

Jan. 08, 2008

By [David Sterrett](#)

## Sandwich chain in deal to open 5 stores in suburbs

(Crain's) — Spicy Pickle, an upscale sandwich chain, announced Tuesday it has signed a deal with a franchisee to develop five stores in the Chicago suburbs.

The Denver-based chain opened its first Chicago-area store in Lincoln Park last May and plans to eventually have about 30 or 40 stores in the area, says Marc Geman, CEO of the company founded in 1999.

He says the company is hoping to work with the franchisee to open a store this spring in Naperville, but no site has been selected yet. The development also includes the possibility of stores in Oak Brook, Lemont and Orland Park.

“We were waiting for the right franchisee to help continue the development of Spicy Pickle in the Chicago market,” Mr. Geman says.

The company views Chicago as one of its central markets, he says. The chain has 36 stores open nationwide. It offers \$6.45 sub and panini sandwiches as well as salads, soups and thin-crust pizzas. The sandwiches come with chips and a dill pickle dipped in the secret-recipe spicy juice.

The Spicy Pickle in Lincoln Park began as a franchisee-run store, but the company decided about a month and a half ago to take the store over from the previous owners.

“We just felt the store wasn't being run up to our standards,” Mr. Geman said. “Sales have gone up since the change.”