

## **IHOP Announces Restaurant Location in Durant**

IHOP, one of America's favorite restaurants for breakfast, lunch and dinner is preparing to open in Durant.

Officials with International House of Pancakes (IHOP) have announced that they are planning to open their next area restaurant location in the Durant Town Center development, at University Avenue and Westside Drive.

"This is a great announcement, and we welcome IHOP to our community", said Mayor Jerry Tomlinson. "Our citizens have been asking for new national sit-down dining restaurants for years and an IHOP specifically".

Owned and operated by franchisee Rima Hakim from Dallas, the IHOP restaurant is expected to open for business by the end of this year. While best known for pancakes and traditional breakfast favorites, IHOP will feature a complete lunch and dinner menu that is contemporary but not trendy, according to an IHOP media release. Guests who visit the new IHOP will see significant changes – including a new and inviting décor that emphasizes the heritage of IHOP, and a new menu with an enhanced focus on lunch and dinner choices. Durant area residents will also be able to call ahead and order any item on the menu via the "IHOP'n Go" takeout menu.

Hakim said the restaurant will employ around 60 people – mostly from the Durant area. "We feel the people of Durant will be our neighbors, and we're going to do everything we can to make sure that every one of our guests leaves happy", Hakim was quoted in the media release. To better serve today's busy lifestyles, plans are for the restaurant to be open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week after the first two weeks of operation.

Durant Industrial Authority Executive Director, Tommy Kramer, said that "Despite the national economic development downturn, there are good things happening in Durant and IHOP is a dynamic part of the ongoing development effort and an exciting addition to our community's dining opportunities."

City Manager Jim Dunegan noted that "many hours of work have gone into making IHOP happen here, especially through the efforts of local investor/developer Allen Wheeler working with the City to obtain a new Hwy 75 off-ramp at this location." He added that "even with the current economic situation, there is still plenty of interest in our community from national restaurants and retailers, and the new Durant Town Center development offers a variety of ready-to-build lot sizes to attract them."