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Coming this spring



Peter Rounce and Kenzie Motai are opening a City Food Hall in Destin Commons in the Spring of 2022. Below: Signs are already touting the food hall. TINA HARBUCK/USA TODAY NETWORK-FLORIDA. BELOW: PROVIDED

City Food Hall to open at Destin Commons

Tina Harbuck The Destin Log | USA TODAY NETWORK

What do you call 10 chefs working under one roof? Destin's first City Food Hall. • Set to open in Destin Commons next spring, City Food Hall will showcase 10 specialty restaurant concepts offering food and drinks, an expansive indoor/outdoor bar, two Topgolf full swing simulators with a variety of multi-sports games, several HDTVs and comfortable lounge seating, according to a news release. • City Food Hall is the brainchild of founders Peter Rounce and Kenzie Motai, who have opened a food hall concept in Miami, New Orleans, Chicago and Jackson, Mississippi, to name a few.

However, they never gave opening one in Destin a thought until they visited the area.

"Destin never stuck out to us on the radar," Rounce said.

Rounce said they even talked with Destin Commons for the longest time and had no interest.

"Then we got on a plane ... flew up to Destin and fell in love," he said.

After seeing it and being here, "How can we not?" he added.

"It has that small-town charm, but on a higher

See FOOD, Page 4A



Bob Dole, former GOP presidential candidate, dies at 98

World War II veteran, senator wanted to be remembered for service

Kathy Kiely

Special to USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Former Sen. Bob Dole, a Kansas lawmaker and decorated World War II veteran who never realized his ambitions to win the presidency but left an indelible mark on the nation's capital and history, died Sunday. He was 98.

Dole died in his sleep, according to an announcement from the Elizabeth Dole Foundation.

For all his accomplishments, Dole wanted to be remembered for his service — particularly as a soldier who lost the use of his right arm on the battlefield in Italy. He described to Fox News in May 2013 how he wanted to be remembered: "Veteran who gave his most for his country."

As a politician, Dole was a major force in the Republican Party for three decades. That service began in 1971, when he was its national chairman, and culminated in 1996, as the GOP presidential nominee in an election lost to Democrat Bill Clinton. Until 2018, Dole held the record as the Senate's longest-serving Republican leader, a post he held for nearly 11 years.

Late in life, Dole was hospitalized

See DOLE, Page 5A



In a 2005 interview with Caring magazine, Bob Dole called passage of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act his greatest achievement as a senator. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Decoding the data behind Ladapo's policies

Joseph Ladapo personally has cast doubt on the effectiveness and safety of COVID vaccines

Jeffrey Schweers

Capital Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK — FLORIDA

When he was first introduced by Gov. Ron DeSantis as his nominee to be the next state Surgeon General, Dr. Joseph Ladapo promised that the Department of Health would draw a distinction between science and opinion.

"People have been taking the science and misrepresenting it," he said, hinting at mainstream public health officials

who have been setting policy for the nation.

"You will know when we are talking about data and opinion," Ladapo added. "Never lose sight that public health is not just one thing. It is not just about the amount of COVID at a single location."

The next day he signed an emergency order that strengthened bans on school mask mandates and stripped schools of the authority to quarantine students

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Dr. Joseph Ladapo, Florida's surgeon general, is shown with Gov. Ron DeSantis. Ladapo promised that the Department of Health would draw a distinction between science and opinion. PROVIDED

USA TODAY

Vaccine equity: Omicron threat prompts closing racial gap in shot distribution. 12A

Good eats in the holiday spirit

Pancakes with Santa returns to Magnolia Grill. Local, 3A

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Food

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level. It's such a warm, welcoming place and we fell in love with it," said Rounce, who is from a small town in the Bahamas. "So we went from having no interest, to being excited."

Rounce says he loves the "whole Destin vibe ... the fishing thing, the beach thing. The whole Destin vibe has a lot of synergy with who we are as individuals, which is reflected in our brand."

His business partner Motai is just as excited.

"Absolutely we're excited to be in Destin Commons. ... It's an amazing destination," Motai said.

