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Three new restaurants coming to The Legends

By JOYCE SMITH
The Kansas City Star

First, Steve Schussler jazzed up Kansas City, Kan., with a 125-foot-long Argentinosauros.

Now, he's bringing in custom motorcycles and gourmet hot dogs.

Schussler, founder of the **Rainforest Cafe** chain and creator of the \$15 million **T-Rex** restaurant concept in **The Legends at Village West**, along with partner **RED Development**, has approval for three new restaurants at the shopping center. The operations are scheduled to open by December at Interstate 435 and State Avenue.



Orange County Choppers America's RoadHouse has a "bikes, blues and barbecue" theme.

"T-Rex is doing very, very well and all kinds of things are opening there," Schussler said. "There are two more hotels, casino, housing developments. Timing is everything."

The three restaurants are expected to cost \$12 million but will receive \$4.9 million in sales tax revenue bonds from the roughly \$265 million in STAR bonds that were originally authorized and issued to finance Village West. Schussler had previously been offered \$8.5 million in STAR bonds for the T-Rex project, according to Doug Bach, deputy county administrator. The \$4.9 million in bonds will go toward special amenities like motorcycle

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memorabilia, animatronics and custom motorcycles.

"Our direction on the project has been to continue to bring in destination development and increase traffic, and we feel these projects from Steve Schussler do that," Bach said. "We're excited about this opportunity."

The three new restaurant concepts:

•**Orange County Choppers America's RoadHouse:** an 8,000-square-foot restaurant with a "bikes, blues and barbecue" theme with motorcycles on turnstiles. There will be a patio the length of the building, and home-style comfort foods such as meat loaf and roasted-in-the-husk corn on the cob will be served.

Antique jukeboxes and motorcycles — some restored, some junkyard bikes, some customized by Orange County Choppers — will be inside. It also will have a memorial display for Sept. 11, as Orange County Choppers does in its headquarters in Orange County, N.Y.

The restaurant is partly named after the custom chopper operation, along with its hit TV show "American Chopper." Its stars — Paul Teutal Sr. and his sons, Paul Teutal Jr. and Mikey Teutal — will be featured and plan to visit often.

•**Hot Dog Hall of Fame:** A 2,500-square-foot operation serving gourmet hot dogs — including two-foot-long dogs and turkey dogs — with a variety of mustards, plus sausages, dumplings, and nine kinds of french fries, including eggplant. It also will have antique jukeboxes along with "Coney Island"-type hot dog memorabilia, and a video loop of people eating hot dogs from around the world and from different eras.

•**Pizza Market:** A 3,000-square-foot "Italian market and wine and pizza place" will offer Italian staples and wine for sale, as well as New York-style pizza in a Brooklyn Italian market decor.

"All three are built specifically around the family, everything from the restrooms to chairs and tables built for children to community tables where three or four families can share together," Schussler said.

The RoadHouse will take the former **Hash House A Go Go** space, while the Hot Dog Hall of Fame and Pizza Market will be next door, sharing a kitchen.

They will join Schussler's T-Rex, which opened in mid-2006 with animatronic dinosaurs, cascading waterfalls, ice caves and bubbling geysers.

While many theme restaurants have failed because they concentrate on the concept and not enough on the product, Schussler, president and chief executive officer of **Schussler Creative Inc.** in Golden Valley, Minn., said his customers come once for the "wow" factor but come back for the food and quality service.

In mid-2007 he teamed with Kansas City's RED Development — developers of The Legends — to invest in and roll out destination dining and entertainment venues. A T-Rex is scheduled to open this fall at **Disney World** in Orlando.

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