



April 19, 2010

Industry Veteran Chuck Freer Joins The Middleby Corporation

The Middleby Corporation announced Chuck Freer has joined Middleby Marshall, the conveyor oven division of The Middleby Corporation, as Vice President of Sales and Business Development. In his new position Mr. Freer will have a strategic role in expanding the conveyor oven business. "Chuck is an outstanding addition to Middleby and strengthens all of our brands. He is highly respected in the industry and has long-standing relationships with key global customers," said Selim A. Bassoul, Chairman and CEO of The Middleby Corporation. "His extensive industry knowledge coupled with his hands-on experience as a former restaurant owner brings a true customer perspective to Middleby. In addition to his role at Middleby Marshall, we expect Chuck's expertise to move companywide strategic sales initiatives forward." Mr. Freer brings more than 20 years of foodservice equipment experience to his new position with Middleby Marshall. Before joining Middleby, he held several high level positions within Manitowoc Foodservice. Most recently he was Area Vice President, representing all Manitowoc foodservice brands.

Source: The Middleby Corporation

Seasons 52 to Open First Texas Restaurant in Plano

Seasons 52, a sister concept to Olive Garden that focuses on fresh, seasonal foods, plans to open its first Texas location this fall in the Shops at Legacy in Plano. The 10,108-square-foot casual-dining restaurant is planned for the north side of the development, near Legacy Drive and the Dallas North Tollway. It will be outlet No. 13 in a chain that launched in 2003. Seasons 52 is owned by Orlando, Fla.-based Darden Restaurants Inc., which also operates Red Lobster and the Capital Grille. Seasons 52 is considered casual dining with a higher-end feel. Most dinner entrees are priced between \$17 and \$25, and wines by the glass range from \$6.25 to \$15, according to the restaurant's Web site. The restaurant also offers live music nightly at its piano bar. In Plano, the restaurant, which is expected to open in October or November, will be one of the largest in the development, said Fehmi Karahan, president and chief executive of the Karahan Cos., the Plano-based developer.

Source: The Dallas Morning News

Italian Restaurant Chain Enters Brazil

Sbarro has entered into Brazil through a partnership agreement with GPS Group. The agreement involves opening of around 1,000 new restaurants throughout the country over a period of twenty years. The chain's

first Brazil location is in Rio de Janeiro, scheduled to open during the second half of this year. The Italian restaurant has also partnered with JCI, that will open 1,250 restaurants throughout Japan. Peter Beaudrault, president and CEO of Sbarro, said: "We could not ask for a better partner than the team at GPS Group. Their expert knowledge of the Brazilian marketplace is the perfect complement to our proven franchise formula. This is an exciting period of international growth for Sbarro and we are now proud to serve guests across 42 countries." Jair Duarte, president and partner of GPS Group, said: "Sbarro is a great brand and restaurant industry icon. It's a proven concept that has flourished throughout the world and there's no team more experienced or successful than Sbarro's international franchise experts. We have no doubt that the fresh, quality food and high standard of service that is synonymous with Sbarro will be a tremendous success across Brazil." Sbarro, based in Melville, New York, is also a shopping mall-focused restaurant concept with around 1,000 restaurants across 42 countries. The restaurant's menu features Italian food, including pizza, a selection of pasta dishes and other hot and cold Italian entrees, salads, sandwiches, drinks and desserts.

Source: Food Business Review

Former Quiznos Exec to C.E.O. at Spicy Pickle

Mark Laramie has been named chief executive officer of Spicy Pickle Franchising, Inc., operator of the fast-casual restaurant chains Spicy Pickle in the United States and Bread Garden Urban Cafe in Canada. The move effectively splits the current c.e.o./president role at Spicy Pickle, with current president Marc Geman continuing in that position. A 30-year veteran in the restaurant industry, Mr. Laramie has extensive experience in retail operations, franchising, brand management and organizational development. Most recently, he was c.e.o. and chairman of Pinnacle Restaurant Group and FranExecs Consulting Group since 2007. "We have been working steadily to improve both our board of directors and bring in C level personnel with extensive experience in growing franchise chains and refining retail operations," Mr. Geman said. "Mark Laramie fits these criteria perfectly. With his background we add the needed ingredient of operational know-how for rapid expansion while we continue to look at multiple opportunities for the growth of our system. I look forward to working with Mark and having someone with his restaurant experience and skills to help us firmly establish both our brands — Spicy Pickle and Bread Garden Urban Cafes — throughout North America and beyond."

