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Community rallies for Orbit owners Truck rams pizza shop in Thursday night accident

BY MELISSA MCKEON MMCKEON@HOLDENLANDMARK.COM



A truck driven by Andrew Soske sits in the front of Holden landmark Orbit Pizza after an accident Thursday night. The restaurant's owners, Aliko and Nick Karas, say they have been overwhelmed by support from the community. Joyce Roberts photo

HOLDEN — It may be weeks, it may be month, before Orbit Pizza owners Aliko and Nick Karas can reopen their Main Street business, but they're sure of one thing.

"This community's the best in the

world," in Aliko Karas' words.

"Everybody has come to support us," she said.

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Karas says.

"I'm so touched," Aliki Karas says.

Everybody includes a lot of folks. People from Paxton, Holden, Princeton, Rutland, and all over the area have shown their support for the family after the accident.

Until that night, the Karas family had been running their pizza shop for 30 years in the town where they also live and raised their family.

Nick Karas had just served the last customer of the day around 8:30 that Thursday evening, and had shut off the lights, locked up and headed home. He was just a short distance up Main Street when he saw the first fire truck heading in the opposite direction. Back home, he heard the LifeFlight heli

copter overhead as well, but had no idea they were headed to his business until police came to his door to tell him about the accident.

Just minutes after Karas left his business, the vehicle driven by Soske, headed northbound on Main Street, left the roadway and hit a telephone pole and a parked car before crashing through the kitchen area of the business. Soske was trapped in the vehicle for more than half an hour before emergency crews were able to extricate him; he was taken to UMass Medical Center - University Campus by LifeFlight, where he was listed in fair condition after the accident. Soske was released from the hospital on Sept. 27.

That's another source of gratitude for the Karas family, that Soske is doing well, and that no one else was seriously injured in the accident, which is still under investigation by Holden Police. Holden Police Chief George Sherrill said it appeared that speed was a factor in the crash.

The Karas family is in the process still of getting estimates and permits and work may begin this week, Nick Karas said; they're not able yet to say when all the work will be finished and the business reopened. But there is one thing they want to do right away.

"We want to thank everybody."



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