

Developer listened to tenants to improve plaza

Starting a small business is always tough. Starting up a family restaurant is even tougher. Trust me, when my husband and I started Randy's Restaurant



ANDREA COLE

nearly 30 years ago, we knew it would take long hours and lots of hard work to be successful. What we weren't prepared for were all the distractions beyond our control. Dealing with change is inevitable, but it's difficult. In the early 1990s, our restaurant was doing well even though we only had space for about 100 customers. (We now have space for 200.) We heard that a company called the Pederson Group had come in to manage the property at Hayden and Chaparral roads and planned to redevelop the area. We immediately had our doubts. As

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a family-owned business, we rely on the surrounding community for much of our clientele. Always the skeptic, I was concerned that Jim Pederson was looking to make a quick buck and didn't fully understand that our restaurant was a lifeline of the neighborhood. Thankfully, my doubts were quickly erased.

An opportunity occasionally comes along that can change a business for the better. For Randy's Restaurant, our opportunity came in the form of the Pederson Group. We owe much of our success to our loyal customers, and we

have always tried to support them as they support us.

When the Pederson Group stepped in and began renovations, our concern was not only for Randy's, but for the neighborhood, too.

MY TURN

At the time, this shopping center was on life support and aging quickly. Randy's was tucked into the eastern corner of the plaza, where Safeway now resides.

Pederson and his team persuaded us (which wasn't easy) that moving our restaurant to the northeastern corner of the property would double our capacity and be a cornerstone to the ex-

tensive remodeling effort that now is Chaparral Plaza. By listening to our concerns, the Pederson Group helped rejuvenate and transform this area.

The plaza has generated hundreds of jobs. What once was an aging patch of asphalt is now a gathering place where people are proud to work and shop. The relocation has helped us reach more customers. Chaparral Plaza celebrates its 15th anniversary this year as Randy's Restaurant stream towards its 30th birthday in 2011.

It is easy to misjudge a company like the Pederson Group, and every small-business owner secretly worries about change. But we know our restaurant and our neighborhood have been rejuvenated because of the Pederson Group, and for that we are thankful.

Since 1981, Andrea Cole and her husband, Randy, have owned and operated Randy's Restaurant and Ice Cream near Hayden and Chaparral roads.