

Rocket Bowls To Soon Open First Location In Edwardsville After Greenville Success

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GREENVILLE – Rocket Bowls restaurant will soon open its first location in Edwardsville.

Rocket Bowls restaurant was launched as a test concept of St. Louis restaurateur Eric Heckman in February 2020 at The SMART Center on the square in Greenville, Illinois. Deeming the launch a great success, even amidst a pandemic and dining restrictions for restaurants.

Eric Heckman, a Saint Louis restaurant entrepreneur, became connected with Greenville University when he was invited to speak to upperclassmen in a Professional Business Leadership class. There he was introduced to the concept of the SMART Center, which was under construction. The idea of a place that could launch businesses and train students at the same time intrigued him.

Heckman decided The SMART Center would be the perfect place to try a new concept, and Rocket Bowls was born. Rocket Bowls operated within the confines of the COVID-19 Pandemic throughout much of the year, yet the city of Greenville and the surrounding area embraced the concept warmly. Rocket Bowls offered call-in ordering, pickup, and delivery, when in-person dining was prohibited in the state.

Throughout the summer, items were added to expand the menu based on customer feedback. In its time in Greenville, Rocket Bowls has employed approximately 10 students, many of whom were international and could not leave the country when the campus was shut down in March.

“I am so appreciative to the community of Greenville for embracing this new concept and supporting me in starting my business. Forever will Greenville be known as the launch place for Rocket Bowls,” says owner Eric Heckman. The SMART Center was developed as a partnership between Greenville University and the City of Greenville for entrepreneurship, community engagement, education, and economic growth. “We are proud that the Rocket Bowls concept became our first restaurant launch together and we envision launching more restaurants in the future, both in Greenville and beyond,” said Elaine McNamara, Director of The SMART Center.

President Suzanne Davis, who spearheaded The SMART Center concept with the City of Greenville indicates an appreciation for what Rocket Bowls has accomplished.

"Our students who worked for Rocket Bowls observed firsthand the launch of a business from the ground floor. Even more impressive, they learned how to innovate by launching a business during a pandemic! We appreciate the partnership we have had with Eric in this venture. We thank him for the mentorship he has provided our students, and we wish him all success."

Rocket Bowls will depart The SMART Center on December 18th.

Rocket Bowls will open in Edwardsville in late January or early February.