

“If they do that well in Boston, where people smoke and drink (a lot), just think what they’ll do here.”

John Peed, UFood Grill franchisee opening a Roseville branch

A healthy eatery wants bite of region

Why, at the age of 77, would an East Coast entrepreneur known as the “guru of franchising” start something new?

George Naddaff, who gained fame as the founder of the Boston Market restaurant chain, laughs at the question. “My wife,” he replies.

She wants him out of the house?

“Bingo,” he says.

But, seriously, Naddaff has another motivation for spearheading the national rollout of **UFood Grill**, a “fast-casual” eatery from Massachusetts that opens its first West Coast location next month – in Roseville.

He’s looking to cap his storied career with another triumph – “the first better-for-you national food chain.”

It’s familiar ground for Naddaff, who years ago opened the nation’s first chain of day care centers east of the Mississippi. He later took a small chain of rotisserie chicken restaurants and turned it into **Boston Market**, which fell on hard times only after he sold it.

He stumbled onto his newest venture near Boston in 2002. Noticing crowds at a small suburban eatery, he sampled the food and eventually bought the business, crafting an expansion plan that calls for 800 outlets by 2010.

What’s special about UFood? Naddaff says it’s perfect for a nation obsessed with healthy eating.

The place offers popular dishes – like burgers, bruschetta sandwiches, brown rice bowls and wraps – made with lean, healthy ingredients that are baked, grilled or steamed. (“We never, ever fry,” Naddaff says.)

There also are lots of veggies, salads, smoothies and protein drinks.

Will nutritional information be prominently displayed? “Bingo,” Naddaff says.

In keeping with that motif, most UFood Grill outlets also sell **GNC** vitamins and supplements. And some will bake and sell energy bars developed by Reno’s **Fresh Energy Bakery**.

The UFood chain currently has just 10 stores, nine of them in the Boston area. The 11th will open in Roseville’s Nugget Shopping Center on Sept. 4, operated by local franchisees **John and Tami Peed**, and **Shane and**



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From left, UFood Grill executive chef **Efrem Cutler** and owners **Shane Vogel**, wife **Wendi Vogel**, **Tami Peed** and husband **John Peed** look over their restaurant signage.



BOB SHALLIT

Wendi Vogel. They plan to have 10 UFood outlets in the Sacramento area, from Davis to Granite Bay.

The husbands, who are brothers-in-law, left careers in high-tech and beverage distribution to start their venture after Peed encountered a UFood Grill while visiting Boston. He was impressed by the line of people waiting

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to get inside.

He envisions even bigger demand here. "If they do that well in Boston, where people smoke and drink (a lot), just think what they'll do here," he says.

Bingo.

■ ■ ■

Piping up: Roseville city officials are crowing about another big business retention success.

A month after reporting they were able to keep chipmaker **Emulex Corp.** in town, they're announcing that **Groeniger & Co.**'s pipe distribution facility also is staying put.

"We're looking at this as another Emulex," says Deputy City Manager **Julia Burrows**, referring to the 55-year-old pipe company that's one of Roseville's top 25 sales tax gener-



Sacramento Bee/Randall Benton

From left, UFood Grill owners John Peed, Wendi Vogel, husband Shane Vogel and Tami Peed, John's wife, check out the interior work of their Roseville restaurant. The couples plan to open 10 outlets in the area.

ators.

The company had been seeking larger space for a year. After talks broke down between Groeniger and **SureWest Communications** for the latter's vacant space near Roseville High School, it appeared the only other options were outside Roseville.

But Burrows says she persuaded the two firms to renew their talks. A compromise was struck.

The Sept. 1 move into the new space should be relatively un-

complicated; the new digs are right across the street from Groeniger's current location.

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Dog day: Regional airline **ExpressJet** is adding new service between Sacramento and Bakersfield in September.

Which comes just a little too late for Metro Chamber of Commerce boss **Matt Mahood**.

Unable to get a direct or affordable flight to B-Town, he and his 6-year-old daughter, **Melina**, are driving there this weekend to

pick up a purebred Havanese puppy.

Why a Havanese? They don't shed, which makes them great pets for people with allergies, like Mahood.

"I would have liked a Lab," he says. "But my sinuses wouldn't have been happy."

The pooch's name? Not Bingo. He'll be called Samson.

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