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## VALPARAISO: Family restaurant to feature stuffed burger

# New Valpo eatery to honor industrial revolution

VALPARAISO | The first of what could be a chain of restaurants saluting the industrial revolution could be open as early as December at the former Brewski's on U.S. 30.

Mike Leeson, owner of Steel Sales and Services Inc. in Lansing and East Chicago, said the theme for the decor of the proposed Industrial Revolution Eatery and Grille is for it to look like the building was frozen in time in 1932 but not focusing on the Depression. Instead, it will focus on "bringing back the good times and saluting America's greatness," he said.

"It's dedicated to the people who protect and build this country," Leeson said. "It will pay homage to a lot of things like innovation, invention and the progress of the industrial revolution. I've been a critic of restaurants for a long time, and I've wondered why nobody has elaborated on the steel work. It's a steel area, and I think people in the business would appreciate a different flair."

He said the highly detailed construction will have "ornate, old school steelwork" that will make the building look like a factory frozen in time while it was still under construction. The look includes sculptures of men astride steel girders "working" on the roof.

He said the sculptures were on display in New York

City at Ground Zero of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks for six months as a tribute to those who built the twin towers and who cleaned up the damage.

The artwork was taken on a national tour by the sculptor, who then tried to find a good home for them. Leeson not only found the home the artist wanted, he commissioned additional sculptures for his restaurant. Leeson said the completely redesigned interior will have a working O scale steam train suspended from the ceiling.

"We will build it with the old look and rust it so it will look 100 years old, although it is brand new. I think it will be very special, and it is something a lot of people will have a good feeling after they go into it. Hopefully, it will be inspiring."

Leeson said one of the food features of the restaurant will be stuffed burgers, which are still being developed. The project was presented to the city's Site Review Committee on Tuesday. City Planning Director Craig Phillips said the unique nature of the decor raised some concern over what will happen if the restaurant is forced to close.

"Because it is unique, if they ever have to close, what measures can they take to insure the building could be marketed for another use in the future," Phillips said.

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## Lunchtime on top of a Skyscraper

Jon L. Hendricks

Italian-born artist Sergio Furnari installs his sculptures "Lunchtime on top of a Skyscraper" on Monday on top of the Industrial Revolution Eatery and Grille restaurant on U.S. 30 in Valparaiso.

The statues were previously placed at Ground Zero after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.