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Local BBQ joint plans fall opening for York Co. location at former 'Pop's' site

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By: Anthony Sabella

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YORK COUNTY, Va. — It was big news two years ago: Longtime York County favorite [Pop's Drive-In was closing](#), and owners the Allen family had offered to sell the property to another local family business, QDaddy's Pitmaster BBQ.

[The sale went through](#) and then...the property sat.

QDaddy's co-owner and "Head Pitmaster" Jesse Witten says it took over a year to get the plans together and proper permits from the county.

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"We really spent our time to make sure everything was perfect before we took it to the county. And then the county realized this has to be perfect," he said.

QDaddy's is taking over for Pop's Drive-In, which spent decades at the busy corner of George Washington Highway and Denbigh Boulevard in Grafton. It'll be the Witten family-owned barbecue joint's third location, joining QDaddy's restaurants in Smithfield and Wakefield.

In January, Witten says construction finally began.

"Things are happening. We're excited," he told News 3 in front of the growing structure of steel and brick.

QDaddy's York County will have a dining area and serving counter that's similar to its other locations. It'll also include several smokers for the restaurant's popular barbecue dishes.

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Witten says this location will also have QDaddy's first drive-thru.

“This is the most traffic we’re going to have and we plan on capitalizing on that,” he said.

Throughout the construction process, there's also been an emphasis on local. Witten says the architect for the site is from down the street and wood beams that will criss-cross the ceiling are from a tree on a nearby property.

Most of the old "Pop's" building has been torn down, save for white-painted bricks in the walls.

“The building had been constructed in phases and there was all these little additions that were kinda mismatched together,” said Trey Witten, contractor and owner of Tidewater Pro Build. “Asbestos was in the building.”

But he says they're saving what they can.

They're also keeping it in the family. Trey is Jesse's brother and has built every QDaddy's location. They and four other siblings are involved in one family business or the other.

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"We all enjoy working together. Jesse is practically my best friend and so are my other two brothers. To see them everyday, it's actually great," said Trey.

You could say it's a labor of love and of family legacy, not only for the Wittens, but for the Allen's and Pop's too.

[We hope to put] our best foot forward and take care of the community the same way that Pop's did it," said Jesse. "We hope to honor that legacy and continue it by being a small, family-owned...and hopefully, town favorite."

Jesse says he still doesn't have an exact opening date, but expects to open the York County location sometime this fall.

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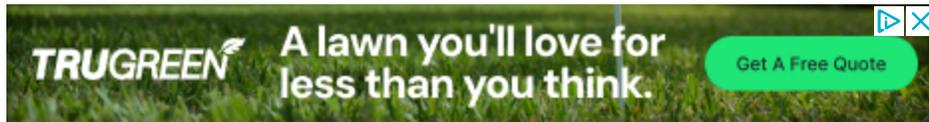


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