

SWFLA Today

Lawmakers criticize Trump administration rollback of offshore drilling regulations

Samantha Putterman
The Bradenton Herald

Florida lawmakers issued statements Friday opposing the Trump administration's decision to roll back parts of an offshore drilling safety regulation that was put into place in response to the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon disaster.

U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Longboat Key, denounced the administration's announcement.

"Any undermining of these safety protocols is reckless and unacceptable," Buchanan said. "Have we

"This administration wants to turn a blind eye to history just to help their friends in the oil industry."

Sen. Bill Nelson in a statement

learned nothing from the worst environmental disaster in American history? These safeguards should remain in place."

Buchanan led a bipartisan group of 21 Florida law-

makers who sent a letter in January to the administration opposing any rollback of oil rig safety regulations.

Buchanan is a longtime opponent of allowing drilling off Florida's Gulf Coast and has introduced legislation to protect the state's coastlines from oil spills. The Marine Oil Spill Prevention Act, Buchanan says, would extend by five years a ban on oil drilling off much of Florida's Gulf Coast until 2027. The current moratorium, which prohibits oil drilling within 125 miles off most of Florida's Gulf Coast, is set to expire on June 30,

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Restaurants to open in Lee center



In the Know

Tim Aten
Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLA.

Four restaurant concepts that launched in Collier County are part of a retail center that opens this week in south Lee County.

KC American Bistro, Skilletts, Tacos & Tequila Cantina and Thai Udon Café have new locations coming to the first phase of University Village Shops, a Miromar Development property bordering Florida Gulf Coast University on Ben Hill Griffin Parkway near Estero.

The new center will host the second location of KC American Bistro, the third location of Tacos & Tequila and Thai Udon, and the seventh loca-

tion of Skilletts. On Tuesday, Skilletts and Thai Udon are among the first businesses set to open there.

"It's a good group of restaurants looking to expand and grow," said Doug Olson, a principal and senior director of Trinity Commercial Group in Southwest Florida.

The walkable center created to serve the college and surrounding gated communities is 70 percent leased, Olson said, with a third of the tenants planning to move in within a month and a third coming in the next few months. The debut of businesses in the initial 70,000 square feet of University Village Shops will be staggered as unit interiors are built out. The goal is to open most of the retail spaces before fall classes begin at FGCU.

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Lois Ann Riess makes her first appearance in Lee County Court on Sunday via video conference from the Lee County Jail in Fort Myers.

KINFAY MOROTI/FORT MYERS NEWS-PRESS

Riess held in Lee County Jail without bond

Michael Braun

Fort Myers News-Press
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Alleged double homicide suspect Lois Ann Riess will be in Lee County Jail for at least five days without bond after her public defender was granted a pretrial detention hearing for the Minnesota woman.

During Riess' first appearance in Lee County court Sunday, an assistant state attorney said Texas authorities claimed that she had a psychosis and was refusing to take medication.

Wearing a dark green jail smock and standing before a video camera, Riess answered Judge Zachary Gill's questions sparingly and in a quiet, halting voice.

Public defender Justin Venegas asked Judge Gill for the detention hearing as he was given information in the case shortly before the proceedings.

Gill approved the detention hearing, and a date will be set later.

While Venegas was appointed by Gill, Riess also agreed to be screened for a full-time public defender.

Venegas said he had not had enough time to review the case and made motions to delay setting bond for 24 hours and that probable cause was not appropriate.

However, Assistant State Attorney Hamid Hunt-

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TIM ATEN/NAPLES DAILY NEWS

Skilletts breakfast-lunch cafe is set to open its seventh location in University Village Shops adjacent to Florida Gulf Coast University on Ben Hill Griffin Parkway near Estero.

Will former Treasure Coast congressman Murphy run for governor?

Ali Schmitz
Treasure Coast Newspapers
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Patrick Murphy's supporters are floating a trial balloon to see if people would vote for the former Treasure Coast congressman if he ran for governor, he told TCPalm Tuesday.

Murphy, a Democrat, said the poll being conducted by his supporters, whom his spokespeople wouldn't name, doesn't mean he's actually mounting a campaign.

"Some supporters wanted to do a poll, and I didn't say no," Murphy said in a text message to TCPalm. "I certainly didn't say yes to actually running!"

Murphy in January told TCPalm he would not run



Murphy

for any office in 2018, and that any future run likely would be for federal office.

The filing deadline is June 22.

Which party?

The poll also floats potential candidates for lieutenant governor, including former U.S. Rep. David Jolly, a Pinellas County Republican, according to the Tampa Bay Times.

However, lieutenant governor candidates must be a member of their party for at least one year before the state's qualifying deadline, according to a Division of Elections qualifying handbook.

A Murphy-Jolly ticket would have to be run as independents.

Democratic gubernatorial candidates include: former Rep. Gwen Graham; Tallahassee Mayor Andrew

Gillum; former Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine; and Orlando-area entrepreneur Chris King.

