

Snap Fitness expands in Douglassville

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DOUGLASSVILLE — When retired marketing executive John Stockton opened Snap Fitness in 2008, little did he know the economy was getting ready to head into a major recession. Stockton and his wife and business partner Karen moved forward with their plans to open the 2,500-square-foot fitness center, and have never looked back.

Now, Snap Fitness is marking its fifth anniversary with a major expansion to 4,000 square feet and the launch of a new fitness option: Fitness on Demand.

Stockton said Fitness on Demand is a natural extension of Snap Fitness, which is open 24/7.

“Fitness on Demand offers our members access to popular group fitness classes at the touch of a button,” Stockton said. And he means that literally. When a member gets to the fitness club, one of their options is the new Fitness on Demand option.

“They walk up to a touch-screen kiosk located at the entrance to the group workout room and can check the schedule to see if there is a class scheduled to begin. And if there isn’t, they can make a selection from a variety of workout videos led by instructors,” Stockton said.

They can select the type of workout — like cardiovascular or kick boxing — and the degree of difficulty. The selection will tell the client whether they need any equipment, like a mat or a step. A video screen automatically comes down from the ceiling and the class begins — projected onto the screen by the overhead projection equipment.

“I like it — it’s very easy to use. I figured it out with little instruction,” said Jennifer Huha of Douglassville. “There is a huge variety of classes. If you want to try the basics you can find it. It also offers a wider range of fitness options. It has a lot of variety and levels of training.”

If a member is not interested in taking a workout class as part of the new Fitness on Demand offerings, then they have their choice of cardiovascular equipment, strength training equipment, sessions with fitness trainers or (live) instructor led classes.

Adding Fitness on Demand to the offerings of Snap Fitness required some additional space. Stockton has increased the square footage of the club by nearly 60 percent, by taking over an empty shop next to his current location at the Redner’s Shopping Center on Old Swede Road in Douglassville. The space was turned in to a classroom space with mirrors and the video equipment needed for the Fitness on Demand classes.

“In addition, we have increased our strength and cardio equipment by 45 percent. And we have hired three additional trainers,” Stockton said.

The club is open 24 hours a day, and members are able to come and go as they please. There isn’t always staff at the club, but members have an access card that they swipe to get in.

“We are here when our members want to exercise, even if it’s in the middle of the night,” Stockton added. “We always keep the lights on, because we want to be an inviting place. We never want someone to think the club might be closed.”

In addition to the secure access to the club, Snap Fitness is also outfitted with a video security system. That means



Snap Fitness in Douglassville now offers 4,000 square feet of space to exercise. The fitness club has just completed an expansion of space, equipment and offerings. (Photo by Kevin Hoffman, The Mercury)

Stockton can keep an eye on the club from his desk, or from his iPhone if he's not on-site.

Huha has been a member of Snap Fitness since 2009. She said the facility is a safe and welcoming place to work out.

"For my husband and I it has also become a bit of a community. We work out in the morning, and there's a group of us that go at the same time — it's very welcoming. And it's also very safe with the key access," she said.

Stockton said he did not plan on what he calls the "economic tsunami" that hit just months after they opened Snap Fitness in January 2008.

"But the only way to survive is to keep going, keep providing excellent customer service and keep investing in the business," he said. Stockton acknowledged that some members left because of the economic downturn, but Snap Fitness kept up its advertising and commitment to customer service and cleanliness.

"I know every member's name and greet them when they come in," Stockton added. "We're a community gym, with 95 percent of our members living within 10 minutes. We're smaller than many of the other gyms and we're very personal."

Stockton's expansion required rental of the additional 1,500 square feet of space, the purchase of new equipment and hiring three additional people.

"I invested in the business and increased the value, but I did not increase membership fees," he said. In fact, Stockton said membership fees have not gone up in the five years Snap Fitness has been open.

"We have also committed to another 5½ years on the lease here," he said. "That will take me from 70 to 75 years old, but I really enjoy the interaction with people."

Snap Fitness is located at 180 Old Swede Road in Douglassville. For information about the club, call 610-385-5555, email douglassville@snapfitness.com or visit www.snapfitness.com/douglassville.