

Five Guys Burgers and Fries to Open in Watertown Saturday, Jan. 7



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WATERTOWN, N.Y. — The franchisee of Five Guys Burgers and Fries says the Northern Virginia-based casual dining chain will open its doors Saturday, Jan. 7, in City Center Plaza on Arsenal Street.

Entrepreneur William G. Cleary, principal of Clearburger Inc., DeWitt, which operates Five Guys locations in Horseheads, DeWitt, Ithaca, Fairmount and Vestal, said construction on the 5,000-square-foot building that will house the Watertown franchise remains "ahead of schedule," despite initial plans to open in November.

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"We had to wait for (developer Patrick E. Donegan) to erect the building before we could go in there and do interior work," Cleary said. "It took a little longer to start, but once they started it, they put it up real quick."

With construction expected to be completed by the end of the week, the chain's signature red and white wall tiles could be seen from outside the restaurant Wednesday morning as crews worked.

"(Unique Development Companies Inc., Syracuse) is constructing the building," Cleary said. "They do a fantastic job and basically put the buildings up in about 90 days, which is unbelievable."

About 50 employees will be hired after Jan. 1, according to Cleary, while the store's general manager has already been training for about three months in Syracuse.

"The assistants, we've already hired, so we'll probably hire one more," Cleary said. "We'll promote somebody within the crew."

Voted "Best Burger" in the country in 2010 and 2011 by Zagat Survey LLC, Five Guys Burgers and Fries first opened its doors in 1986 in Arlington, Va., before branching outside the Capital Beltway in 2003 when the family-owned company began offering franchise opportunities.