

# Corporate offices move to San Jose

CEO Erik Johnson says goal is to attract new franchisees

By Jennifer Pittman

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**SANTA CRUZ** » Erik's DeliCafé, an old-time general store-themed restaurant chain that will be opening its 33rd location next month, has moved its headquarters to San Jose to better serve a growing franchise community.

"It's just to give us a presence over the hill," said Erik Johnson who founded the first restaurant in Scotts Valley in 1973. The company, with about 60 employees, now includes five corporate-owned restaurants in the Santa Cruz and Los Gatos area and 27 franchises throughout Northern California. Two more are set to open in the next six months.

"Most of our growth has been over the hill," Johnson said.

The 2,200-square-foot headquarters in the Garden Center on The Alameda in San Jose is a more professional corporate showcase

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## Erik's

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and a better commute for several of the executives who are already in Silicon Valley, Johnson said.

The newest franchise will open in May in the new Gateway Center in Santa Clara, just about a mile from Levi's Stadium, the new home of the 49ers, and will serve up an expanded menu with espresso and breakfast sandwiches. Other changes include updating the menu with wraps and paninis in some locations and remodeling several restaurants. The plan is to grow the number of franchises by three to four annually, according to Johnson.

When my wife (Judy) and I started in 1973, it wasn't the intent to open a bunch

of stores," Johnson said. "It was just to give people a good product that we would enjoy eating ourselves."

But, now that Johnson has stepped back from the day-to-day operational side of things, the move made sense.

"I'll still be here," Johnson said.

He plans to maintain offices in the warehouse he has owned since 1986 in the Harvey West industrial area of Santa Cruz, just a few minutes from his home. He envisions creating a venue to show off the vintage farm equipment and general store-themed items collected for many years by his late father, Ray Johnson, who provided the initial loan to start the business and was an original soup-maker and life-long mentor for decades.

"I've got like 460 brand-

## ERIK'S DELICAFÉ

**What:** A privately owned deli company with five corporate-owned delis in Santa Cruz County and Los Gatos and 27 franchises in California. The menu includes sandwiches, wraps, soups and salads for lunch, dinner and catering services.

**Headquarters:** 1550 The Alameda, Suite 330, San Jose

**Background:** Founded in Scotts Valley in 1973.

**Leadership:** Erik Johnson, founder and CEO

**Employees:** About 60, including part-time staff.

**Information:** 831-458-1818; <http://www.eriksdelicafe.com>

**Financials:** Expected revenues this year of more than \$21 million.

ing, irons, plus potbelly stoves and things," Johnson said.