

'The Buck' is back in St. Joseph

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St. Joseph residents can look forward to a somewhat familiar treat this spring, as The Buck makes a “comeback” to the historic downtown area.

The building at 412 State St., estimated to have been built in the late 1800s, has seen its share of transition. At various points in its history, it was a pool hall, a gift shop, and even a confectionary store. Then, for more than 50 years, it was the Silver Dollar Café — casually referred to by its regulars as “The Buck”. When it became Chicago-style martini bar Port 412 in 2009 and 2010, the top-floor apartments were modified into an upper extension of the restaurant, and an outdoor patio was added on, designed for patrons to enjoy a lakeside breeze in the warmer months.

Now, it's being reinstated as The Buck Burgers and Brew, and it promises to offer a new, affordable burgers-and-beer experience at a slightly upscale version of the original Silver Dollar Café. As a brewpub that will specialize in offering Michigan craft beers and food ingredients sourced from local growers, it will be, in a sense, for local people by local people.

A truly local focus is something that owner Ken Kozminksi is committed to. He is a member of the Sustainable Business Forum, a network of businesses whose mission it is to promote best practices that demonstrate environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and social responsibility.

“We're fortunate to [be located within] such a robust agricultural region with quality producers,” said Kozminksi, who plans to take advantage of the area's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs to provide a simple, focused menu featuring locally-grown ingredients. He sees the restaurant as an opportunity to support area farmers and to reinvest in the community.

Kozminksi intends for The Buck to provide an environment that will fulfill a niche within the local community for year-round business, as the Silver Dollar Café historically did. The longtime resident looks forward to bringing the restaurant back to its roots as the family-friendly hangout it was once known and loved for.

The Buck Burgers and Brew will tentatively open mid-April of this year.