



Cool off just in time for summer

By Kristy Eppley Rupon – krupon@thestate.com

32 Degrees, which already has a store in Forest Acres' Trenholm Plaza, plans to open 10 new S.C. stores over the next three years.

"We are expanding pretty much all over the Southeast," said Jenny Buha, a spokeswoman for the company, which is franchising. "South Carolina is a very, very good state for us."

At least one of the stores is slated to open in Columbia this year, but Buha said a specific location has not yet been determined.

Frozen yogurt has gained popularity tremendously over the past couple of years with a range of stores opening throughout the nation – and the Midlands.

It is the second time in the limelight for the frozen treat, popularized in the 1980s when TCBY opened stores, well, pretty much everywhere.

That trend died down after a while. But the treat became popular again a few years ago with a slightly different model.

"The self-serve concept is what has renewed people's interest in yogurt," Buha said.

At most of the new frozen yogurt shops, customers are invited to make their own creations, choosing from a range of yogurt flavors and toppings.

Buha said 32 Degrees offers 50 different toppings a day out of 150 available. Half a dozen of the toppings are fresh, locally purchased fruits, she said.

Between keeping its offerings fresh and educating its staff on all things fro-yo, Buha thinks the brand will "survive" the boom-bust trend of the past, staying cool long after the next hot thing comes along.