"The concept is really to highlight what the city has to offer under one roof," he said.

"We always like to work with as many local chefs as possible so we can highlight them," Motai added.

NOT A MALL FOOD COURT

The food hall will not have national franchise brands.

"We like to find that up-and-coming chef in Destin. One with a food truck or maybe doing pop-ups at a farmer's market ... give them the opportunity," Motai said.

As a matter of fact, he and Rounce were in town just a few weeks ago and headed to 30A to check out some of the trucks.

"We give them a platform to try their brands out at very little risk," Motai said.

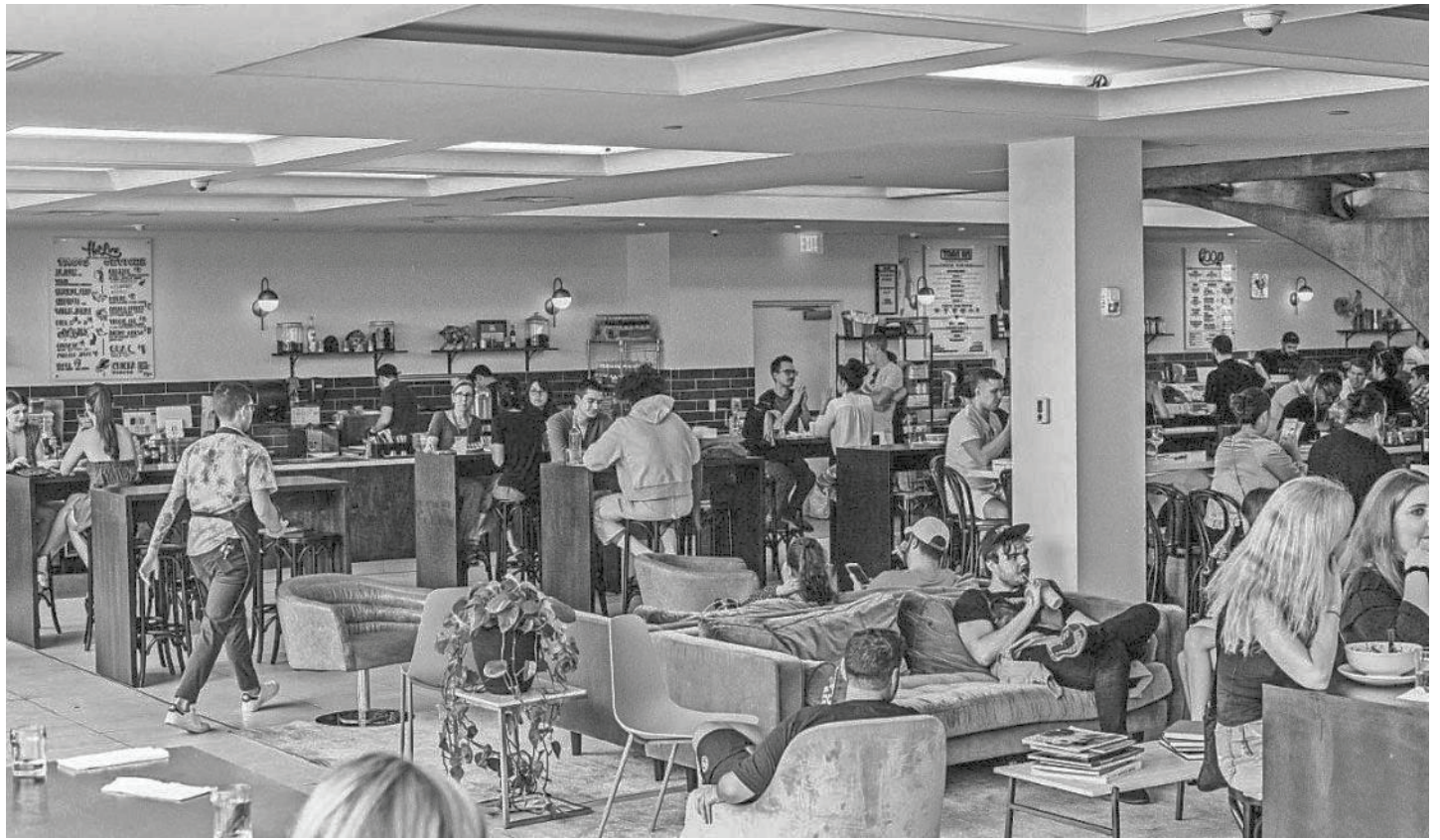
After the pandemic, it's expensive to open up a restaurant and sign a long lease. That's where City Food Hall comes in.

