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Section: Business

Message Envy comes to Park City

Andrew Kirk, OF THE RECORD STAFF

Nationwide, there are almost 600 locations of **Message Envy**, a franchise approach to massage service that enables lower pricing and a predictable experience. There is only one in the country attached to a hotel, and it's at Newpark. Entrepreneur John Johnson wanted it that way. He owns several businesses in Utah and decided to participate in the franchise upon his wife's urgings. She loved the convenience and affordability of **Message Envy**.

The benefit of the franchise system to consumers comes in the form of memberships. For \$45 a month, members can enjoy a one-hour massage at any of the company's 600 locations. Additional massages are only \$39. Theoretically, a member could get one a week for \$162 a month.

Besides wanting to please his wife, Johnson said he was really impressed by the company's mission: to make the luxury and health benefits of massage affordable for everyone.

"It's not for the elite anymore with our prices," he said. "And it's so convenient with all the locations, the business model made a lot of sense."

He immediately began looking for a place in Park City, and wanted one near a hotel so visitors who were **Message Envy** members could get discounted massages on vacation.

Also, he said, people in Summit County are so physically active that massage for many of them is more a necessity than pampering.

He got approval from corporate, and secured a contract with Newpark Hotel at Kimball Junction. Then he had to wait for everything to get built.

In the meantime, he opened one in Murray to work out any kinks. The Kimball Junction location is not in addition to or an extension of his other site, he said, it's the culmination of everything he's learned about the business.

The Newpark location has all the signature design features of **Message Envy**. For example, the walls in the rooms are purple, the corporate color. But Johnson also selected artwork, tiling and carpet that matched the feel of Newpark Hotel to create cohesion.

The facility has 11 rooms, including two couples rooms where friends or companions can get massages together.

A large waiting room has leather recliners and a fireplace to help people relax before or after their session. Johnson's locations are the only ones with these features in Utah, explained manager Shawn Price.

He also pointed out another unique feature members won't find elsewhere in Utah. A few of the rooms have sinks because the Newpark location gained clearance from corporate to participate in a pilot program to offer facials. **Message Envy** is considering offering full spa services and the pilot programs will test interest, Price explained.

A benefit to the established business plan at every location is members know what they're going to get. The masseuses are employees, not independent business people, so each is trained in every form of massage including hot stone and every type is the same price.

This simplifies the menu: anything you want.

Masseuses like working for them because the membership system means they have steady work, they don't have the stress of running their own business and unlike at many cooperative efforts, they don't have to share their tips, he said.

The Newpark location currently has 15 therapists on staff, most of them full-time. It opens at 8 a.m. and closes late at night Monday through Saturday for people who want treatments before work, or after running errands in the evening. Sunday hours are shorter, but still open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Non-members are also welcome at **Massage Envy**, but prices are slightly higher, Price said.

Sam Madsen said he's been going to the **Massage Envy** in Murray for over a year and said he's never had a poor experience.

"The stores are clean and comfortable," he said. "The pricing is right. I can get twice as many massages in a month for the same price as elsewhere."

Massage Envy

1476 Newpark Blvd. Suite 70

(on the south side of the hotel)

658-3322

[Photo:](#)

[Massage Envy's Trishelle Longhurst gives a back rub in Newpark on Thursday. Photo by David Ryder/Park Record](#)

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