



## Beef 'O' Brady's extends bowl game sponsorship

Execs: Sponsorship driving franchisee interest in brand  
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Beef 'O' Brady's has renewed its sponsorship of a college football bowl game, an investment the Tampa, Fla.-based family sports pub chain hopes will spur more franchisees to open new stores in California and abroad.

The chain with 217 units in 23 states has been the title sponsor of the bowl game, which is played at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, Fla., since 2009 and recently signed a seven-figure deal with ESPN Regional Television to continue its sponsorship for three more years.

"We're well-known in Florida, but outside of Florida Beef 'O' Brady's doesn't mean much to people," said Chris Elliott, Beef 'O' Brady's chief executive officer since March 2010. "The bowl game will do a lot for us outside of the state of Florida."

In fact, the TV broadcast of last year's Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl prompted a Nampa, Idaho man, Jim Wood, to contact the chain and inquire about opening a Beef 'O' Brady's in the Boise area. Wood plans to run the first Beef 'O' Brady's in the Northwest this year.

With expansion in mind, Beef 'O' Brady's is scouting locations and prospective franchisees in Mexico, Canada, China, Brazil and the Middle East -- plus the West Coast, said James Walker, chief development officer for Beef 'O' Brady's.

The bowl game title sponsorship created a national buzz that prompts about 20 to 30 calls a month from interested parties inquiring about opening Beef 'O' Brady's franchises in California and Nevada, Walker said. Beef 'O' Brady's is looking at locations in the Los Angeles and Las Vegas areas, Walker said. The most Western unit now is in Colorado, he said.

Walker noted a Chinese businessman in Shanghai had heard about the Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl and was interested in opening a unit there. Same for potential operators in California.

"We've have gotten West Coast inquiries because of the bowl game. People know us from the bowl game. The bowl got our name out there and is getting people to understand who we are," Elliott said.

The bowl game deal will also get local Florida franchisees involved by introducing watch parties and providing exposure for the brand for all the franchisees in the system, he said. The bowl game started as the St. Petersburg Bowl in 2008.

"We're treating it like a community event instead of just a football game," Elliott said.

The Beef 'O' Brady's brand is based on family, sports and meal value, with future international units to include some local sports elements such as soccer in Mexico. New units that are opened this year will also feature a new prototype.

Start-up costs range from \$200,000 to \$500,000, depending if there is a current building or whether new construction is involved, Walker said.