Republican candidates include: Florida Agricultural Commissioner Adam Putnam; and Rep. Ron Desantis from Flagler County.

Failed Senate run

Murphy represented Martin, St. Lucie and northern Palm Beach counties in Congress from 2013 to 2016.

He mounted an unsuccessful bid for U.S. Senate against Sen. Marco Rubio in 2016.

Since he lost the election, he has been working for his family's construction company.

He also lectured at Georgetown and Florida International University and founded a nonprofit aimed at encouraging millennials to get more politically involved.

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Other restaurant tenants coming soon include Mellow Mushroom pizzeria, Blue Bistro coffee shop, Poke Fusion, The Shaved Ice Bar and Smoothie King. Additional retailers include F45 Training fitness center, Vanti Nails & Spa and Yoga Lab.

“There are still a handful of opportunities there available,” Olson said.

The shops are part of University Village, a 100-acre mixed-use development that will include off-campus housing and an amenity center connected to FGCU via South Village Boulevard. University Village Shops and The Residences at University Village are the first phase of University Village, which eventually will have a smaller second phase of stores and apartments immediately south of the initial project. An organic grocer is planned to anchor phase two, Olson said.

Skilletts

Skilletts CEO and co-founder Ross Edlund said he is excited about partnering with FGCU. The local breakfast-lunch venture is set to open this week on the same day as Thai Udon and The Shaved Ice Bar.

“That will be a new experience for us to see how well we do with the college,” he said. “We’d like to be the official breakfast place for the university. We want to be more than just a business there.”

With five locations in Collier County, Skilletts opened its first Lee County store in Bonita Springs in 1999. “It’s our busiest store,” Edlund said.

The Skilletts team had been looking for another site in that area. Its 3,856-square-foot restaurant is in the southwestern part of the new center, which delayed its opening a few months because of Hurricane Irma last fall.

“We are away from the maddening crowd. We sort of feel like we have a nice zone,” Edlund said. “We’ve never been in a pedestrian mall before, so we’re excited about it. I think they’ve done a really good job to make it a friendly place.”

The new location for Skilletts, a restaurant group realizing that bacon and



Tacos & Tequila Cantina is planning to open its third location in May at this space in the new University Village Shop near Estero.



Thai Udon Cafe is planning to open its third location May 1 in this space at the new University Village Shop near Estero. PHOTOS BY TIM ATEN/NAPLES DAILY NEWS

eggs are its bread and butter, will feature the same menu as its original locations as well as the same hours, 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily. The interior’s homespun décor and knotty pine paneling will be comparable in size to other Skilletts and include a breakfast bar, patio, open tables, banquette and booth seating, and even the trademark Pioneer Room for more private dining or meetings.

“We hope it is really utilized,” Edlund said. “When you walk in the place you definitely know you’re in a Skilletts. We are sticking with our décor. We are

sticking with what we do, what we know. You’ll know it’s a Skilletts.”

A veteran crew will open the restaurant because many had already been commuting south to other Skilletts. “I’d say two-thirds of our staff were already working for us,” Edlund said.

Continuing its Florida expansion, the next Skilletts is targeted to open in August or September in Cypress Trace, an L-shaped plaza with Stein Mart, Bealls, Ross and even Lucky’s Market coming soon at U.S. 41 and Cypress Lake Drive in Fort Myers, Edlund said. “We will

have one of the only eating establishments in that plaza,” he said.

Thai Udon Cafe

A walkway in University Village Shops separates the outdoor seating of Skilletts from Thai Udon Café.

Thai Udon’s new location follows its debut in 2013 in Magnolia Square at Goodlette-Frank and Pine Ridge roads in North Naples and its second restaurant in 2016 on Fifth Avenue South in downtown Naples.

The local concept created by Adam Satinsky and Khwan Sawai will offer Thai and hot Japanese dishes, but not sushi. The husband-and-wife team has a partner to help them open and operate the third location, which has been in the works for nearly two years.

“I just want to thank the customers that support us. That’s why we have the third one,” said Chef Khwan, a native of Thailand who grew up in a small town near Bangkok.

The chef shares her native inspiration and passion for traditional Thai cuisine as well as some of her own Asian fusion creations with some trendy, easy-to-eat and affordable dishes targeted toward college students. The new Thai Udon will expand on the menu of the first location and offer lunch and dinner 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

One of the selling points for the new center is that it is not predicted to be as seasonal as Naples’ venues, so it may be more consistent year-round, said Satinsky, a cellist for the Naples Philharmonic for more than 20 years.

“I’m very curious to see what the vibe is like there,” he said. “I can’t really tell yet because nothing’s open.”

Tacos & Tequila Cantina

The third Tacos & Tequila is targeted to open the week of May 11 on the center’s eastern edge between the shops and the student apartments.

“We’re hoping. Fingers crossed,” said Kelly Musico who co-owns the growing business with her husband, Aldo Musico, who also owns and operates Aldo’s Ristorante Italiano & Bar in East Naples.

