

# GRAND HAVEN TRIBUNE



## Checkers fast-food eatery to open next year

By Marie Havenga | Nov. 28, 2018

Although the exact location hasn't been determined, a Checkers fast-food restaurant is coming to the area next year.

Bruce Kim, director of franchise development for the Tampa, Florida-based [Checkers & Rally's](#) corporation, said a Spring Lake resident will be the franchisee. Kim declined to identify the person.

Checkers' menu includes burgers, chicken, fish, hot dogs, BLT sandwiches, fries, shakes, and more.

The new Checkers is expected to be open by next spring or summer. Kim said the company has begun the search for a location.

“The first choice would be Grand Haven because it's the larger of Ferrysburg, Spring Lake and Grand Haven,” he said. “But the franchisee is flexible as long as it's a good location.”

Kim said the ideal site would have a high traffic count, good visibility and be in an area where people like to congregate.

“We just started the search last week,” he said. “It usually takes about 2-6 months to secure a site. We identify a site, negotiate, and either buy or lease. It takes another month or two for permits.”

As an example of an ideal site, Kim mentioned the area near the Walmart store on U.S. 31 in Grand Haven Township.

“That's kind of what we look for,” he said. “We want to be near a major traffic area like that. What's interesting is, in Grand Haven, there's not a whole lot of restaurants by that Walmart. Usually, there's a lot of food congregated in an area like that.

“Along (Beacon Boulevard) or 172nd Avenue will probably be one of the first places we'll look, because those are the most promising areas,” he added.

Kim said another option is to purchase an existing building. The former Wendy's building on Beacon Boulevard is for sale, as is the former Burger King in Spring Lake Township.

“We could go for conversion of an existing building,” Kim said. “The other option is to buy a location with a building, scrape and rebuild.”

The Checkers & Rally's company also has a new modular program. The building is constructed off-site and then shipped to the new location.

“They're pre-built buildings,” Kim said. “You put them on a foundation and get the utilities put in and, voila, you have a new store.”

Because Checkers doesn't focus on dine-in customers, the building footprint is smaller than that of many competitors

“The lot size requirements are half of what is required of a McDonald's or Burger King,” Kim said.

Checkers currently has 73 stores in Michigan, including Grand Rapids and Muskegon, and 881 stores nationwide.

“Michigan is one of our hottest markets overall,” Kim said.

Most locations are drive-thru only, although if an existing building is transformed into a Checkers, it may include indoor seating.

“Any new building will only offer outdoor patio seating,” Kim said.