

CA sandwich chain Togo's to open in Sparks, plans larger Northern NV expansion



A look at the interior of a Togo's sandwich shop. The California-based brand plans to open its first location in Northern Nevada this summer. Courtesy Photo

By [Kaleb Roedel](#) Monday, April 26, 2021

- [Discuss](#)
- [Comment, Blog about](#)
- [Share this](#)
- [Email, Facebook, Twitter](#)

Dave Erickson likes Togo's sandwiches — a lot.

Growing up in the Bay Area and attending college in San Jose, where the Togo's franchise was founded, Erickson could always count on his favorite sandwich shop being a short drive or walk away.

That changed a year ago, in April 2020, when the Bay Area native moved to Reno. Simply put, there were no Togo's in Reno — or anywhere in Northern Nevada, for that matter. If Erickson and his family wanted to savor Togo's sandwiches, they had to drive back to California, traveling roughly 100 miles before reaching the nearest one in Auburn.

“My wife and I relocated here and we agreed that we're missing those Togo's flavors and quality,” said Erickson, whose youngest son attended the University of Nevada, Reno and still lives in the area. “And during the whole time my son and all of his friends from California that were at UNR complained about the lack of sandwich options.”

Erickson didn't want to just wait and hope Togo's would migrate to Northern Nevada. So he decided to turn his taste for Togo's into a business venture and help bring the California-based brand to the region.

With that, Erickson signed a franchise agreement with Togo's to open the company's first location in Northern Nevada.



Reno resident Dave Erickson, center, is turning his taste for Togo's into a business venture and helping bring the brand to Reno-Sparks.

John Dyer, director of franchise development and real estate at Togo's, said the company plans to open a franchise in Sparks by late summer.

“The biggest reason that makes the Reno market attractive to Togo’s,” Dyer said, “is all of the California transplants like Dave that have grown up on the brand in California and other parts of the West Coast are now living in Reno, and have familiarity with the brand but don’t have the ability to access it because we don’t currently have a presence there.

“And Northern Nevada is much more business friendly, and has lower real estate costs and lower labor costs.”

So much so that Togo’s feels greater Northern Nevada has the potential to hold at least 12 restaurants, said Dyer, pointing to Carson City, Winnemucca and Elko as cities the brand is targeting for future expansion.

“We’re looking for actively engaged owner operators that are excited about operating a restaurant business, and getting involved in their local communities to build the brand and build the business,” Dyer said.

According to the company, franchisees will have to make a total investment ranging between \$238,500 and \$477,700. Typically, the initial franchise fee is \$30,000, but this year, in recognition of Togo’s 50th anniversary, the company knocked that fee down to \$15,000.

Moreover, during a new franchisee’s first year in operation, they only have to pay royalties equating to 2.5% of gross sales instead of the standard 5%, Dyer said.

In all, Togo’s hopes to pencil in 21 new franchisee agreements across the West Coast in 2021, and open the doors of seven of those locations by the end of the year. Dyer said the company recently signed with a franchisee that will open three restaurants in the Las Vegas area, with the first one opening in Henderson by late summer.

SKIP THE LINE



Due to the pandemic, Togo's has added self-ordering kiosks in all of its fast-casual restaurants.

Most of Togo's 200 locations are concentrated in California. The company also has four sandwich shops dotted in Oregon, and one apiece in Washington and Arizona. Dyer said the company plans to not only grow the brand in states it already has a strong customer base, but also expand into states like Utah and Idaho.

"We're obviously focused on development in the state of California, but there are many reasons to be focused on opportunities outside of the state because so many former Californians would have instant brand recognition with Togo's," he said.

Erickson, for one, said he is committed to developing at least three Togo's shops in Reno-Sparks. He said his sons are already placing their orders.

"My youngest was telling me the other day, I can't wait to get the pastrami sandwich," Erickson said. "And my oldest said he can't wait to get the 'Pretzelrami.'"

Dyer said each new Togo's restaurant would create between 10-15 full- and part-time jobs.

Because of pandemic-related changes in consumer behavior, Togo's is looking to open in smaller spaces, ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 square feet, with larger patio dining space. The company is also exploring the idea of adding drive-thru options to its new designs, a feature none of its current restaurants have.

Over the past year, Togo's has added curbside pickup and self-ordering kiosks to meet the demand amid COVID restrictions. The company has also seen a boom in customers using third-party delivery platforms like Uber Eats Grubhub and DoorDash, Dyer said.

"The business has changed," Dyer said. "Stores are way more tech-focused, and focused on getting the products to our guests in more convenient ways."