"That's what makes us unique; everything is set up," he said.

Motai said they build out a full kitchen in the back and vendors can cook all day long.

"We build out the vendors' stall in the front which is also equipped," Motai said. "You can come in and start operating in less than a week. ... You just have to set up your menus."

"We want to give those trucks a more permanent location without the burden of opening a full stand-alone," he added.



The City Food Hall concept is very popular in the Miami area. PROVIDED PHOTOS

However, it isn't just about food. "We don't just look for good food, we look for good people as well," Rounce said.

"I would take a good person who cooks OK over someone who is an amazing chef but not a good person. It's building community... that's what important," he said.

TOPGOLF AND MULTI SPORTS

Rounce and Motai are avid golfers, and brought their clubs along when they visited Destin.

City Food Hall will have two Topgolf Swing Suites for the novices and aspiring pros. The suites include a massive screen and other multi-sport games.

The full swing golf simulator technology is the same simulator used by PGA Tour pros for off-course practice.

"Golf enthusiasts can develop their swing and challenge their friends, all while enjoying a cocktail, craft beer and delicious food," Rounce said in the news release.

"And they can catch the game on one



This is what a food hall looks like in the Miami area.

of our HDTV's. We believe City Food Hall will become one of Destin's top culinary and nightlife destinations," he added.

City Food Hall at Destin Commons

will be in a 14,000- square-foot space next to the Foot Locker.

For more information, visit cityfood-hall.com or email info@cityfood-hall.com.

Ladapo

Continued from Page 1A

who had come in contact with the COVID-19 virus for up to four days, leaving that decision to parents.

More recently, after DeSantis signed into law restrictions on vaccine mandates, including exemptions for people who have recovered from COVID and who are pregnant or planning to be pregnant, he thanked DeSantis for his "leadership in making practical and informed decisions based on science."

So where's the science?

Asked for the scientific basis for Ladapo's statements, Christina Pushaw, DeSantis' press secretary, offered three studies to back up his claims about vaccines and masks.

While selected parts of the studies do back up the claims that vaccines are losing their effectiveness or that masks aren't a panacea, other data in those studies contradict their assertions.

Vaccine effectiveness

While the state health department has consistently touted getting vaccinated as the best and most effective tool to protect against COVID-19 and prevent its spread, Ladapo personally has cast doubt over the effectiveness and safety of the vaccine. Public health experts say such public statements contribute to vaccine hesitancy, the reluctance to get immunized against COVID-19.

"Remember when people were telling you that these vaccines would stop transmission and the rate of protection was greater than 90%? Ten months later, we're finding that the rate of protection is less than 40% than some of them," he has said.

Pushaw cited two news links — one from CNBC and one from Forbes — to a study reported by the Israel Health Ministry that showed a full course of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine was only 39% effective against the Delta variant in Israel, where high levels of the delta variant led to a resurgence in outbreaks of COVID-19.

The Forbes article was more specific — the vaccine was only 39% effective at preventing infections and 41% effective at preventing symptomatic infections caused by the variant. Both articles noted that was down from 64% two weeks earlier.

Pushaw, however, didn't mention that the study was based on "an unspecified number of people between June 20

and July 17," according to Forbes, and that it conflicted with data from the United Kingdom that found a full course of the vaccine was 88% effective against "symptomatic disease caused by the variant."

She also omitted that the health ministry said the vaccine still provided high levels of protection against hospitalization (92%) and severe illness (91%) caused by the Delta variant.

