

Pizza delivery chains cater to consumers to get a piece of the business pie

By FELISA NEURINGER
Staff Writer

"America is in love with pizza," said Ed Rogosich, manager of Pizza Transit Authority (PTA) in Chapel Hill.

And the students at UNC are no exception because the pizza delivery business in Chapel Hill is quite profitable.

"Business is great and we are having no big problems," said Trent Turner, manager of Domino's Pizza on East Main Street, Carrboro. "Sales are about the same as they were last year. . . . We are seeing more competition this year, but it hasn't hurt us."

Domino's is the original and largest pizza delivery chain in the country, according to Turner.

The Chapel Hill store, which opened around 1979, was once the number one pizza delivery place in the nation. Since then, Domino's has opened another store on U.S. 15-501 bypass.

"Beyond a doubt, we are still the top delivery place in town," Turner said. Turner attributed the success of Domino's Pizza to its famous guarantee — if they don't deliver your pizza in 30 minutes or less, you get the pizza free.

"Everyone is opening up stores now trying to get into the business, but by no means is that hurting us

because you can't beat our guarantee," Turner said.

In August, sales for PTA were up about 8 to 9 percent from last year, Rogosich said. "There is more consumer cash available on the student level due to the change in drinking age," he said. "Therefore, my guess is that the funds have been redirected to other things like pizza."

PTA started delivering pizzas about 13 years ago. The original store is the Chapel Hill location on Rosemary Street. Now there are about 32 franchise stores across the country.

PTA says it has its own unique deal. "Our budget is smaller so it's harder for us to advertise," Rogosich said. "So we need something different."

That "something different" is the two-for-one offer. If you order any large two-item pizza, you get a second one free. This is good if a large group of students want to get together to have pizza, Rogosich said.

For Pizza Hut, who started delivering pizzas around five years ago, business is excellent and up substantially, said David Duckett, manager of the Pizza Hut Delivery Service on Franklin Street.

A combination of factors has helped business, Duckett said. "A lot of people weren't aware that Pizza

Hut is available for home delivery, but by advertising and word of mouth . . . people now know."

Duckett said pizza delivery is becoming an even more successful business because people in the United States are living in a society that is less willing to spend \$50 on a night out.

"Now people can pick up a video cassette and order pizza to their house," he said. "You can have the same evening of dinner and a movie for a third of the price."

Junior Bill Moore said he ordered more pizzas from Pizza Hut than from any other pizza chain.

"I think (Pizza Hut) pizzas are bigger than others — the crust is a lot thicker," Moore said. "Plus, Pizza Hut puts out more coupons, so they're always a little cheaper. To me, Pizza Hut is the best."

Pizza Delight is one of the more recent pizza delivery businesses in Chapel Hill. It just opened last winter.

"Business is good, but it is typically better during basketball season," said chain owner Steve Turner. "Pizza delivery is very sports oriented anyway."

"Because UNC is 68 percent girls, it has had an effect on our deliveries," Turner said. "We do a lot better at State where over 70 percent of the

students are guys. . . . They eat a lot of pizza."

