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Spring is a time of renewal and revitalization in Warwick

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Spring is a time of renewal and revitalization, and, here in Warwick, we've celebrated the renovation of several commercial properties for new business uses.

St. Patrick's Day marked the grand opening of two businesses. Buffalo Wild Wings, a Minnesota-based chain with more than 900 locations in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, opened its first Rhode Island location at the Warwick Mall, completely transforming space that had been home to another restaurant. Local elected officials, Chamber of Commerce representatives, mall owner Aram Garabedian and I joined dozens of enthusiastic employees and managers to cut the ribbon. More than 100 customers, many of whom had braved the cold for several hours in an effort to be among those to receive free wings for a year, looked on and cheered.

The restaurant, which features a selection of wings, burgers, salads, flatbreads, and other items, has numerous televisions tuned to various sporting events, and jerseys of local high school and college sports teams adorn the walls. Since its opening, Buffalo Wild Wings has been busy - good for the local economy and for the 155 people employed at the location.

March 17 also saw the opening of The Shanty, former home of a longtime favorite Irish Pub. Owner and operator Kara Neisinger, a Johnson & Wales University graduate with a degree in food and beverage management, previously managed several regional upscale establishments and worked for a while in Alaska before returning to New England. The menu, prepared in collaboration with her culinary team of Bekah Yoder and Chris Rattaro, features a variety of American food prepared with locally grown, farm-fresh ingredients. A mix of craft beers as well as traditional and innovative cocktails are also offered. Neisinger's ultimate goal is to provide unparalleled customer service in a "comfortable, 'locals' atmosphere."

Like Neisinger, Anita Kiernan dreamed of one day opening her own business - a dream that was realized with the recent opening of Retail Therapy Beauty Bar, located along the busy Rte. 2 corridor in a storefront that had been vacant for some time. Experienced staff members - eight are presently employed by Kiernan - are on hand to provide hair and makeup services, manicures, pedicures, facials, and other treatments. Clients can purchase skin care products and makeup, and enjoy a light lunch or appetizers and drinks at the café and bar. A number of locally-made products are also offered for sale.

The city is pleased to welcome these new ventures and looks forward to celebrating the addition of more companies to our business landscape in the months to come.

Our Department of Tourism, Culture, and Development maintains a database of commercial space available for sale or lease. I invite you to contact director Karen Jedson at (401) 738-2000, ext. 6402, to learn how we can help your business succeed in our community.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick and the chairman of the RIPTA board of directors.