Diminished strength over time

Pushaw provided another article on a study on vaccine effectiveness and death in the Veterans Health Administration over time. The report, cited in Science, said efficacy dropped from 87.9% to 48.1% from February to October, confirming what many scientists thought could happen with the vaccine as the months passed.

But the report also said the vaccine continued to protect against death in people who became infected during the Delta surge.

The report also said that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines "have effectively prevented clinically significant disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus" since they became available last December.

And while initial reports showed sustained protection, three reports of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in August showed protection waning as the Delta variant became the dominant strain by mid-summer. But protection against hospitalizations and deaths remained high.

The article also mentioned that, after Israel saw a decline in the vaccine's effectiveness after several months, it authorized booster shots for adults 60 and older in July and extended that authorization to people 50 and older in August.

"Rates of infection and severe illness subsequently declined in those who received a booster," the Science report said.

Mask mandates

One of the main reasons critics of mask mandates have cited as a reason not to support mandatory mask-wearing is the lack of a randomized controlled trial (RCT). Scientists and policymakers have had to rely on observation and lab studies to justify mask mandates.

Until recently.

Considered to be the gold standard of scientific research, RCTs are carefully constructed and monitored trials where



A student special mask that allows a flute to slide into one side and out the other during the 8th annual Artsgiving at the Bak Middle School of the Arts in West Palm Beach on Nov. 19. GREG LOVETT/USA TODAY NETWORK-FLORIDA

participants are assigned at random to either a control group or intervention group.

"Inspired by the growing body of scientific evidence that face masks can slow the spread of the disease and save lives," a group led by scientists from Stanford and Yale universities conducted a randomized trial of nearly 350,000 people in 600 small villages in Bangladesh, the authors said in the introduction of their report.

Pushaw offered it as evidence that wearing masks don't work, but the study's authors said they found the opposite to be true.

"This really should be the end of the debate," Ashley Styczynski, an infectious-disease researcher at Stanford University in California and a co-author of the report, told Nature. The study's findings, released Sept. 1, found that "the number of symptomatic cases was lower in treatment villages than in control villages," the Nature article reported.

"It's notable that even though fewer than 50% of the people in the intervention villages wore masks in public places, we still saw a significant risk reduction in symptomatic COVID-19 in these communities, particularly in elderly, more vulnerable people," Styczynski said in a Stanford Medicine article.

People in villages that were given several interventions promoting the use of surgical masks were 11% less likely to develop COVID-19 than people in villages that didn't receive such interventions, the report said. That protection increased to 35% among people 60 and over.

Researchers said the true risk reduc-

tion is likely greater because they didn't test people without symptoms or whose symptoms did not meet the World Health Organization definition of COVID-19.

Pushaw noted that the study "didn't control for other behavioral differences in this age group." She also said the study found that "mask mandates make no statistically significant difference in terms of COVID spread for people under age 50."

School children and masks

Because there were no randomized clinical trials conducted in the U.S. on masking and COVID, "we only have observational data from the last ~20 months, when different cities and states enacted different masking policies," Pushaw said in an email.

The data showed no correlation between mask mandates and reduced COVID infection rates, she said, yet said that in Florida, "we observed that pediatric COVID infections fell at the same rate in school districts with and without mask mandates since school started in August."

Pushaw also said that forcing school children to wear masks is not the scientific consensus and is not data-driven. Not so, said Julie Swann, a department head and professor at North Carolina State University, who leads a COVID-19 forecasting team funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The results about masks and children are overall very positive," Swann said. "There are empirical studies that have been published from 2021 showing very few infections in schools when (and) where masks were worn."

One such study done in the spring among 1 million students in 100 school districts and 14 charter schools in North Carolina found that mask mandates helped keep transmission rates of COVID-19 to under 1% in schools last fall and spring.

"The science clearly shows us that masking is an effective strategy to prevent within-school transmission when COVID-19 is circulating and when vaccination is not yet available for all children," Dr. Kanecia Zimmerman, co-chair of the ABC Science Collaborative that conducted the study, said in a report published by NPR.

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