

# LAKE NORMAN TIMES

## Rita's Water Ice opens 500th store nationwide in Mooresville, two more lake-area stores planned

By Bill Kiser  
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One of the nation's fastest-growing fast-food franchises has set up shop in the Lake Norman area, with plans to expand its footprint even further.

Rita's Water Ice, which specializes in flavored Italian Ice frozen cones, held the grand opening for the chain's 500th store last week in Mooresville.

Among those attending the grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremonies were Jim Rudolph, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Rita's Water Ice, as well as other corporate officers and local business leaders.

This is the third Rita's Water Ice franchise to open in North Carolina in the last three months and the 86th nationwide this year. Company officials said that 14 more stores are expected to open by the end of the year.

"The opening of our 500th location is not only a special day for Rita's but a testament to our Guests' loyalty and the hard work of our Franchise Partners and staff," Rudolph said in a prepared release. "This is only the beginning of great things to come as we continue to expand and build the Rita's brand by providing **quality treats paired with superior service.**"

The Mooresville franchise is owned and operated by Joe and Cindy Gregory, who moved to the area from Maryland.

"We always enjoyed Rita's as a treat with our family and friends," Joe Gregory said in a prepared release. "When we moved here we missed going to Rita's and thought it would be a great market for the product.



A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held during the grand opening of the new Rita's Water Ice location in Mooresville on Nov. 2. Taking part were (from left) company officials Roger Falloon and Lynn Hoban; Rita's CEO and chairman of the board Jim Rudolph; and Joe and Cynthia Gregory, the franchise owners of the Mooresville location.

"Since we have opened, we have had several northerners come in to the store and they are so excited to be able to-go to Rita's again!"

Gregory said that the Mooresville store is the first of three planned for the Lake Norman area, but locations are still being scouted by Rita's officials.

Rita's Water Ice, which opened its first store in 1984, currently operates franchises in 15 states, with three states — in addition to North Carolina, the others are Georgia and Massachusetts — added this year.

The Mooresville franchise is located at 591-R River Highway (N.C. 150) in the Mooresville Crossing shopping center. Its operating hours are 12-9 p.m. Monday-Friday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, and 12-7 p.m. Sunday.