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Cold Stone Creamery is stone cold hit

By JON ERICSON, *Courier Staff Writer*

CEDAR FALLS --- Blake Borwick expected good things when he left his job as College Square mall manager to open a Cold Stone Creamery franchise.

But he didn't anticipate just how good things would be in the first month.

Inside the new Cold Stone Creamery off University Avenue, lines for ice cream stretched from the counter to the door.

Even with January-like weather on May Day, people stacked up for bowls full of the Cedar Valley's newest cold treats.

On weekday evenings, lines often stretch to the front door and beyond.

Ever since the business opened April 16 people have been streaming in for creations like "Cookie Doughn't You Want Some," or "Peanut Butter Cup Perfection."

"We've had 1/2 hour lines or longer," Borwick said. "When they're being entertained with the songs and the things the crew does, they don't seem to mind."

On the opening weekend, the store actually ran out of ice cream and toppings. They had to have a Des Moines store make an emergency run with more provisions.

"We're better prepared than we were that first week or week and a half," Borwick said. He's had to find more staff to keep up with demand and has gotten a better grip on ordering ingredients. "We've got a lot of good problems."

At Cold Stone, customers order one of the company's 32 original creations or choose an ice cream flavor and hand pick their add-in ingredients from a list of candies, nuts and fruits. Employees scoop the ice cream onto a cold stone counter, scoop on the toppings and then shape the mass into a combination with a pair of metal tools.



Mixing up orders on the cold stone at Cold Stone Creamery are Ben Bower and Beth Palas.

RICK CHASE / Courier Staff Photographer

If customers leave a tip, employees sing a song. The songs are based on a public-domain title, such as the "I Don't Know But I've Been Told" military march chant to "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." The words are changed to include references to ice cream and Cold Stone.

Children seem to love the atmosphere and the songs. Bailey and Jordyn Victoria, ages 8 and 10, respectively, already have been to Cold Stone three times. While waiting to get ice cream they tried to sing along with one of the songs.

"It was 'Old McDonald' with some Cold Stone words," said the older sister.

But they don't come for the atmosphere, they come for the ice cream. They load up theirs with goodies like chocolate, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups or Oreos.

The charm of the songs doesn't last as long with the adult crowd.

Melissa Mohr and Ben Wafful are college students in Cedar Falls. They got their first taste of Cold Stone Creamery Wednesday night. Mohr enjoyed the atmosphere inside, and they both loved the ice cream. But they ate their treats on the grass outside.

"We left the tip and then took off as quickly as we could," joked Wafful.

Borwick will open a second local Cold Stone Creamery next year in Waterloo.