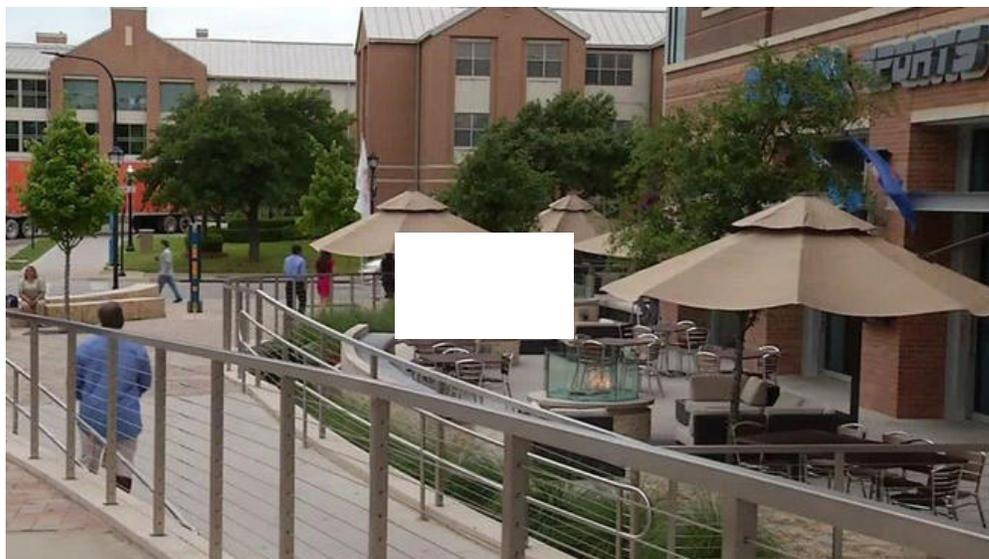


HOME > NEWS > LOCAL

Better Business for Arlington's College Park District

By [Tim Ciesco](#) | Thursday, Jun 5, 2014 | Updated 8:28 PM CDT



Tim Ciesco

It's been a bit of a bumpy start for UT Arlington's College Park District. Since opening in 2012, the \$160 million development has seen four restaurants close. Still, the university insists things are looking up

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the university insists that things are looking up.

The \$160 million development has seen four restaurants close since its debut.

Proud parents aren't the only ones excited about high school graduation ceremonies at UTA's College Park Center. Across the street, Blaze's Sports Grill gets to enjoy the spillover.

"You've got six or 7,000 people going into the College Park Center every two to three hours for four or five days straight," said Josh Pool, a manager at Blaze's Sports Grill. "So it's welcome."

Pool said the crowds the arena and nearby Downtown Arlington draw are a big reason they've been successful operating in the College Park District.

"It's a great area to be in," said Pool. "We've just got to wait for it to develop. And that will happen."

It hasn't worked out so well for other restaurants. Of the seven that debuted with the College Park District when it opened in 2012, only three remain – Blaze's, Pie Five Pizza Co. and Cool Berry Frozen Yogurt

Recent reports.

Smiling Moose Deli is the most recent to call it quits, just recently informing the university it would not be reopening in the fall. We attempted to reach them for further comment, but have not heard back.

"It takes a while for this type of business to mature," said Eric Leidlein, Executive Director of Auxiliary Services at UT Arlington.

University officials acknowledge there have been growing pains during the district's early run – but say places like Blaze's prove that a business can be successful there.

They said they're actively working to get new tenants into the empty spaces. A Texas Trust Credit Union branch will open in the district in August. More announcements are expected in the fall after leasing agreements are finalized.

They're also encouraged by the city's recent approval of three new apartment complexes nearby.

"All of this is bringing a new population to the downtown," said Leidlein. "So it's got great promise for the future of this development."

Pool is also optimistic that good things lie ahead for the district.

"Any area like this is going to have its struggles early on, just like any other business," said Pool.

"But we have no worries about the future and we plan on being here for a long time."

Starting this fall, UTA will add college park dollars to their student meal plans, which students will be able to use at all the restaurants in the district. Officials are hopeful that will help boost sales.

Find this article at:

<http://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/Despite-Business-Closures-Things-Looking-Up-for-College-Park-District-262060491.html>

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