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Papa John's Pizza will open 30 new locations in metro Detroit, two near Wayne State

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Contributing Writer

Papa John's International, Inc. is set to open a total of 30 new locations in the Detroit area, including four that will be open by the end of this year. Two locations will be near Wayne State University.

The partnership with the pizza chain Alpha Restaurant Group, made earlier this month, is expected to create 400 jobs.

"We saw a great opportunity to build a relationship with students," said Gracemary Allen, general director of marketing and communications for Alpha Restaurant Group.

A Papa John's will open near the WSU Detroit Medical Center and the other will be built at Cass Avenue and Canfield Avenue. Both are expected to be open for business by August.

"We looked at the marketplace," Allen said. "We felt Papa John's suited as a commitment to the city of Detroit."

The first Papa John's will open this June at Seven Mile Road and Livernois Avenue near the University of Detroit-Mercy and Marygrove College.

"I think it's a plus for the community," said Edward King, assistant director of professional development at the WSU School of Business Administration. "College students love pizza. College students can work there and make extra money.

"They're going after the college market. Little Caesar's left. Pizza Hut picked it up. It's not the location. I think it's the quality of the pizza."

King says the new restaurants will have little to no financial effect on the other pizzerias around Wayne State. The WSU campus already features a Pizza Hut, Domino's, and Pizzeria Venti, located underneath The Towers and several others near campus.

Freshman Adonis Flores said a Papa John's is a good idea.

"Why not go to Cass and Canfield? What students prefer is having a pizzeria on their way (to campus)," he said.

Four locations are expected to open in Detroit by the end of the year. Twenty-six other Papa John's pizzerias will open within the next six years across metro Detroit.

The operations, management, staffing and training for the 30 new locations will be handled by The Alpha Restaurant Group. Papa John's will be a consultant and will partner on marketing initiatives for the new pizzerias.

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