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Kelly's Roast Beef leaving Allston

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT DECEMBER 06, 2011

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WENDY MAEDA/GLOBE STAFF

Michael Ng (left) and other family members visited Kelly's Roast Beef in Allston in May, an option that ends Sunday.

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The family-run chain Kelly's Roast Beef will close its Allston restaurant this weekend, company officials said yesterday.

The newest of Kelly's six locations in Massachusetts will bid farewell after business Sunday, ending its 1 1/2-year run at the busy corner of Harvard and Commonwealth avenues.

"Our company is still growing, but it just didn't work out for us at this location," Dean Murphy, director of operations at Kelly's, said by phone. "Allston's a great neighborhood. Unfortunately, we couldn't maintain the sales level needed."

The franchise was born on July 3, 1951, when the original eatery opened on Revere Beach, he said. After opening four suburban locations, the company brought its seafood and

roast beef menu to Boston in May 2010, opening a 5,000-square-foot, 132-seat restaurant in a former liquor store in Allston.

For the first time in Kelly's 60-year history, the company will lay off workers, who were given prior notice of the closure, Murphy said.

"It's a terrible time to lose a job," he said. "Unfortunately there will have to be some layoffs. We've never done that before."

Employees who had transferred from another Kelly's restaurant to work at the Allston location will be able to continue working with the franchise at another of its five spots, but 20 of the 35 workers at the Allston eatery will lose their jobs, according to the operations director.

No business has been lined up to take over the space, but Murphy said the company is open to all options. Kelly's has eight years remaining on a 10-year lease the company signed for the space with the property's Allston-based owner, the Hamilton Co.


With no parking lot of its own, few available spots nearby, and no drive-through, Kelly's business concept struggled to bring in enough revenue to stay in operation, according to Murphy.

He said four of the other five Kelly's restaurants - in Saugus, Natick, Danvers, and Medford - have a drive-through window and offer parking. The flagship location on Revere Beach has neither, but benefits from heavy beach pedestrian traffic, a walk-up window, and available parking options nearby.

Murphy said the company, which claims to sell 1 million roast beef sandwiches annually, is looking to open other locations, though there are no definite plans to announce.

"We're certainly considering all areas at this time," he said.

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