

Checkers to Reopen on Missouri Avenue

After a two-year absence, the iconic burger joint will return to south Clearwater.

- By [Jeffrey Rosenfield](#)
- [Email the author](#)
- May 11, 2012



The Checkers on the corner of Missouri Avenue and Belleair Road should reopen by Memorial Day, according to a company official. Credit [Jeffrey Rosenfield](#)

Photos





Following a two-year hiatus and after nearly a year of behind-the-scenes wrangling with the city, [Checkers](#), the Florida-based fast food franchise, will reopen its location at 1595 S. Missouri Ave. by the end of the month.

The company, which is based in Tampa and used to have its headquarters in Clearwater, retook ownership of the Missouri Avenue branch after the previous franchisee failed.

“We had an opportunity to get back in that location, and we knew it was a strong location ... so we’re excited,” Jennifer Durham, Checkers VP of Franchise Development, said by phone.

Are you excited Checkers is returning to south Clearwater, or have you moved on to other fast food joints in since it closed? Let us know in the comments below.

Checkers has more than 800 restaurants across the chain, 40 percent of which are owned by the company; the other 60 percent are owned by independent franchisees.

“It was not an easy task to reopen at this location,” Durham added. “The city made it very difficult. It was a long process we had to go through.”

Restaurant Will Get a New Sign

In addition to meeting landscaping requirements, the company will have to install a new monument-style sign, replacing the old pylon, or pole, sign that adorned the lot on the corner of Missouri Avenue and Belleair Road.

But according to Durham, the company’s buildings are so visible and iconic that people shouldn’t have a problem realizing the site is open despite the low-slung sign.

“Our buildings stand out, so it should be fine with the new sign.”

Ice Cream, Wings Now on Menu

While the menu will remain the same, Durham wants everyone to be aware that Checkers now serves ice cream and “crazy good wings” in addition to its signature burgers and famous crispy fries.

She also wants people to understand that even though some of the franchisees have gone under as a result of the tough economy, the Checkers brand is stronger than ever.

“We’re growing our company,” she said. “We’re actively looking for franchisees ... and we might reopen other locations in Pinellas County if this one proves to be successful.

“We’re always going to be true to who we are — offering great food at tremendously low prices.”