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02-02

January 4, 2002

For Immediate Release:

EIU ENTERS FINAL COUNTDOWN FOR OPENING OF NEW FOOD COURT

CHARLESTON – Following months of hard work by hundreds of workers from a dozen different companies, Eastern Illinois University's Food Court is slated to begin wrapping up its 11-month construction schedule.

According to Mark Hudson, EIU's director of Housing and Dining Services, flooring is currently being placed which will allow for equipment to be installed during the first two weeks of January. Complete hookup of all equipment will be necessary so that final inspections for various certifications can take place in order to open the new facility.

"We are all very excited to get the Food Court open and operational," Hudson said. "We plan to be serving food out of this facility soon. The exact day is not quite known, but it is a countdown with the end in sight."

The new Food Court will be located in the northwest second-floor section of the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union. Seventh Street Underground, the temporary location of the Food Court, closed at the end of the Fall 2001 semester, thus allowing time for disconnecting equipment so it could be prepared for installation in the new location.

"The effort that goes into the completion of a project this size, with its thousands of

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details, is just amazing," Hudson said. "The university has worked hard with the designer and contractors to ensure the facility will deliver a service the university community will value and appreciate."

In addition to the Subway, Chick-fil-a and Connie's Pizza operation that existed in 7th Street Underground, two additional concepts -- The Charleston Market, featuring various entrees from sandwiches to ethnic foods, and the Panther Grille with its hamburgers, hot dogs, fries and other favorites -- will be available to patrons.

Seating will be available for 400, which includes 25 booths that will have Internet connection ports available so customers can use the facility for not only eating, but also socializing and surfing the World Wide Web on their laptop computers.

To accommodate Food Court customers during this month of transition, Tower Dining Center has extended its hours from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily so everyone will have access to a quick-meal option. Tower's very popular deli line will be open and customers may use cash or dining dollars. Diners may enter the Tower dining facility from the southeast corner of Stevenson Tower.

In addition to Tower Dining Center, all dining centers can accommodate Food Court customers. Taylor, which features chicken specialties, will remain open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 4:30 to 7 p.m. seven days a week. It is also open for breakfast from 7:15 to 9:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Thomas is open from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, serving burgers, hot dogs and other favorites. From 8 p.m. on, Thomas serves pizza, available by the slice or the whole pie. Carman is also open daily from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m., serving "long-time favorites" entrees.