

Business Review

Get ready for some good eats

Hungry entrepreneurs interested in owning a fast food restaurant with an old Southern feel — all-day breakfast including country ham and buttermilk biscuits anyone? — will have their chance when **Bojangles' Restaurants** returns to Florida.

The expanding Charlotte, N.C.-based chain has pegged the Sunshine State as its growth epicenter, with plans to open up to 65 restaurants between the Tampa-St. Pete and the Sarasota-Bradenton markets in the next six to 18 months. If those openings go well, the chain could expand as far south as Bonita Springs and Cape Coral, **Chris Bailey**, Bojangles' franchise development executive, tells Coffee Talk.

"We want to grow in the best markets," says Bailey, "but we don't want to overstep."

The chain is well known in North Carolina and Georgia and currently has one store in Florida, in Jacksonville. In addition to the Gulf Coast, franchise executives are planning to open stores in Pensacola and expand in Jacksonville over the next two years.

Bojangles' had a bigger presence in Florida, and the Gulf Coast, in the 1980s under different owners with a strategy that focused on the locations over the owners, says Bailey. The current philosophy, he says, is to find a group of local and established entrepreneurs and grow through the operations side.

Bojangles' was founded in 1977 and has 375 restaurants in 11 states along the East Coast, as well as five in Honduras and one in Mexico. About 236 of those stores are franchises, and the rest are corporate owned.