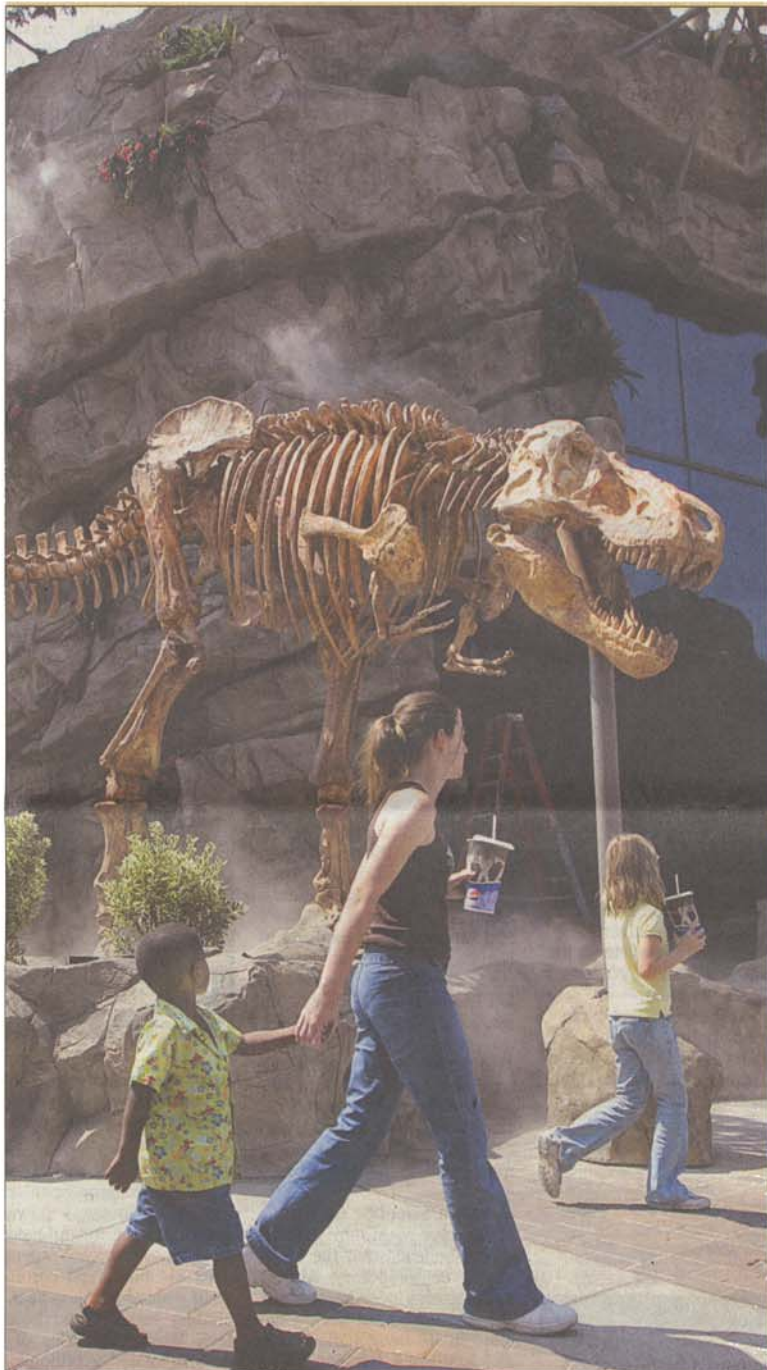


THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

Business

PARTNERSHIP | Developer and restaurant creator



KANSAS CITY STAR FILE PHOTO

No business called T-Rex would be complete without a skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus rex. The restaurant and entertainment attraction opened last year in Kansas City, Kan.

Not just meals, but experiences

Far-out dining concepts are to open locally, nationally and globally with KC real estate company's help.

By JOYCE SMITH
The Kansas City Star

Kansas City's **RED Development** is teaming up with the founder of the **Rain Forest Cafe** chain and **T-Rex** to invest in and roll out destination dining and entertainment venues.

RED and **Schussler Creative Inc.**, of Minneapolis, will open new concepts, as well as Schussler's T-Rex, in RED projects. RED also will help place Schussler concepts in other developers' projects throughout the country and internationally. Several may open in the Kansas City area.

