

Scott Chappelle Discusses How Strathmore Real Estate Group Continues to Open Restaurants During the Pandemic

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-- The restaurant and hospitality industries have faced steep challenges in 2020 as lockdowns and social distancing have completely changed the way that companies must approach both customers and storefronts. Strathmore Real Estate Group's Riverview 14 Entertainment District, located in Gibsonton, Florida shows a clear example of how restaurants can work together to stay open while meeting local requirements.

This group of eateries, including Rosemary Grill, the GDX14 Features Gastropub, Zaxby's, McAlister's Deli, and Four Stacks Brewery, has welcomed back customers with a combination of new policies and setups.



Scott Chappelle Strathmore Development

"The local market has been very supportive and despite a few bumps in the road everyone is making headway," says [Scott Chappelle, President of Strathmore Real Estate Group](#).

"Hillsborough County is experiencing phenomenal growth, which in turn is driving the demand for new retail, especially food options".

Riverview 14 is well-equipped to take advantage of that customer support: The development, which still has two lots currently open, was built in Hillsborough County within the Tampa submarket of Gibsonton, Florida while enjoying close proximity to the I-75 corridor. The restaurants located within the Riverview 14 lot were innovative in their approach to reopening despite concerns regarding COVID-19. Effective tactics utilized by various restaurants include:

Limiting POS activity: Point of sale options can be redesigned to limit traffic and the number of surfaces [touched. Scott Chappelle says Strathmore Development](#) has seen creative restaurants limit indoor foot traffic and lines by moving their POS options right to the front door.

Marking floors for social distancing: Sometimes it's not possible to avoid lines when ordering food, waiting for the restroom, or waiting outside for reservations to open up. In these cases, restaurants like Cracker Barrel (which has an establishment in the Strathmore Development) are marking floors and adding signs to make it clear where people should stand while waiting to minimize contact.

Spacing out tables and limiting capacity: Tables also need to be spaced out to meet distancing regulations, which requires new creative ideas for designing an updated restaurant floor plan. Restaurants can also take advantage of smaller tables, and block off sections of long tables to find better seating options.

Moving seating outdoors: The Strathmore Real Estate Group has also seen restaurants successfully move much of their seating outdoors, opening up sidewalks, backlots, and owned parking spots so that people have more options for seating. This also gives customers more options about where they prefer to sit.

Wipe-down and hand-washing policies: New policies require thorough cleaning of all surfaces after contact with approved cleaners. This includes number pads, seats, tables, or menus that customers may have used. Wait staff should be provided with improved cleaning equipment to help assist in this, while other restaurants prefer to leave cleaning stations at tables. Older menus can also be replaced with wipeable versions, and restaurants are encouraging customers to use digital menus available online.

Shutting down certain high-risk activities in the restaurant: Restaurants like Cracker Barrel have also chosen to shut down certain activities as well as removing salt and pepper shakers so that contact issues aren't a [problem. Scott Chappelle says Strathmore Development](#) has also seen other restaurants take new approaches to toys and child seating to help reduce the chances of infection.

Scott Chappelle explains Strathmore Development has seen more than 51,000 people moved into the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater metropolitan area last year, earning the ninth spot on the Census's Top 10 Metropolitan Areas in Numeric Growth: 2017 to 2018 list.

This growth, powered by new arrivals moving to the area, shows promise for the future development of the area, which Strathmore Real Estate Group believes will bring in more business opportunities. Currently, the Strathmore Development Group has six other retail and multi-family living projects in development within the state.

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