

Army retiree opens a Charley's Grilled Subs



TIM DUNN/RGJ

Cornell Irons, owner of the newly opened Charley's Grilled Subs in Meadowood Mall, serves Brinae Christensen on Wednesday.

Irons discovered deli chain through travels

By Kara LaPoint
klapoint@rgj.com

After 29 years in the U.S. Army, Cornell Irons has decided to pursue his dream of becoming an entrepreneur.

Irons, a contract officer who is retiring from the Army effective in December, has opened a franchise of Charley's Grilled Subs with 20 employees in Meadowood Mall.

"Even before I went into the military, I knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur," said Irons, 48. "The opportunity just didn't present itself."

But now, he said, opening a franchise has come as a natural next step following his military service.

Irons, a Syracuse, N.Y., native, first became acquainted with Charley's Grilled Subs, which has more than 400 lo-

IF YOU GO: CHARLEY'S GRILLED SUBS

WHERE: Meadowood Mall food court, 5615 Meadowood Mall Circle, Reno

HOURS: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday

SPECIALTIES: Philly steak and other gourmet sandwich varieties, salads, gourmet cheese fries, lemonade. All dishes made to order.

PRICE RANGE: \$4.99-\$7.99 subs, available in 7.5-inch and 12-inch sizes.

SPECIAL OFFERS: Discounts offered for military personnel.

cations worldwide, through his travels with the Army.

"Charley's deals a lot with military," he said. "They have many locations at airports and army bases, so through

my travels I was able to get Charley's during some of my assignments."

As a customer, Irons liked the food — one of his top reasons, he said, for selecting the restaurant for his franchising venture.

"I'm a firm believer that if you're going to get into business, you have to believe in the product," he said.

While he knew he wanted to pursue owning a franchise after his time in the Army, he wasn't initially sure what he wanted that franchise to be.

"I hadn't really narrowed it down to what, I just knew I wanted to do it," he said.

But after analyzing several possibilities, Irons decided Charley's was the right one.

The restaurant specializes

SEE SUBS, 7A »



Charley's Grilled Subs, in the food court in Meadowood Mall, has already drawn a strong following despite having just opened.

TIM DUNN/RGJ

Subs/New Meadowood franchise opened Nov. 1

From 8A

in Philly steak sandwiches, but features 17 sandwich varieties, including chicken, turkey and Italian deli. It also serves salads and gourmet fries in a range of flavors, including cheddar and bacon.

Irons said the products have not changed since he first enjoyed them as a customer — something he values.

“Charley’s pushes to stay consistent throughout the world,” he said. “Wherever you go, you’re going to get the same-tasting product.”

Now the restaurant has become what Irons said will be a long-term career, adding that he’s looking to open more locations in Nevada and California in the near future. It has also given him a reason to settle down.

During his time with the Army, Irons moved more than 10 times in 23 years. After spending the last three years in San Antonio, the Charley’s franchise opportu-

nity came available in Reno, one of the few places he’d never been before but is now ready to call home.

“It’s kind of ironic that I ended up being here,” he said. “But being in the military, at some point you want to settle down and call some place your home. I’ve had so many moves over there years, so I just kind of decided I’d go ahead and make Reno my home.”

Irons opened his franchise Nov. 1 and said it has been well-received, but many people are still just discovering it.

“As soon as the public realizes we’re here, I think we’ll have a good following,” he said.

But right now, Irons said he is simply excited to be heading down a new path.

“It’s a new venture for me, so I’m very excited,” he said. “We’re making progress and that’s what I’m happy about, so hopefully we can continue to do that.”