

Grand Rapids Business Journal

Fast-food chain plans more locations in West Michigan

By Rachel Watson | November 20, 2018



A drive-thru fast-food chain is planning to add up to 10 locations in West Michigan.

Tampa, Florida-based Checkers & Rally's Restaurants announced plans this summer to expand its total of Checkers and Rally's franchises from 881 to 1,200 by 2020.

As part of that goal, the company said last week it is looking to add up to 10 Checkers locations in metro Grand Rapids. The region doesn't currently have any Rally's locations, and none are planned.

Bruce Kim, director of franchise development for Checkers & Rally's, said the company has signed one franchisee and is in talks with another. The franchisees — whose names he did not disclose — are looking to open one location apiece, one in Grand Haven and one in Lowell. He said the Grand Haven franchisee hopes to open a location in time for next year's tourist season.

He said other prospective franchisees have expressed interest in opening locations in Muskegon and Grand Rapids.

Kim said Checkers & Rally's Restaurants is scouting property locations, but no real estate deals have been completed yet.

"When we find a qualified franchisee that has the experience and background we're looking for, once they're approved, they tell us they want to be in these areas ... then we initiate a live search for locations that are available," Kim said. "We want to know where they want to be, but it's a matter of finding the right people and places."

Kim said Checkers & Rally's determined 10 Checkers locations is the amount that could open in West Michigan without over-saturating the market.

The 10-store expansion plan is projected to create up to 300 jobs, with 20-30 employees per store.

Checkers & Rally's Restaurants

[Checkers](#) & Rally's Restaurants was founded through a merger of the two brands in 1999.

Rally's was established in Louisville, Kentucky in 1985, and Checkers was founded in Mobile, Alabama in 1986.

Both brands specialize in hamburgers, hot dogs, french fries and milkshakes and offer a double drive-thru and outdoor seating, with no indoor seating.