

Study predicts more, wealthier Hispanics. PAGE 7B

BUSINESS

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TRANSPLANTS TURNED ENTREPRENEURS

Paradise found



Photos by BRIAN BLANCO/The Herald

Cortez Kitchen, a popular outdoor waterfront restaurant in Cortez, is under new ownership. The new owner, Joe Oelker, first visited the establishment while on vacation in Manatee County.

Business owners from the North set up shop

TILDE HERRERA
Herald Staff Writer

MANATEE — They came. They saw. And then they stayed.

Joe Oelker had visited Florida since he was a kid, and moved here more than a year ago from Ohio. With his purchase of Cortez Kitchen in mid-September, Oelker is part of a trend of newcomers investing in local business ventures after first vacationing in the area.

"He'd come in a few times, had heard it was up for sale and then bought it," said former owner Peter Barreda, who opened the restaurant in 2000.

Oelker's scheduling constraints



Cortez Kitchen is one of several establishments run by transplants who fell in love with the area.

precluded him from contributing to this story.

Cathy and Jake Radojesics also traded in the Buckeye state for

Manatee County earlier this year after spending summers here for most of their married life. They learned that Tyler's Ice Cream Shop went up for sale and seized the opportunity so fast they didn't have time to sell their house or former business in Ohio.

"We've been coming here for so long," Cathy Radojesics said. "We just fell in love with it."

German-born Sabine Musil-Buehler caught the bug in 1993 after spending five days on Anna Maria Island visiting a friend. Her previous plans to buy an apartment in New York evaporated.

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