like New York and Chicago," the Chicago native said. "I think this is why we are getting it here because there's hibachi tables everywhere, but that's not healthy because they use a lot of butter and oil."

He said that serving healthy food was a large part of he and his partner Peter Hur's concept. Park said the plan is to use local vegetables and products as much as possible, working with local vendors to support businesses in the area.

"Our philosophy is food that we can make that we can feed our family, to have people trust that it is very clean, safe and quality," Park said. "Because our menu is not going to be extensive, it's going to be seasonable, and it will be top quality whatever that is."

Park added that with nearly two decades in the restaurant business he knows which fish to order



## Ready for sushi?

Brian Park stands in front of the Phoenix Building Tuesday where he will be opening a new restaurant called Zen Sushi & Grill. The restaurant will feature a sushi bar as well as Robata grills, or Japanese-style charcoal grills. Park said he and his business partner Peter Hur hope to offer great food in a relaxing environment when they open this summer.

during what season to offer the highest quality of food. He said there will also be a wide variety of sake wines and local wines at the inside bar. During the summer months, there will be additional seating on the patio off the side of the restaurant.

Dan Barkes, vice president of the Midwest Region for Hendricks Commercial Properties, LLC, said the idea to bring in a sushi restaurant to the Phoenix Building came from a 2012 survey at the farmer's market. A vast majority of people said they would like to see a sushi restaurant come to the city. Park had already been catering for Diane Hendricks for many years, so it seemed like a perfect fit to bring he and his business partner into the fold.

Park said he and his partner's philosophy is three-fold: ambiance, service and quality. He said staff will be carefully trained to ensure each guest's experience. He added that he and Hur plan to approach local schools like Blackhawk Technical College and Beloit College to seek out the approximately 15 employees they will need on staff.

He said he hoped to offer the community something different — great food, great service and entertainment in a relaxed environment. He said the goal for the restaurant was to be part of the city.

“We're like a neighbor, we know the customers and who has a baby,” Park said. “We want to introduce the food, who we are and what we do and become a part of Beloit.”