

# Calgary burgers will be even better: U.S. chain

BY DAVID PARKER, CALGARY HERALD NOVEMBER 18, 2010

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**Photograph by:** Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald

CALGARY - On a TV special, A Day Inside the White House, U.S. President Barack Obama took his staff out to dinner at his favourite restaurant -- Five Guys Burgers and Fries in Arlington, Va.

PGA star Phil Mickelson likes the burgers so much he's invested in the company. And the results of a survey by Zagat's Restaurant Guide, in which 136 fast food chains were tested last August, named Five Guys the Best Burger in America.

Now you can all find out what they thought was so special as the first Calgary location of Five Guys opened this week in Deerfoot Meadows in a 92-seat restaurant on Heritage Meadows Way.

The company was launched by Janie and Jerry Murrell in Arlington in 1986. Jerry had retired as a financial adviser and had always dreamed of making and selling the perfect burger. Four sons were college-bound but when he gave them the choice of going to school or joining the company, they all opted for working for dad. Since then a younger son has joined the firm as one of the five guys.

The Calgary operation is owned by Robert Baxter, principal of Five Star North America based in Salt Lake City, Utah. His company owns the rights to operate Five Guys in B.C., southern Ontario, Alberta

and Wyoming; one was opened in Medicine Hat earlier this year and there are two locations in Vancouver.

Deerfoot Meadows was leased through Jeff McGinley of Avison Young, who has been hired to represent Five Star North in Alberta. Other outlets are scheduled to open in Lethbridge in December and Airdrie in mid-January. McGinley is charged with finding four or five new locations in Calgary that should open by end of 2011.

Baxter says he is concentrating on Alberta where he finds customers appreciate quality food and clean surroundings. And he uses only 100 per cent, never-frozen Alberta beef and he believes our cheese is so good the Calgary burgers will be even better than those offered in the over 713 locations throughout the States.

Along with partner Blaire Walker and COO/ CFO Darven Erickson, Baxter has been in Calgary supervising the construction and training of the 50 crew and four management staff.

They will all work hard on the company's passionate focus on customer experience, quality and cleanliness as they are all well aware of the independent secret shoppers who visit twice a week to grade the outlet. A high score means a share of bonuses for all salaried employees.

No timers are allowed and no standing burgers, as all are made to order as well done/juicy.

The beef is great but I got to hand-cut the un-peeled potatoes, which are soaked for 20 minutes in flowing water to remove starch and then blanched before frying in peanut oil. Even the buns are special, baked at a local bakery with no preservatives or additives to a Five Guys proprietary recipe. And all of the 15 different toppings to build your own burger are free.

I hope McGinley soon finds a good location up in the northwest where I live.

First Calgary Savings is sporting a new logo that announces a new brand recognition to help members and non-members better understand the full financial services it offers. The 70-year-old credit union has grown to become the second-largest in the province with 16 retail branches, 13 one2one Financial Consulting Centres, Commercial banking team, Dealer Services operation, a Contact Centre and Just Financial -- supported by 468 employees.

President and CEO Paul Kelly has mailed information on the new name and logo to his nearly 80,000 members. From now on they will be served by First Calgary Financial -- a name expected to be approved at the AGM on March 16.

The Canadian Marketing Association has the rights to screen the "Cannes Reel" -- the winning entries from the Cannes Lions International Advertising festival. Thanks to Platinum sponsor Evans Hunt and the CMA Calgary chapter, you can view the world's best commercials at the

Christmas @ Cannes party being held at Flames Central on Tuesday, Nov. 30.

David Parker appears Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Read his columns online at

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