

# Brews, beans and Arcata's big bash

Arcata jam band Moo-Got-2 is scheduled to play Hum Brews opening night on November 29. Less than a month away, most of the jamming is occurring at the building's interior where contractor Bill Abram has been overseeing its transformation since May. Now dubbed the Arcata Brews Building by owners



in some 30 years. In a nod to Arcata's historic architecture, dentals at roofline mirror those of



Ray Nelson (Bill's bro), Tom Perrett and Robert Fowlkes, the work has been fast-paced for months.

Most renovating builders know to expect the unexpected. Abram started pulling back the layers of time and rehabs and discovered massive structural dry rot. Suddenly, Hum Brews owners Robin Hewitt and Andy Ardell's goal of being back open in time for fall semester looked increasingly unlikely.

But with structural problems now shored up, Abram attention turned back to making the facility a functioning restaurant, office and recreation space. Much of Arcata Brews' second floor is spoken for. A studio and yoga school will take it over. Downstairs, the only thing left standing from the brew houses' two decades of history is the room-length bar. Abram's moved the stage to the alley-facing side and installed sound-proofing in the area. Neighbor complaints during big amp-wielding



for Kinetic Koffee. "Now we're getting a lot of referrals, real grassroots business," Ritz says.

Still, Kinetic Koffee faces the same problem that dogged Yakima for two decades: geographic isolation. Orders are great, but they've got to get back past the Redwood Curtain. The situation is improved for Ritz. He's only waiting on a single shipment item – beans – and processing it for export. Multiple carriers – United Parcel Service, the United States Postal Service and Federal Express – present all the options he needs.

But like most local business, Ritz was reminded of the county's tenuous connection to the outside world, once again, during last month's fiber optic cable cut. "It killed my business. I was totally out of business for that time," he says. The inability to take orders, reply to inquiries had him, staring blankly at his computer screen like hundreds of other businesspeople.

Living here is worth it for him, however. Dozens of other Yakimites agree, and several who left to

the nearby Minor Theatre (though generally manufactured from metal through the years, Abram uncovered a high-compressed foam product with a much improved installation process).

For Hewitt and Ardell, the delay has been longer than they anticipated. But they'll basically be walking into a brand new restaurant in the middle of the month and figure it will be worth it. The two-some is used to being flexible. They're the

says Hewitt. Mark Ritz doesn't mind getting up early. Most morning's he's at the shop by 7 a.m. Luckily, he's got plenty of inspiration – lots of coffee.

It's around when Ritz could really use it. He needed it last Thursday morning after his nightlong shift at the Kinetic Sculpture Lab's Haunted Lab ended at about 2:30 a.m.

Ritz and Charlie Jordan are two former Yakimites who ditch the company's move to Portland, Ore. two years ago. Instead, they opted to make a go of it in Arcata. The pair loved the bouquet and jumpstarts of good coffee. They had decades of experience in the outdoor industry. In classic niche marketing fashion, Kinetic Koffee is going directly after



PHOTOS BY TMC | EYE



Mark Ritz (right), savors his kinetic, caffeinated post-Yakima endeavors. TMC | EYE

bands will be a thing of the past. Ardell is busying himself with research for a new sound system.

Inside and out, Arcata Brews is getting a real makeover. New siding has been applied and Abram is putting up large sections of metal flashing. He doesn't want another builder to face the rain damage he confronted

remaining owners of Hum Brews' beautiful, but failed experiment.

When former brewery owners the Celatto family planned its closure four years ago, 10 employees organized a limited liability corporation in cooperative fashion. Over the years, all but Ardell and Hewitt dropped out. "We know how to work together,"

outdoor gear and bike shops to sell its coffee.

It's not that random of a combination, says Ritz. "There is a real connection between outdoor people and coffee addiction," Ritz says. Many bike rides stop and/or start at a coffee shop. It's the best beverage for kicking it into gear on early morning loops.

Utilizing some three decades of bike shop experience (Ritz used to own one), Kinetic Koffee has been approaching cyclistries, offering to roast customized blends. The bagged coffee pounds can be a useful promotional tool and gift.

On a wall of Kinetic Koffee's office and warehouse in the Bayview Industrial Park (South G) bags of all colors and label design represent clients around the country.

Last month, Ritz spent three days at the Interbike Trade Show in Las Vegas pouring coffee for bike dealers and shop owners... some 2,500 cups.

It was worth it as Ritz made hundreds of contacts

make the Portland move have returned. Throughout the county, new business offshoots have been built by Yakimites starting new ventures, armed with international business experience and marketing training.

Arcata's 150th anniversary party plans are getting back on track after the generosity of several local businesses.

Last month's planning meeting at City Hall revealed a real dearth of funds.

Now Chamber Executive Assistant Kate Kline reports several companies have stepped up to the plate. Hotel Arcata, the Slack Family, Sun Valley Group, Arcata Stay and Mad River Quality Inn are some of the entities that have brought funds up to over \$2,500.

The money will be used to plan and promote festivities scheduled for next September.

Information about donating or details of the ongoing 150th annual logo contest available from the Chamber, (707) 822-3619.