

California Tortilla® Announces Signing of Franchise Deal for Montgomery County, Md.

Three Seasoned Restaurant Employees Team Up to Break Into Business Ownership with the Popular California-Style Mexican Brand

POTOMAC, MD, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- California Tortilla®, the California-style Mexican concept famous for its chef-inspired menu combining bold flavors and fresh ingredients and its Wall of Flame featuring 75 hot sauces, announced today that it has signed an agreement with a former employee, Erin Bila, her husband, Rogerio, and a business partner, Dilshad Awan, to open a new franchise location in Maryland's Montgomery County. The newly formed group, operating as Bila & Awan Group, LLC, hopes to secure a location soon and be open by early next year.



California Tortilla expects to open a new franchise location in Montgomery County, Md., early next year.

“

I pushed for California Tortilla because I know and love this brand and so do many people throughout this area...I am excited to get this first location open, and then work on opening more.”

Erin Bila, franchisee

This is the latest agreement secured since California Tortilla emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic and launched a new franchise expansion effort fueled by increasing demand for Mexican food, the popularity of the brand and the success and refinement of its latest retail format. The company is looking to grow further around Baltimore and Washington, D.C., and to span out along the Eastern Seaboard, with a goal of adding 100 new locations in the next five years.

The new location, once open, will feature California

Tortilla's ACE (Accuracy, Customization and Engagement) model, which lets guests experience the full array of flavor profiles on the brand's menu and adapt their meals to their individual tastes using a vast array of signature sauces and toppings. Guests communicate directly with team members as they move down the food-preparation line to build a dish that fits their current

cravings. California Tortilla introduced the ACE model shortly before the pandemic and has since converted more than one-third of its locations to the format. All future locations will adhere to the format as well.

“The pandemic was a challenge for all restaurants,” said Keith Goldman, who became the chain’s president/CEO in June after serving more than 12 years as its Chief Operating Officer. “It was also an opportunity to assess our strengths and opportunities so that we could mount an aggressive resurgence once we emerged from that period. With our operator-friendly ACE model, increasing demand for high-quality, fast-casual Mexican food, our first new franchise group and a clear vision of where we want to grow, we’re very optimistic about the potential to bring California Tortilla to many new markets over the next several years.”

According to a [report](#) released by industry research firm IBISWorld, the Mexican restaurant segment in the United States will hit \$96.4 billion in 2024, having enjoyed “robust growth over the past five years, spurred by several promising trends. These include the mainstream adoption of Mexican food in the American Diet.”

The report also said affordability compared to other ethnic food makes Mexican restaurants a prime choice for consumers.

Bila said she and her partners are eager to leverage their respective strengths and capitalize on California Tortilla’s strength in their market. The brand is well-established in Montgomery County, where it already has six locations. All three partners also reside in the county – the Bilas in Damascus and Awan in Rockville – and have extensive restaurant experience. Erin started in the industry working at the California Tortilla in Olney, Md., and went on to work one of the largest Dunkin’ Donuts franchisees in the state, where she is still employed. Rogerio and Dilshad



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worked for that same organization but are now devoted full time to developing and operating their new California Tortilla franchise. All are excited to take this next step in their careers and become business owners.

“Once we decided to strike out on our own,” she said, “we inquired about several concepts, but at the end of the day I pushed for California Tortilla because I know and love this brand and so do many people throughout this area. California Tortilla has been near and dear to me since I started my career. I even still have my W-2 from 2007, my first year at the company. I am excited to get this first location open, and then work on opening more.”

About California Tortilla®

California Tortilla® is a unique fast-casual restaurant concept that serves a chef-inspired menu of “California-style” Mexican food including burritos, tacos, bowls and salads. Since 1995, “Cal Tort,” as it is affectionately known, has brought a fresh perspective to Mexican food by offering bold and exciting flavor profiles, high-quality, fresh ingredients, and an array of sauces and toppings. With 30 locations, the company has earned numerous accolades, including being named one of FastCasual.com’s “Top 100 Movers & Shakers,” Washington City Paper’s “Best Fast Casual in D.C.,” and Washingtonian’s Best Mexican, Best Taco, Best Burrito, Best Kid Friendly Restaurant and Best Vegetarian offering.

Franchise opportunities with California Tortilla are available in select markets throughout the eastern United States. For more information, or to inquire about available territories, contact Tom Finn at California Tortilla at (410) 960-9565 or tom.finn@californiatortilla.com, or visit <https://franchise.californiatortilla.com/>.

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