



## Bigger piece of the pie Pizza Hotline aims to expand

By KATHLEEN MARTENS, BUSINESS REPORTER

A longtime Winnipeg Pizza chain believes its pies can find fans across Canada.

Pizza Hotline -- of 222-2222 fame -- plans to aggressively franchise outlets across Western Canada. It already has a nibble from northeastern Alberta.

"We're getting inquiries just off the box," said Ron Chan, director of franchise development for the 20-year-old local chain.

Now with eight franchises in Winnipeg, two in rural Manitoba and one in Calgary, Chan said the company is ready to take a bigger bite out of the market -- inside and outside the province.

It has pizza stores in Steinbach and Brandon, and is looking for franchisees in Winkler, Selkirk, Thompson, Dauphin, Portage la Prairie, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Chan said.

While supper orders make up the bulk of its business, Pizza Hotline outlets open at 11 a.m. to serve a growing lunch demand.

"The environment has changed a little bit in that people don't have time in the day to cook meals. We're seeing that pizza is the home meal replacement," said Chan, adding the chain is also rolling out a new look and will soon offer online ordering.

### COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

"We'll have a competitive advantage; we can deliver a quality product with a quick time -- probably within 30 minutes."

Chan is also seeking permission to use the dairy producers' logo on his boxes to show Pizza Hotline uses real cheese on dough that is made daily.

He said a couple of his franchisees have started out as delivery drivers like Vladymyr Yegorov, who operates the franchise at 6-2795 Pembina Hwy.

"I'm living my own dream," said Yegorov, who emigrated from Russia in 1995 and has been with the company since 1996. "They are good people with good opportunity."



**Chan (left) wants to see Pizza Hotline expand. Franchisee Yegorov (right) started out as driver. (C. PROCAYLO, Sun)**