

Business

Roy Rogers plans expansion on Long Island

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A Roy Rogers restaurant in Hagerstown, Md., serves up a crabcake sandwich combo meal on July 20, 2004. Photo Credit: AP

Roy Rogers, once an immensely popular fast-food chain that blanketed the mid-Atlantic with hundreds of locations, is back in expansion mode, and its co-president said it would like to return to Long Island.

Jim Plamondon, co-president of Roy Rogers Franchise Co. in Frederick, Maryland, said the chain has had discussions with prospective franchise owners on Long Island.

"I would love to be there," Plamondon said. "We would like to find a franchise owner because the local owner is going to have a much better understanding of the market."

He said the cost to open a new restaurant is about \$1.3 million to \$1.5 million, but that the cost could be half that if an existing, vacant fast-food structure is used.

Roy Rogers, which once had nearly 650 locations, has 49 stores after opening a new restaurant in Franklin, New Jersey. Of the 49 stores, 26 are franchise-owned, and the rest are corporate-owned.



The last Roy Rogers on Long Island was located in Shirley. The chain said it would like to return to the market. Photo Credit: Carl Corry

Roy Rogers Franchise Co. manages the franchise restaurants and also owns the Roy Rogers trademark, while Plamondon Enterprises Inc. operates the company-run stores.

Both are run by Plamondon and his brother, Pete Plamondon Jr.

Roy Rogers was created in 1968 by the Marriott Corp., and was bought by Hardee's in 1990. Plamondon said the acquirer planned to convert Roy Rogers to Hardee's, but stopped once the early conversions failed.

Many of the New York area Roy Rogers stores were then sold off to other chains, including Wendy's and Burger King.

Other stores simply closed. The last Roy Rogers on Long Island was located in Shirley, and closed in 2010.

Plamondon, whose family owned Roy Rogers franchises, purchased the Roy Rogers franchising rights and brand name in 2002.

"At that time there were about 80 Roy Rogers locations left, and we intentionally shrunk it further," he said. "We pruned the entire system, but now we are back in growth mode."

Plamondon said the chain would like to expand by two to six stores per year for the next five years.

Other stores in Maryland and New Jersey are scheduled to open later this year.