

## Seattle-based chain of smoothie stores to enter Utah market

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A new smoothie concept which bills itself as a "meal replacement" beverage is preparing to enter the Utah market with five to six new stores expected to open throughout the state in the first year.

Emerald City Smoothie, a Seattle-based company that has 40 stores in Washington, Arizona and California, will open its first three stores in Riverton, Murray and St. George within the next few months and is looking into locations in Salt Lake City and Ogden.

"We're the other drink from the Northwest," said Jim Baskett, executive vice president of franchise development for Emerald City Smoothie and a co-owner. "But we're a healthy alternative. Instead of the Starbucks coffee we're Emerald City Smoothies."

The company's entrance into the Utah market is part of a nationwide expansion that is focused on the western region of the United States, Hawaii and internationally with a store being planned in Aruba.

"We are planning to have another 50 stores coming on board in the next two to three years," Baskett said. "Over the next three years I think we'll be seeing close to 20-25 stores in Utah. The market's strong economic base, diverse and expanding population makes it the perfect place to expand the Emerald City Smoothie concept."