"This is the first time a developer has taken such a nonegotistical position," said Steve Schussler, chairman of Schussler Creative.

"What a treat it is to be able to move these across the country in both RED projects and have them as a leader and a voice talking

"I'm known for that wow factor, but people come once for the wow factor and they come back for the good-quality food."

STEVE SCHUSSLER, CHAIRMAN
OF SCHUSSLER CREATIVE INC.

about this with other developers," he added.

Schussler opened the first T-Rex concept in mid-2006 in RED's **The Legends at Village West** in Kansas City, Kan. T-Rex is a \$15 million restaurant, shop and entertainment attraction featuring animatronic dinosaurs.

Dave Clafin, spokesman for RED Development, said Schussler is an "incredibly creative person with great business acumen and an incredibly successful track record."

"So that's really what got us together," Clafin said. "Then the success that we had at The Legends with T-Rex, getting the first one

PARTNERS: KC developer to help open far-out restaurants

FROM CI in the country there — and the sales have backed up every hope that we had about it.”

Along with T-Rex locations, RED and Schussler plan to partner on:

■ **Aerobleu:** Based on a late-1940s Paris jazz club. The 12,000-square-foot operation will feature an airplane coming out of the ceiling. Someone then will walk onto the wing playing a saxophone and dancing. The concept is based on a fictional character who flies between Paris, New Orleans, Cuba, London and New York — the five locales to be reflected in the cuisine. The part-

ners are in negotiations to open in downtown Kansas City, as well as Reno, Nev., and Las Vegas.

■ **America's Roadhouse:** A 10,000-square-foot American cuisine operation featuring an old truck stop decor outside. Inside will be antique jukeboxes, live music, a barbecue pit and mechanics assembling motorcycles. It may open in late summer at The Legends.

■ **Dynasty:** A 12,000-square-foot Chinese fusion restaurant. It will feature Chinese artwork from 1644 to 1912. One is to open in Las Vegas.

■ **Hot Dog Hall of Fame:** A restaurant serving gourmet

dogs with a variety of mustards, plus sausages, dumplings, ravioli, wontons, blintzes, french fries, pizza and roasted-in-the-husk corn on the cob. It will open this summer in The Legends, but the concept is intended to be a chain with locations ranging from 500 to 4,000 square feet.

■ **Musical Gardens:** A 10,000-square-foot seafood and salad restaurant. It will feature animatronic insects, bronze statues of children and fairy tale characters, topiary animals, and waterfalls, streams and bridges. It will include a 1,000-square-foot shop. A location could open in Kansas City.

■ **Sorcerer's Kitchen:** A 12,000-square-foot operation inspired by the Harry Potter series. It will serve comfort foods like rotisserie chickens, turkey legs and pastas. The decor will include stained glass windows, gargoyles, wizards and bubbling potions. There will be daily book readings and a book club. Locations are planned for Las Vegas; Orlando, Fla.; California; and Dubai.

■ **Winter Wonderland:** A 13,500-square-foot attraction featuring comfort foods such as meat loaf and chicken pot pie. It will have a year-round winter theme with a sleigh and

lifelike reindeer on a track to take customers to their tables, plus falling snow, snowmen, lifelike snowboarders and snowball fights. A section called Marshmallow World will offer hot chocolate drinks. Locations are still being considered.

■ **Yak & Yeti:** An Asian fusion restaurant under construction in **Disney's Animal Kingdom** in Orlando. It will have a western Himalayan decor.

Schussler has worked on the concepts in his Minneapolis laboratory for seven years.

“It's tens of thousands of man-hours,” Schussler said. “We spend a lot of time doing

research in libraries, books, TV shows, and incorporating our own ideas after being inspired. We add a twist of creativity and passion that no one else does to give it a flavor that's over the top.”

Still, Schussler doesn't plan to skimp on the cuisine. He said he is working with top food companies and hopes to get input from celebrity chefs.

“I'm known for that wow factor, but people come once for the wow factor and they come back for the good-quality food,” Schussler said.

To reach Joyce Smith, call 816-234-4692 or send e-mail to jsmith@kcstar.com.