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The second location of Empire Coffee & Pastry is slated to open next month in the Highlight Center. Photo by Eric Best

Empire Coffee expands with Highlight Center café

By **ERIC BEST**

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The Northeast-based coffee shop will open a second location next month.

Amy and Chrissy Kelsch are expanding their empire.

The sisters are behind Empire Coffee & Pastry on Stinson Boulevard in Northeast Minneapolis. Next month, they'll expand their coffee shop and bakery business with a second location in the newly renovated **Highlight Center** across from Able Seedhouse & Brewery.

The roughly 700-square-foot, 12-seat shop will be focus on grab-and-go coffee and expanded lunch offerings catered toward the building's office tenants. Hillcrest Development, Empire's landlord at both locations and a prolific Northeast developer, has attracted several tech companies to the 170,000-square-foot building, notably youth sports league software company Sport Ngin (now SportsEngine after being **acquired** by NBC Sports Group in July).



The Highlight Center near Central & Broadway in Northeast Minneapolis. Photo by Rick Peters of Inside-out Studios.

Chrissy said they'll continue to primarily use beans from B+W Specialty Coffee, but they'll also offer some local roasters, such as Bootstrap Coffee Roasters. The café will serve nitro cold brew coffee on tap from Twin Cities-based Blackeye Roasting Company.

On the food side, Amy will have an approximately 1,100-square-foot kitchen located in the basement of the former Minneapolis Public Schools headquarters building. With that space, which is much larger than what they have in the original shop, they'll offer additional lunch items like sandwiches, salads and soups, along with a catering service. Amy, who trained at the French Pastry School, will continue to serve customers' favorite breakfast pastries and treats like a white cheddar muffin with bacon and chocolate chip cookies with sea salt.

The two opened their original location at 451 Stinson Blvd. in 2013 in the Mid-City Industrial neighborhood.

They expect the new shop at 807 Broadway St. NE in the Logan Park neighborhood to have a Sept. 1 soft opening. A grand opening is planned right after Labor Day on Sept. 6.

