

Article from the **Pantagraph** (Bloomington, IL)

Canteen owner thrilled

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BLOOMINGTON - Karen Murukas feels at home at her new downtown Bloomington bar.

She recently opened Canteen in the former McLean County Bar, 107 W. Front St. She loves the location and feels comfortable at one of her old hangouts, which closed about a year ago.

"I'm excited to be part of downtown," Murukas said.

Canteen is Murukas' second bar in the Twin Cities. She's also the owner of the Entourage Lounge, a bar and restaurant on Hershey Road in east Bloomington.

She refers to the Entourage as her "girl bar," as it's a little bit fancier, and Canteen as her "boy bar" for its more comfortable feel. However, Canteen does not draw business from just one specific crowd, she said.

The atmosphere is relaxed on weekdays and more lively on weekends, with more people singing along with the jukebox, Murukas said.

"It really depends on the night and the crowd," she said.

Canteen offers a full-service bar, daily specials and 60 different bottled beers, the bar's strong suit, Murukas said.

"It's something to bring you out and keep you coming back," Murukas said of the selection.

Entertainment includes karaoke, darts and bean bags. She plans to introduce Nintendo Wii in mid-March. She'll also cater pizza and paninis from the Entourage. Beer prices range from \$1.50 specials to \$6, while the food will cost from \$5 to \$10.

Hours at Canteen are 4 p.m. to 1 a.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday.