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## McAlister's Comes to Herndon

### Steve and Heather Ricks open second Northern Virginia location.

By **Alex McVeigh**  
Tuesday, October 11, 2011

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McAlister's Deli is the newest addition to Herndon's restaurant scene, as the southern-based franchise opened a location in Worldgate Sept. 27, 2011. Local residents Steve and Heather Ricks own the deli, which is their second in the area after their Front Royal location, which opened in January 2010.

Steve Ricks spent 25 years working in the restaurant business, first for Chili's, then for their On the Border franchise. After two-plus decades, he decided to strike out on his own.

"I knew I wanted to do something on my own, and I met with a few different franchises, but the feel just wasn't right," he said. "Then I had a meeting with the people at McAlister's, and it went great. It was one of those meetings where right away people were joking around and sharing stories."

Steve Ricks says the quality of food was of utmost importance to him when deciding what kind of place to open, and McAlister's was a perfect fit.

"Right away I saw how good the food was, and that comes from the quality ingredients," he said. "I think McAlister's is the type that can give you a higher level of service than fast food, the food is brought to your table on real dishes and with real silverware, but at a price point that's similar to fast food."

The Ricks enjoy the food so much, that it goes against their usual tastes. Heather Ricks, who doesn't eat red meat, says her favorite sandwich is the horseradish roast beef griller. Steve Ricks says his favorite is the veggie club, even though he says he loves red meat.

Their signature special is the "Choose Two" portion on the menu, where half of anything on the menu can be paired with half of anything else. They also feature their signature "Giant Spuds," which can be prepared eight different ways and seven new club sandwiches.

Steve Ricks said they chose the Worldgate location due to its proximity to nearby residences and offices, which also provides them an outlet for their catering services.

The restaurant's décor is filled with photos of local landmarks, including Dulles Airport. Heather Ricks said picking them out was a fun process. She also said they are looking forward to getting more involved with the local community as the restaurant finds its footing.

"We'll have family nights, where children under age 12 eat for free, and we'll bring in things like a fire truck or arts and crafts," she said. "We're also hoping to connect with local organizations and schools for our Dining For Dollars events, where the group brings people in, and we donate 10 percent of the proceeds to the group."

She said that their Front Royal location raised almost \$4,000 during the 2010-11 school year.

McAlister's Deli is located at 13007 Worldgate Drive in Herndon, and can be found online at [www.mcalistersdeli.com](http://www.mcalistersdeli.com), or on Facebook under "McAlister's Deli - Herndon, VA."

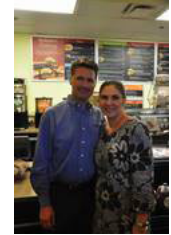


Photo by Alex McVeigh/The Connection  
**Steve and Heather Ricks opened McAlister's Deli in Worldgate Sept. 27, 2011.**



Photo by Alex McVeigh/The Connection  
**McAlister's Deli was opened Sept. 27, 2011 in Worldgate.**

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