At about 4,300 square feet, the third location is larger than the original

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In the Know

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location at Kings Lake Square in East Naples, but smaller than the second one at The Pavilion in North Naples because it won't have a large retail clothing component. T&T will join the neighboring KC American Bistro and Skillet's from The Pavilion retail center at U.S. 41 and Vanderbilt Beach Road.

"It's fun to see neighbors up there that are neighbors down here. It's very refreshing," Kelly Musico said. "We are so excited to be up there because it is so different for us. We were always in big, anchored plazas. This is more of a community feel, which will be different for us."

Similar to the other locations, the new Tacos & Tequila has garage doors that open to connect the interior dining space to an abundance of outdoor seating.

"We are planning a pergola out there with a lot of foliage and greenery," Musico said. "It's so pretty up there. We sit around this huge fountain overlooking the residential part of the campus."

Despite some differences, expect the same menu, the same interior design and the same rustic furniture. "All done by all the same people. We haven't changed much," Musico said.

That includes the top-selling Americanized offerings such as the Baja fried mahi-mahi taco, the T&T signature taco with crispy fried chicken and the retro Mom's Taco featuring a hard shell stuffed with Ortega-style seasoned ground beef, shredded lettuce, tomato and cheddar cheese.

"We are not trying to compete with the traditional Mexican cuisine," Musico said. "We are putting a fun twist on it and having fun doing it."

KC American Bistro

Keith Casey, chef and owner of KC American Bistro, is shooting for a late October or early November opening of his new restaurant with indoor and outdoor dining on the northeastern edge of University Village Shops.

Continuing to operate his popular dinner-only restaurant in The Pavilion of North Naples as he has since June



KC American Bistro is planning to open its second location this fall in this space at the new University Village Shop near Estero.

TIM ATEN/NAPLES DAILY NEWS

2009, Casey plans to also add lunch and Sundays to his new venture in Lee County. "I'll start with dinner, then add lunch after only about a week," he said.

Although not all of his dining selections change every day, Casey prints KC's menu daily to take advantage of seasonal and local ingredients available. His new restaurant will build upon what he has been able to do in Collier County during the last decade.

"We'll have some more selections because it will be a larger kitchen, so we'll be able to do more of a variety," he said.

After looking for a second location for a couple of years, Casey was impressed with the size and scope of the University Village project and the fact that Miromar Development, which also developed the nearby Miromar Outlets, was behind it.

"When I heard they were building this boutique property there, it attracted me immediately," he said. "One of the things that attracted me, too, is that I believe that area will be less seasonal."

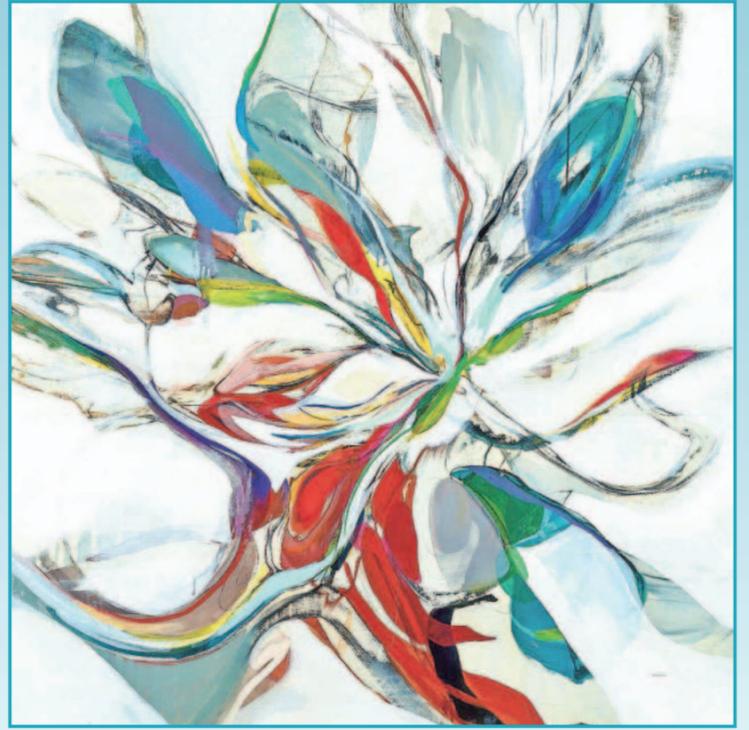
Despite its proximity to FGCU, KC American Bistro is expected to appeal to the residents of nearby gated communities such as Grandezza, Miromar Lakes and Stoneybrook.

"Our focus will continue to be folks who are looking to have a special night out," Casey said.

Have a local question? Email it with your name and city of residence to intheknow@naplesnews.com. Tim Aten's "In the Know" is published every Monday and Wednesday. Like In the Know on Facebook now at [facebook.com/timaten.intheknow](https://www.facebook.com/timaten.intheknow).

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