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Cold Stone opening Friends try its ice cream

By ANNETTE ARREOLA

Cold Stone Creamery on Tuesday informally debuted its new south Salinas store, a location its manager says will save local ice-cream lovers a trek to Northridge Mall.

The shop on South Main Street is opening to the public Saturday.

"We weren't able to tap into the south Salinas market as easily as in north Salinas, and sometimes it's difficult to get to the mall," said Tim Spinner, owner of both Salinas Cold Stone Creamery outlets. The Northridge store opened in January 2003.

On Tuesday night, the new store provided free treats to employees and about 60 of their friends and family.

"It's the closest thing to homemade ice cream," Spinner said. "It's fresh, not hard-packed, and that's what makes us so great."

Deanna Dickman of Salinas stood in line for mint chocolate ice cream, which she described as "creamy and lightly flavored."

"It's new and a totally different kind of ice cream," Dickman said. "But I'm still a Baskin-Robbins girl."

The new Cold Stone is in the Albertson's shopping center, just two blocks from Baskin-Robbins on South Main Street.

Thomas Ryan, an employee at Baskin-Robbins, said, "They definitely do different stuff, and people will go check it out, but I'm confident it won't hurt our sales."

Tuesday night is also known as "\$1 scoop night" at Baskin-Robbins, and Audrienne Taylor took her three children there for ice cream.

"A Cold Stone was close to our house when we lived in Sacramento, and we soon became addicted to it," Taylor said. "But at Baskin-Robbins my family and I get ice cream for \$4, and at Cold Stone one person can't always buy ice cream for that amount."



Customer Ellie Stewart enjoys ice cream Tuesday at Cold Stone Creamery on South Main Street in Salinas.



Terry Tan



Logan Schneider

Sonia Lopez of Salinas, who was eating next door at the Quizno's sandwich shop, said she enjoys the taste and texture of Cold Stone ice cream.

"It's great that we have two Cold Stones now," Lopez said. "On the weekends I can go to the one in the mall, and the rest of the week I can come here."

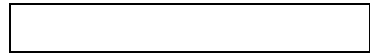
On Saturday, customers will receive free spoon samples along with coupons and prizes, including free Cold Stone ice cream for a year.

A quarter of the grand opening sales from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. will be donated to Washington Middle School.

Cold Stone Creamery opened its Northridge Mall store in January 2003. It is the nation's fastest-growing ice cream chain, with plans to establish 1,000 stores coast to coast by year-end, according to a company statement. Nationwide there are 627 Cold Stones, of which 181 are located in California.

TO ATTEND

The new Cold Stone Creamery at 1176 S. Main St., Salinas, in the Albertson's shopping center, will celebrate its grand opening Saturday, with free spoon samples and door prizes. Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday through Thursday; 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.



Dotty Hall