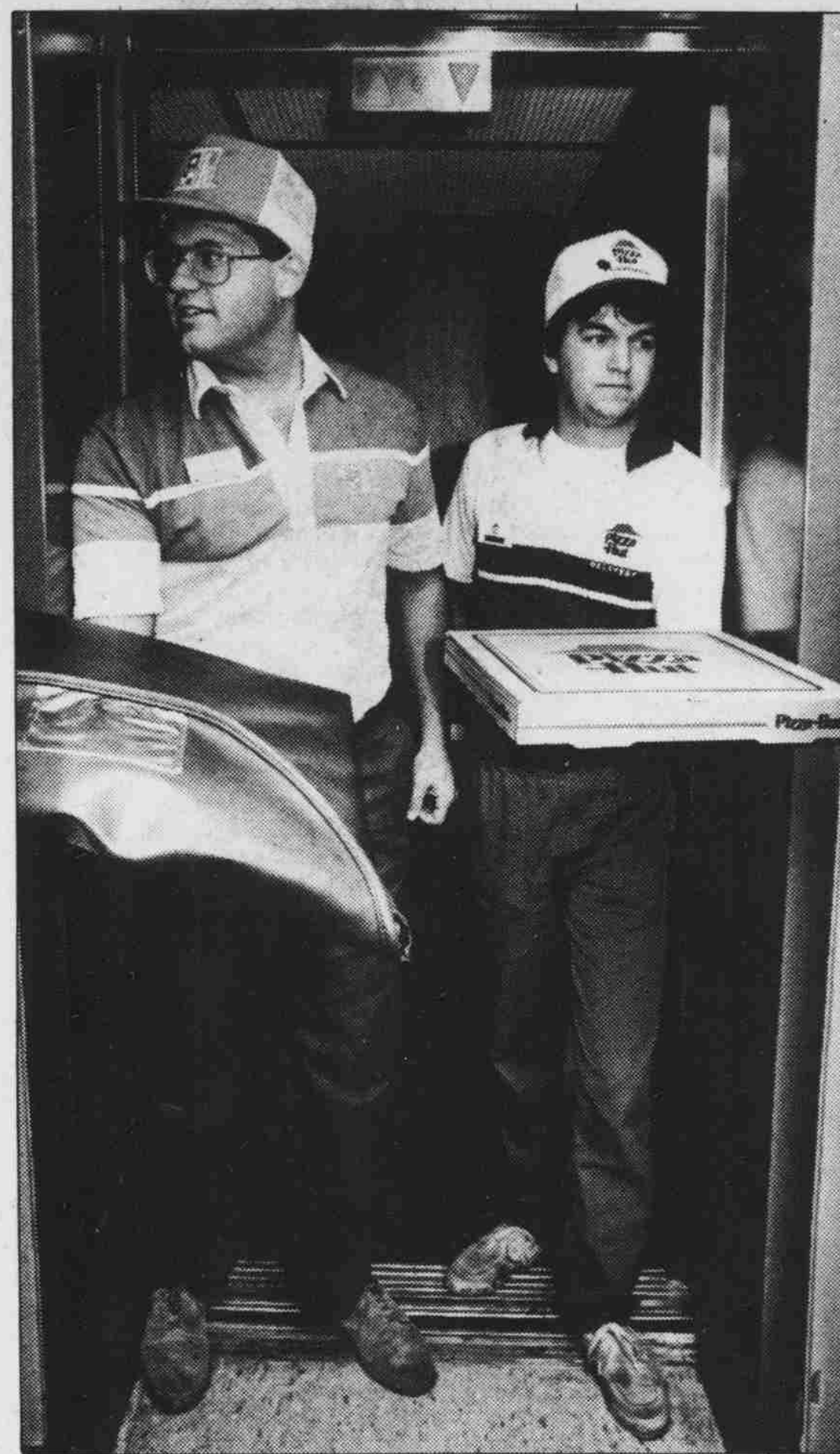
Pizza Inn, formally Peppi's restaurant, has not started delivering pizzas yet. But manager Clifton McFadden said deliveries should be in full operation right after Thanksgiving.

All of the store managers agreed that UNC students are their main customers. Generally, half of the deliveries go to residence halls and the other half to residential areas like apartment complexes.

"Pizza delivery is a tough business," Rogosich said. "You have to satisfy the customer who wants a quick delivery. In a restaurant you don't mind waiting to eat because you can see what's going on, but people get really impatient when it comes to waiting on their pizza. Little do they know that there may be 10 or 12 orders ahead of theirs," he added.

Turner said the trend was for more sit-down pizza restaurants to start making deliveries. "Now kids can't drink beer and eat pizza in the restaurants, but they can order out for pizza and drink the beer at home," he said.

"Since the competition is so intensely fierce, the students will dictate who survives," Rogosich said. "Therefore, we and all pizza delivery places must have a high quality product in order to compete."



Stuart Oxer (left) and Greg Dixon make elevated pizza deliveries

New, high growth ventures boost economy

By KELLY CLARK
Staff Writer

Businesses entering the Chapel Hill and Carrboro area should be the primary activity of economic development for the next decade, a spokesman for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce said Monday.

According to a recent survey by the Chamber of Commerce, 36 of the 50 largest employers in Orange County have less than 100 full-time employees — an indication that many of the employers may be new to the area.

"There are several new entrepreneurial operations on the list and I anticipate that over the next five to 10 years, we will see a lot more new ventures becoming major employers," said Len Van Ness, executive vice president for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce.

Included on the list of companies surveyed were eight manufacturers, six restaurants, two banks and two insurance companies. Six of the top 15 employers are governmental organizations, including UNC and N.C. Memorial Hospital.

But according to Van Ness, the

businesses to watch are those that have the potential to become large employers.

These are businesses called "high-growth enterprises" by the Council for Entrepreneurial Development (CED) in Research Triangle Park.

CED is a private, non-profit organization that promotes the development of high-growth businesses in the Triangle.

"We mostly concentrate on growth-type companies," Monica Doss, administrative director for CED, said. "The Chapel Hill-Carrboro area has a climate for high-

growth businesses and most of our members are that kind."

Chapel Hill based FGI, Inc., is one such company. Specializing in marketing research, visual design, direct marketing and advertising, FGI has experienced a yearly growth rate of about 300 percent since it formed in 1982. James A. Protzman, chairman of the firm, said.

Van Ness believes the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area is definitely ready for entrepreneurial growth. "Everything seems to be coming into place," he said.



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