

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

FRIDAY | MARCH 16, 2007 | FOUNDED BY JOSEPH PULITZER IN 1878 | STLTODAY.COM | 50¢



Mike Mergen | Bloomberg News

Baskin-Robbins seeks big St. Louis cone

Massachusetts company plans to open 40 to 60 stores here in the next four to five years.

By Gail Appleson
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Baskin-Robbins, which calls itself the world's largest chain of ice cream specialty shops, is gearing up to give St. Louis competitors a licking with plans to open 40 to 60 stores in the metro area in the next four to five years.

The company, based in Canton, Mass., will hold a seminar

Tuesday at the St. Louis Airport Marriott hotel to seek 20 to 25 franchisees. There are seven Baskin-Robbins stores today in the St. Louis area.

Baskin-Robbins is part of the Dunkin' Brands Inc. family of companies owned by a group of private-equity firms. Information about the meeting is available on the Internet by clicking on "franchising opportunities" at www.baskinrobbins.com.

Baskin-Robbins, which is 61 years old, has more than 5,600 stores in more than 40 countries, with 2,600 in the United States.

The plan to expand in St. Louis

is part of the company's strategy to rapidly boost the number of shops around the world, said James Franks, director of franchising. He said Baskin-Robbins hopes to open 400 stores a year in the next four to five years, with some 100 stores planned for the United States in 2007.

"St. Louis is one of our focus markets," Franks said.

St. Louis was chosen as one of the target areas, he said, because of its mix of affluent suburban and urban neighborhoods. The company already has some ideas about locations, but Franks would not disclose the specific

sites.

However, Franks said a downtown St. Louis spot would fit into the company's plans. "We want to have stores where people live, work and play."

To qualify for a franchising license, an applicant must have at least \$100,000 in liquid assets and a net worth of at least \$300,000. The licensing fee for one store is \$30,000, and it is \$20,000 for each additional store. The licensing agreements are for a 20-year period. Other costs include royalty and advertising fees.

gappleson@post-dispatch.com | 314-340-8331