

'Turtle' plans expansion in Southern Maryland

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Columbia, MD - With a longtime location in the Southern Maryland region preparing to go in a different direction, the principals of a successful sports bar franchise already have an eye out for new opportunities. During a Feb. 9 telephone interview with TheBayNet.com, The Greene Turtle President and CEO Bob Barry briefly lamented the decision of the current Prince Frederick location's franchisee to not sign another contract. "It was a very good ride," said Barry of the 10-year partnership with franchisee Steven Cooper at The Greene Turtle (TGT) in the Prince Frederick Shopping Center. Barry said it was "unfortunate" that Cooper did not wish to meet the company's evolving standards going forward. Instead, Cooper has announced plans to rename the Prince Frederick location "Calvert Tap House" and create a new menu, additionally serving products from local breweries. The current Prince Frederick location of The Greene Turtle will close briefly sometime after St. Patrick's Day, reopening shortly under its new name.

Barry said TGT officials are currently looking at three sites in the Tri-County area as potential locations for new franchises. The potential locations are in the Waldorf-Brandywine area. He added that there is also a location in Leonardtown "that we're very excited about." Barry stated his company is looking at a new location in Central Calvert County that would be within a two-mile radius of the current Prince Frederick "Turtle." He said, "we could be back as early as 2019." The Greene Turtle has a location in La Plata.

The Greene Turtle has grown from one location—an English pub in Ocean City purchased and converted into a sports bar by some college chums—to over 50 locations in seven states and Washington, DC. The Greene Turtle Prince Frederick came into existence in 2008 as the brand's star began a meteoric rise. In 2010 Entrepreneur Magazine named TGT the fastest-growing sports bar franchise in the United States.

Barry explained that in order to make sure TGT remains tops in its niche, "a new fresh look" is needed. Among the innovations that will be implemented—"more interactive screens" and "a little higher quality furniture." While Barry said TGT intends to remain "family friendly," the added audio visual packages and new look and feel of the furniture will attract the younger generation.

Changes are also coming to TGT's kitchens, as Barry explained more "fresh, never frozen" entrees—including crab, fish and chicken—will be part of the fare served to diners. "We've taken it up a notch," said Barry.

The Greene Turtle has earned a reputation for occasional live entertainment in Calvert County. "We still continue to have live entertainment," said Barry, who added that the band "must not conflict with a big game."

Barry points out proudly that The Greene Turtle has found success in states like New York and New Jersey where "a lot of sports bars compete with us." Of the competition and efforts to develop a loyal customer base, Barry stated, "it's fun. We still see customers walking around with Greene Turtle T-shirts. It's still a fun and engaging restaurant."

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