

## INSIDE BUSINESS

# Raising Cane's set to open chicken finger restaurants in Hampton and York County

By Sandra J. Pennecke

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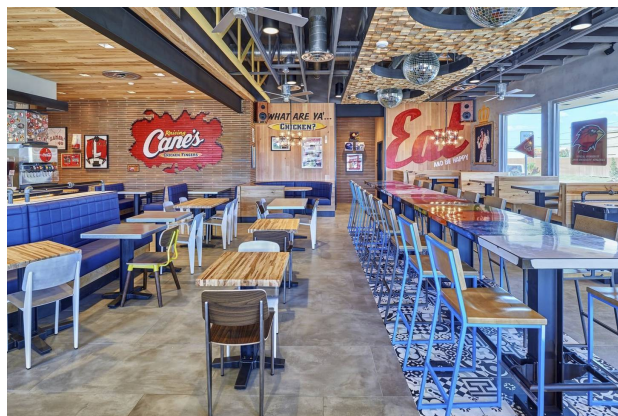


Raising Cane's features chicken finger meals with crinkle-cut fries, coleslaw, Texas toast and its signature Cane's sauce. (Courtesy of Raising Cane's)

Since its founding in 1996, [Raising Cane's](#) has kept its concept simple. Its menu and brand are centered around a classic favorite: chicken fingers.

“We serve what we call a perfect box — quality chicken finger meals, crinkle-cut fries, Texas toast, coleslaw and creamy Cane's sauce,” said Dustin Shearer, Raising Cane's vice president of company restaurants.

Two new roughly 4,000-square-foot Raising Cane's are under construction in Hampton Roads. Each location, featuring a 100-seat dining room and double lane drive-thru, will bring about 150 jobs to the area.



Raising Cane's will open two new locations this fall — one in Hampton and one in York County. (Courtesy of Raising Cane's)

November. The former Ruby Tuesday at that corner site along Victory Boulevard was leveled. Locations in Chesapeake and Norfolk are also on the horizon, he said.

“We’ve been planning to come into the Virginia market — part of our Northeast strategy — for many, many years,” Shearer said. “In terms of company restaurant presence, it’s been a long time coming.”

With a company-owned restaurant in Charlottesville since 2006, franchise locations on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University and one in the Norfolk Navy Exchange, Raising Cane’s was ready to expand into the region.

Its location at Old Dominion University closed earlier this year after running out its agreement with Aramark, Shearer said. Despite close to 1,100 signatures on a petition to keep it open, the location was replaced with a Chick-fil-A.

“We want to grow our own company restaurants in the market, too,” Shearer said. “We’re gearing up to open up over 100 restaurants in the next year, which will be our highest growth year yet.”

Founded by Todd Graves in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, [the restaurant chain was named for his yellow Labrador. The mascot baton has since passed to Raising Cane III.](#) The company now has more than 750 restaurants in 35 states.

“We expect to be really busy,” Shearer said. “There’s been a lot of appetite for Cane’s in the market.”

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