



Submarina to take bigger bite out of sandwich market

Franchise to grow into Arizona, Florida and Texas

By **HEATHER CHAMBERS**, The Daily Transcript

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Submarina Inc., the self-described "fast-casual" submarine sandwich chain based in San Marcos, said it will grow franchise operations outside of California to include more than 300 locations during the next 10 years. The submarine sandwich chain operates 51 stores in San Diego, Riverside and Orange counties.

Submarina said it will open locations in Arizona, Florida and Texas during the next 10 years. It also plans to expand into the Inland Empire.

"We've had tremendous success in Southern California over the last 30 years," said Submarina President and CEO Jeff Warfield, in a press release. "When we sat down and analyzed what we've achieved in that significant milestone, we decided it's time for us to grow and take our concept outside of California."

The first Submarina to open outside of the California market will debut in Houston on Aug. 1. A development agreement calls for 110 restaurants for the greater Houston area.

A Florida agreement encompasses 86 counties, including Brevard, Indian River, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Volusia.

In Arizona, it will open 140 locations including approximately 10 shops in Tucson and Phoenix.

Warfield said Submarina also plans to open in additional markets across the United States.

"The time has come to uncork the privately-held family business and let it breathe," he said.

Jeff Warfield's father, Submarina co-founder Les Warfield, handed Jeff the company reins when he retired in 2000. Les and his business partner, Ron Vickers, opened the first Submarina restaurant in Poway in 1977.

Vickers retired within months of his partner, leaving leadership to the younger Warfield.

During the last year, the company tested a revamped interior décor, redesigned retail logo and upscale, California theme in Riverside.

"Customer response to our changes has been outstanding, which tells us we need to change all our stores in the same concept," Warfield said.

Submarina has since partnered with real estate broker Michael A. Scott, retail construction firm **Schrader and Martinez** and design company **Fitch** to help move the concept forward.