

## Checkers Grand Opening Draws Crowd, Company Luminaries

The founder of the franchise along with hundreds of patrons turned out for the re-opening of the East Bay Drive eatery.

By [Jeffrey Rosenfield](#)



Checkers founder Herb Brown (R) greets current CEO Rick Silva during the re-opening of the East Bay Drive location on Saturday. Credit: [Jeffrey Rosenfield](#)

In founder Herb Brown's words, the Checkers restaurant on East Bay Drive was one of the busiest locations in the franchise's early history, providing a springboard for the company's incredible success.

So it should come as no surprise that current management decided to re-open the long closed location as part of its efforts to expand its presence in the marketplace.

On Saturday morning hundreds of people, along with Brown, current CEO Rick Silva and dozens of other former and current company officials, showed up at 3150 East Bay Drive to welcome the old store back into the fold.

"This was the store that showed the potential that Checkers had," Brown, who helped found the company back in 1989 when he was in his mid-60s, said. "It's very exciting for me to see this location open again."

The event was part of a nationwide effort to revitalize the company that is competing in a crowded market place with dozens of other fast food franchises.

Silva said they will reopen or introduce 50 new stores nationwide to the franchise this year, or an average of one per week.

In addition to face painting and eating contests on Saturday, the company gave away packs of 52 combo meal tickets to more than 100 lucky attendees, many of whom lined up the night before the event to receive the year's worth of free meals.

Nearby resident James LoCastro was one of the combo meal winners; he said he's glad the restaurant is finally open again.

"I live just down the street, and I drove by here everyday wondering why it was closed," he said. "This is such a great location. I'm glad they decided to reopen it."

According to Silva, an affable man best known for his [appearance on "Undercover Boss"](#), the decision to reopen the East Bay Drive location as part of this new strategy was a no-brainer.

"It feels fantastic to reopen this location...because a lot of careers started here," he said. "It really kicked off our brand across the country. We have 800 stores nationwide because of this store."

Silva also said the Checkers brand continues to be a strong one today, thanks to the principals Brown built the company on a quarter-century ago.

"What Herb created 25 years ago continues today, and that's the core values of good food, good values and good service. Those kind of things never go out of style."