

Relay makes a move in online grocery race

MARK ROBINSON | JUNE 19, 2013 | 1



Relay Foods leased 4,500 square feet of restaurant space at 1717 E. Franklin St. (Photo by Mark Robinson)

Making dinner just keeps getting easier.

Charlottesville-based Relay Foods, a startup built on bringing groceries to its customers' doors, has leased a Shockoe Bottom restaurant space to launch a line of prepared meals available for delivery.

The 4,500-square-foot space at 1717 E. Franklin St. "will allow us to use the foods that we do buy from partners and introduce them in more consumable ways," said Kevin Kurzendoefer, Relay's senior vice president of operations.

Relay hired chef Ernie LaBrecque and a sous-chef to develop a full menu, Kurzendoefer said. He would not share any menu or pricing details.

The meals will be available through online orders to start, but Kurzendoefer said the company might consider a takeout business in the future.

Relay hopes to have the meal service in full swing by mid-July. The Franklin Street location, which previously housed the Lounge Bar & Grille and is managed by Bandazian and Holden, will be the first of its kind for the company.

Kurzendoefer said the company would renovate the front end of the space but would not share how much it plans to spend.

Relay Foods was founded in 2008 and began delivering groceries in Richmond in July 2010. It also operates in Charlottesville, Williamsburg, Northern Virginia, Washington and Baltimore. Customers order groceries from the Relay website and pick them up at designated locations, and users in certain Zip codes can choose home delivery.



We do it all!

- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Solar
- Duct Cleaning
- Energy Audits
- Heating
- Air Conditioning

James River
Air Conditioning Co.



The company [raised \\$8.25 million in capital](#) this year. That's in addition to more than \$5 million in venture funding it has received since its inception.

In August 2012, Relay bought out competing online grocer Arganica Farm Club. Arganica delivered groceries in Richmond starting in early 2011.

Relay's expansion comes amid news that an online retail giant has its sights set on the grocery industry.

Seattle-based [Amazon announced recently](#) that its grocery delivery service, AmazonFresh, could expand to 20 markets as early as next year. The company has two distribution centers in the Richmond market.

If Amazon does enter the Richmond grocery market, Kurzendoefer welcomes the competition.

"We're actually really more excited about it," he said. "Specifically what Amazon brings is getting more people comfortable buying food online."

POSTED IN » News, Startups, Top News



About the author: Mark Robinson

[View all posts by Mark Robinson](#)

Mark Robinson is a Richmond BizSense summer reporter. He is a rising senior at Virginia Commonwealth University, where he edits the student newspaper. Email him at mark@richmondbizsense.com.

Editor's Picks



Downtown tower site gets pieced together



On trip to drop off his kid, dad picks up a distillery



Childhood treat gets a sophisticated twist



Longtime seafood restaurant ships out

Most Read

1. Winds shift in West End mansion's saga
2. Capital One announces Richmond layoffs
3. 4,500-acre trophy property up for auction
4. Plans on track for new downtown brewery
5. Longtime seafood restaurant ships out

Most Commented

- Short Pump goes shopping for suggestions (27)
- Downtown tower site gets pieced together (16)
- Longtime seafood restaurant ships out (8)
- Pedal-powered cabs wheel into Richmond (7)
- New doughnut shop hits the sweet spot (7)

One Comment »



Bill Chapman June 19, 2013 at 8:24 pm - Reply

Fantastic news and a great use for the space! Welcome to Shockoe Bottom Relay!

Leave A Response »

Please use your real, full name (first and last) and a valid email address to foster a more civil discussion. Comments without first and last name may not be approved.

We encourage active participation in our online community, but we reserve the right to remove any off topic or inappropriate comments.

Name (required)

Comment