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For immediate release

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RIPON'S FAVORITE PIZZA RESTAURANT TO GET A NEW LOOK AND DOUBLE ITS SPACE

**Roadhouse renovation is another in a series of projects that will restore
and preserve historic buildings and bring new energy to downtown**

Ripon, Wis. — Roadhouse Pizza, a fixture in downtown Ripon for more than 30 years, begins a major renovation project this week that will more than double the restaurant's space, allowing for greatly expanded seating and new menu items.

The Roadhouse renovation and expansion is another in a series of projects undertaken by Boca Grande Capital, which is committed to revitalizing numerous downtown buildings, preserving Ripon's historic nature and bringing new vitality to the heart of the community. These projects will strengthen existing restaurants and other businesses, attract new businesses, provide new opportunities for people to live and work downtown, and encourage more people to visit Ripon.

"We could not be more excited about moving ahead with these plans," said Jim Connelly, Boca's chairman and chief executive officer. "These projects represent a new chapter in Ripon's long and rich history – a significant new investment in this strong and vibrant community."

Boca is working in partnership with the City of Ripon. "This effort would not be possible without the continuing support and direction we receive from city officials," Connelly said.

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Roadhouse Pizza renovation to begin / Add one

Roadhouse Pizza occupies the building at 102 Watson St., on the city square at the corner of Watson and Jackson Streets. The renovation project will expand the restaurant into the adjoining building at 104 Watson St. The two buildings date to the 1870s, and preserving their historic integrity will be central to the project.

“With the Roadhouse renovation, we are continuing our work to restore the original dignity and historically significant architectural features of these downtown Ripon buildings while also incorporating modern design,” said Jacob Kain, Boca’s vice president of architecture and design.

Among other improvements, the project will include the restoration of windows that were bricked over long ago, particularly on the north side of the building at 102 Watson St., along Jackson St., and also will restore the original hardwood floors in the buildings.

Roadhouse Pizza will remain open throughout construction. The work will begin in the building at 104 Watson St. while restaurant operations continue at 102 Watson. When the work at the 104 building is largely complete, the restaurant will move into the newly renovated space to allow construction to proceed in the building at 102 Watson. The renovation will involve both floors of the two buildings as well as the basement level.

“Construction contractors from the Ripon area will handle the majority of the Roadhouse renovation,” said Lynn Pollesch, vice president of construction management for Boca. The contractors will include: Pollesch Construction, Ripon; Design Specialty Builders, Green Lake; Atomic Plumbing, Ripon; Condon Total Comfort, Ripon; C & S Electric, Ripon; Surface & Surroundings, Ripon; and Jackson Glass, Ripon.

The project will double the number of seats available for dining on the first floor, from the current 52 to 104. In addition, during the warm weather months there will be seating for about 25 people in a new outdoor dining area in front of the restaurant, along Watson St. A second-story deck on the west side of the buildings will provide additional outdoor dining space.

The second floor will feature a large dining room and entertainment venue for live music, comedy and other performances. The room will be available for private parties as well.

The renovation and additional space will allow for a number of creative and exciting additions to the restaurant’s menu.

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Roadhouse Pizza renovation to begin / Add two

“We look forward to offering a variety of pasta dishes and salads,” said Andy Radke, manager of Roadhouse Pizza. “We’ll also have additional options for pizza toppings, and we may even offer a choice in crusts beyond our signature thin-crust pizza.”

There will be full bars on both floors of the newly renovated Roadhouse.

The restaurant is now open from 4 to 9 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. At some point after the renovation, the restaurant may expand its hours, possibly adding lunch service and Monday and Tuesday hours.

The remodeled Roadhouse Pizza will feature free wireless broadband Internet access, using the services of Ripon-based Granite Broadband. “We’ll be encouraging students and others to come with their laptops and combine some work and web surfing with their pizza,” Radke said. “Our customers will have a high-speed connection throughout the restaurant as well as in the outdoor seating areas.”

Speaking of technology, Roadhouse also will work with Granite Broadband, Ripon College, Ripon High School and the Midwest Conference to have college and high school games streamed live on TV screens in the restaurant.

More than 150 area residents reviewed plans for the Roadhouse renovation at open house events held at the restaurant in October and November. “We really wanted to know what customers thought of our design plans,” Kain said. “Those who attended made excellent suggestions, many of which are reflected in our plans.”

Kain said a primary goal of the project was to preserve the fundamental character of the restaurant. “We want Roadhouse to continue to be the friendly, neighborhood, family place that this community has embraced for more than 30 years,” he said.

The building that now houses Roadhouse Pizza, at 102 Watson St., has been a saloon or a restaurant through most of its history. From the time of its construction to Prohibition, it was a saloon that went by four different names: the Charles Kopplin Saloon, the Emil Hass Saloon, the E. Kaiser Saloon and the Dalrympal Saloon.

During Prohibition, it was a piano and music store (Kingsbury Piano, and then Kingsbury Music) and a battery store (Nelson Batteries). Later, it was an ice cream parlor under several names: Ripon Super Ice Cream, Graydon's Super Ice Cream, Chet's Ice Cream and Dick's Dairy Bar.

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Roadhouse Pizza renovation to begin / Add three

About 1959, it became a restaurant called Mill's Grill, then the Maple Lunch Restaurant, and later the Hopp Inn Restaurant. Gus's Pizza Palace opened in the building in the early 1970s, succeeded by Roadhouse Pizza in 1978.

Phase I of the renovation and expansion of Roadhouse Pizza is expected to be finished by Memorial Day, at which time the building at 104 Watson as well as the entire second floor will be open. The full project is expected to be completed by Independence Day. Community members will be invited to events to celebrate completion of both phases of the work.

Other Boca projects downtown are expected to get under way later in the year. The input of area residents will be sought throughout the process, and the community will be kept well informed of Boca's progress.

Boca Grande Capital, with offices at 303 Watson St., is dedicated to bringing new vitality to Ripon's historic downtown. The centerpiece of Boca's efforts will be construction of a world-class inn and spa, to be built on the west side of Watson St. at Blossom St. Boca also plans to establish a National Museum of Republican Presidents in Ripon, the birthplace of the Republican Party.

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