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## **Simply Subs expands to Berlin Mall**

By Daniel Staples

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BERLIN — Construction crews are busy at the space in the Berlin Mall where Ed Lacross, the owner of Simply Subs, will open the third branch of his sandwich, pizza and salad empire.

Lacross said he hoped to have his newest location operating in a couple of weeks. He plans to offer mall clientele the same sub and salad menu and pizza-by-the-slice selections as he does at the other two locations — on Main Street in Barre and on Route 302 in Berlin.

**“We’re trying to serve the community the best we can,”** said Lacross, a native of Barre who opened his first restaurant in 1992.

**“I really enjoy doing what I do and I enjoy the people,”** said Lacross, who has been connected with the food service industry since his high school days working at **Dell’s pizzeria.**

Lacross said that he believes he has been successful with his first two restaurants because he offers good food that people can afford.

**“It’s a blue-collar community and we give them blue-collar food for a good price,”** said Lacross.

Lacross said that moving into a space at the mall creates a good opportunity for people outside the area to see what Simply Subs has to offer. He said he hopes the presence of the restaurant also will help draw more people to the mall.

One of the reasons that Lacross has been able to open two new branches in just over a year may have something to do with the 90 to 100 hours a week he puts into the effort.

**“You have to** be really devoted to put in the kind of hours it takes and you have to **have a good crew,”** said Lacross, who added that he hasn’t had time to get out in his boat lately.

Lacross said that his business and menu, which offers almost 100 items including specialty pizzas, subs, soups, salads and sides, have grown over the years because of customer input.

**"You have to listen to both the positive and the negative," said Lacross.**

Lacross said the new location also will help keep busy his staff of more than 30.

**"I'm committed to my employees and they are committed to the business," said Lacross.**

Lacross said that at the new location, as with the Route 302 store, pizzas will be made at the Main Street restaurant where both a conveyor and traditional oven are used to bake the pizzas. The finished pizzas will then be brought up to mall where they will be sold by the slice.

**"You have to really enjoy food to do the work," said Lacross. "But it's an enjoyable business because people do enjoy the food you prepare."**

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