



JAIME GREEN The Wichita Eagle

Kevin Allis has been with Stroud’s since 2013 and is its managing partner. The restaurant’s owners have decided to close the restaurant next month.

An owner of Wichita’s Stroud’s shares reasons behind surprise closing announcement

BY DENISE NEIL
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One of the owners of Stroud’s — the fried chicken restaurant that has operated at 3661 N. Hillside since the summer of 1993 — says that its owners had a difficult time deciding to close the restaurant next month. But the decision, which was announced via social media on Wednesday morning, was inevitable.

Prices have just gone up too much lately, said Kevin Allis, the restaurant’s managing partner, and the owners didn’t see any other way. The lease is set to expire at the end of May, and the ownership group — which also includes Allis and his wife, Rochele Cochrane, plus Bill and Catherine Shea and Doug and Diana Farha — have decided not to renew it. “We’ve raised prices three times in the last year

and a half,” Allis said. “And it’s not just food prices. It’s the cost of occupying the building. We have an older building here, and our insurance went up tremendously.” For nearly four decades, Stroud’s has served family-style fried chicken dinners and holiday meals to families or big groups celebrating special occasions. Set up in a converted old barn on the edge of town, the rustic restaurant has been one of the few

places where parties of 20 could find tables big enough to accommodate everyone. But that will end next month. Allis said that the restaurant will open for one last Mother’s Day then will close for good. The owners are targeting May 15 as Stroud’s final day. Since the pandemic, Allis said, nothing’s been the same for the restaurant. Customers’ dining habits have changed, and



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Stroud’s has operated at 3661 N. Hillside since the summer of 1993.

the only way to have continued serving its menu without raising prices would have been to shrink the portion sizes. “We’re Stroud’s. We can’t do that,” Allis said. “We serve family-style meals.” Wichita’s Strouds was licensed by the Stroud’s in Kansas City, where the first Stroud’s opened in 1933 and where two still operate: at 5410 NE Oak Ridge Drive and at 8301 W. 135th St. in Overland Park. Wichita’s restaurant has the same menu and uses the same recipes. Back in 1993, the restaurant’s Kansas City owners — who’d been getting rave reviews nationwide but were reluctant to franchise or expand — signed their first-ever licensing agreement with Dennis Clifford and Blaze Brigman, both experienced Kansas City restaurateurs. The duo initially had trouble finding the right spot for the restaurant. Then, a young George Laham, who at the time was working for J.P. Weigand & Sons, showed them a private venue called the Wine Barn. The owners decided it was perfect, and they added 1,800-square-feet onto the back of the barn for the restaurant’s kitchen, where cooks prepared pan-fried chicken, real mashed potatoes., and gravy made with cracklings. The City of Wichita had to annex the property so that Stroud’s could install a city sewer line, and

neighboring business KWCH had to agree to allow an easement on its property for the line to be installed. The restaurant opened on Wednesday, June 30, with 30 full-time and 30-part-time workers, most wearing shirts printed with Stroud’s then-motto “We choke our own chickens.” The Farhas and Sheas bought the restaurant in 1999, and Allis started there in 2013, he said, eventually becoming a partner. Allis said he was dealing with feelings of sadness around the decision. In addition to losing his customers, he’ll also be losing long-standing employees, including a cook who’s been with Stroud’s for 25 years. He said he’d also miss his relationship with Wichita State University Athletics, which is Stroud’s biggest catering customer. The restaurant would frequently provide food for WSU’s Champions Club and its All-American Club and will serve one last meal to the latter on May 2. “Trust me, I’m very sad. But we had to do it,” Allis said. “We had a 30-some year run, and that’s kind of biblical in restaurant years.” Until it closes, Stroud’s will keep its usual hours: 4 to 8 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 4 to 9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays. Denise Neil: 316-268-6327, @deniseneil

Russian missiles pummel Kyiv, prompting rebuke from Trump

BY KIM BARKER AND MARIA VARENIKOVA
NYT News Service

KYIV, UKRAINE Russia killed at least 12 people and injured 90 others in a huge attack on the Ukrainian capital early Thursday, prompting President Donald Trump to issue a rare public critique of Moscow just hours after he lashed out at President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine. The assault was the deadliest on the capital, Kyiv, since the summer. Explosions shook buildings and sent more than 16,000 people into the subway system to take shelter; clouds of smoke rose over the city as the sun came up. One missile hit a two-story building with 12 apartments where emergency workers hunted for survivors. A five-story building next door lost all its windows. People stood outside, staring at the damage and talking on



Kyodo News/Sipa USA

A photo taken on Thursday shows destroyed buildings in Kyiv following Russian missile attacks. The strikes killed at least 12 people and injured 90 others.

their phones, telling loved ones that they were alive. No military target was visible nearby. Zelenskyy said nearly 70 missiles, including ballistic ones, and about 150 attack drones had targeted cities across the country — the hardest Kyiv was the hardest hit. Before cutting short a

trip to South Africa, Zelenskyy said at a news conference there that he saw no indication Russia was being pressured to agree to a ceasefire. He said with more pressure brought on Moscow, “we will be able to get closer to a complete, unconditional ceasefire.” To him, Zelenskyy added, the attack on

Kyiv instead appeared intended to pressure the United States. About the same time, Trump lashed out at President Vladimir Putin of Russia about the attack, showing how his administration’s positions can seem to flip-flop without warning. “Vladimir, STOP!” Trump posted on Truth Social, saying that he was “not happy” with the Russian strikes on Kyiv. “Not necessary, and very bad timing,” the post added. The attack came hours after Trump and his top aides demanded that Kyiv accept a U.S.-designed plan that would seemingly grant Russia all of the territory it has gained in the war, which started with Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. The plan also offers Ukraine only vague assurances about future security. So far, Zelenskyy has said Ukraine cannot accept such a deal. Since Trump took office

in January, his administration has echoed Kremlin talking points in the war, a reversal of previous U.S. policy under the Biden administration. Over the past week, the Trump administration has repeatedly threatened to walk away from the peace process, claiming that the two sides were both intransigent. On Wednesday, planned peace talks in London were downgraded, largely because the United States decided not to attend. Trump later called Zelenskyy “inflammatory” in a post on social media and said the Ukrainian president would only “prolong the ‘killing field.’” “The president’s frustrated; his patience is running very thin,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters later Wednesday. She echoed Trump in appearing to blame Zelenskyy, saying that Ukraine’s leader seemed to be “moving in the wrong direction.” On Thursday, in his Truth Social post, Trump said he wanted to “get the Peace Deal DONE!” Zelenskyy earlier pointed out that in March Ukraine accepted a U.S.

proposal for a 30-day ceasefire but that Putin has refused to agree to that plan. While Putin did announce a temporary truce for Easter Sunday, it seemed more of a public relations stunt than a ceasefire along the front lines. Ukrainian cities, at least, were largely spared for the truce’s 30 hours. Ukrainian officials have said that Russia has only intensified attacks against civilians since the start of U.S.-led peace negotiations. Andriy Yermak, the Ukrainian president’s chief of staff, posted a video on social media showing emergency workers Thursday. “Once again, Russia strikes civilians,” he said. Other Ukrainian officials urged Western partners to replenish Ukraine’s air defenses.

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