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MOVABLE FEAST **West Side diner heads to Catskills**

By Jennifer Fermino

One 57-year-old, 30-ton, extra-spicy diner – to go, please.

The chrome and blue Munson Diner was set to be hauled off its rough-and-tumble Hell's Kitchen corner early this morning and moved to a new home in the decidedly less piquant Catskills village of Liberty.

Once in the bucolic 'burb, the diner – which has been featured on “Seinfeld” and “Law and Order”, and was an Andy Warhol hangout – will reopen, under the same name, after an extensive \$150,000 renovation that should be finished by the Fourth of July.

“We're thrilled that this important piece of New York City's cultural history is going to become an important piece of Liberty history,” said Allen Berube, the community-development coordinator of the village which has a population of 4,000.

Investors bought the diner for \$30,000 and are spending another \$40,000 to move the venerable ham-and-eggs haven, which they hope will lure tourists to the town.

“Almost everybody (in Liberty) can't wait,” said new owner Jeremy Gorelick. “It's a sign that the renaissance and revitalization is really happening and it's not just talk anymore.”

The town, 90 miles from Manhattan, was once a mecca for vacationing New Yorkers and a major notch on the Borscht Belt.

But it's been in an economic slump ever since the famed Grossinger's resort closed in the 1980's.

Many of the other popular village staples, like Katz's Bakery and Singer's Deli, have been shuttered as well.

Munson's stopped slinging hash for good last summer, when its owners sold it to the Volvo dealership next door so it could expand.

“We knew we didn't want to demolish it because it was a very important part of New York,” said Tony Chianese, the general manager of the Volvo showroom, who added that the American Diner Museum in Rhode Island helped get him together with Liberty officials.

“This is a preservationist dream come true,” said the director of the museum, Daniel Zilka.

Not everyone was thrilled about the move.

Jose Alarcon, 44 worked at the diner for 21 years, starting as a delivery boy and working his way up to cook.

“It can't be the same,” he said. “That corner, 49th and 11th, is very important to me. You'll never see the Munson Diner in New York City again.”