

J&P expanding, new restaurant on hold

by Tonya Richardson

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Frank Illiano, owner of New York J&P Pizza, will not open an upscale restaurant this year in the soon-to-be-built Ridgeville Plaza. Illiano said that he does not have enough time to open a new restaurant.

"I want to spend time with my kids and my wife," Illiano said.

He also said that money was not an issue for delaying the restaurant. With the expansion on J&P Pizza to be completed on Monday and the Ridgeville Plaza, Illiano says he just does not have time.

J&P Pizza opened in Mount Airy in 1989. It expanded in December 1993 because it had outgrown its original space. Five years later, Illiano is expanding again to accommodate private parties.

"There's no place to have parties (in Mount Airy)," Illiano said.

The new addition should accommodate between 70 and 100 people, Illiano said. Another bonus is that people won't have to reserve weeks in advance to have a party like many other places.

The Ridgeville Plaza, on Ridgeville Boulevard, which will break ground at the end of July, will occupy 16,000 square feet. Illiano said that various offices and businesses will occupy the plaza. A lawyer has already rented space in the plaza. Leano's Pizza, which will feature carry-out and delivery, will also have a spot in the plaza. The upscale restaurant was supposed to open upstairs.

Illiano is well-known throughout the community. He has donated food for the fire department's Italian Night. The Rotary Club has used J&P's facilities for the past seven years to have its Super Bowl parties and to raise money.

Illiano is also involved with elementary schools in the area.

He has been to Green Valley Elementary School for the past four years. He teaches the students how to make pizza, then they get to eat the pizza. He also tells the students about running a business, such as what it takes and how to deal with employees.

"I like to work with kids to sure they get off on the right foot," Illiano said.

Illiano also donated food to the Linganore Band Boosters for one of their fundraisers. They raised about \$11,000.

Illiano, originally from

Naples, Italy, said that supporting the community is very important to him. When he was a child and played sports, there was no one in the community to support them. There was no one to buy uniforms. He wants it to be different for children in this