Source: FoodBusinessNews.net

KFC, Pizza Hut Operator to Expand in Brazil, Chile

Yum Brands Inc. franchisee Brazil Fast Food Corp. plans to develop a total of 10 more Pizza Hut and KFC restaurants this year in South America under an agreement with the Louisville-based fast-food chain. According to a news release from Rio de Janeiro-based Brazil Fast Food, the company has agreements with Yum Brands to further expand the number of fast-food and pizza restaurants in Brazil and Chile. Terms of the agreements were not disclosed. According to its annual report, Yum Brands has 600 restaurant units in South America through its Yum Brands International division and expects that number to grow. Overall, YBI, which excludes restaurants in the United States and China, opened 900 restaurants in 2009. Currently, Brazil Fast Food operates four KFC restaurants in Rio de Janeiro and 14 Pizza Hut restaurants in São Paulo, Brazil. Brazil Fast Food plans to add four KFC locations, two Pizza Hut restaurants and four Pizza Hut delivery stations this year. The Pizza Hut expansion will be driven by company-owned stores and delivery stations, while KFC will be driven by franchising, the release said. Brazil Fast Food Corp. owns and operates, both directly or through franchisees, the second largest fast-food restaurant chain in Brazil, the release said.

Source: Business First of Louisville



Cadbury Plans to Open Chain of Cafés

Cadbury is to go ahead with a plan to open a chain of high street cafés after Kraft Foods, its new owner, endorsed the venture. As well as serving afternoon tea, Cadbury Cocoa Houses will have a chocolatier service on site offering quirky gifts such as giant Flakes. Cadbury signed off plans for the café chain in January, just before Kraft's £11.4 billion takeover the following month. The US foodmaker has now sanctioned the 20-year licence to a party of retail entrepreneurs including David Morris, the former Harrods director of Food & Restaurants, who will become chief executive of the venture. It is understood that Kraft will not provide any finance for the project. Negotiations with landlords over the first sites have begun and the first café could open in London by the year end. As many 60 cafés could be opened. A Cadbury spokesman confirmed the plans but said "It is very early days."

Source: Times Online

Del Taco Promotes Steve Brake to CFO

Steve Brake has been named Chief Financial Officer of Del Taco LLC, effectively immediately. Brake, who has been with Del Taco for seven years, had been Vice President, treasurer and controller. "Steve brings to his expanded responsibilities a strong track record with Del Taco," said Paul Murphy, Del Taco CEO and Chairman. "His leadership has helped us to improve performance. Steve will be instrumental in helping us to achieve the company's vision of becoming a growth leader in the Mexican QSR category." Prior to joining Del Taco, Brake worked at both KPMG and Arthur Andersen. He received his MBA and BA from the University of California, Irvine.

Source: Del Taco LLC

Solo Cup Company Appoints James Alexy to Board of Directors

Solo Cup Company announced the appointment of R. James Alexy to fill a vacancy on its Board of Directors. Mr. Alexy, 69, recently retired as Chairman of the Board of Network Services Company. He joined Network Services Company in 1992 and built the company from \$1 billion to \$16 billion in annual revenue over 18 years. Prior to Network Services Company, Mr. Alexy held management and executive level positions in a variety of industries and companies, including Sealy, Inc., Fort Howard Corporation, Pope & Talbot and Gulf & Western Industries. He began his career at Scott Paper Company in 1964. "Jim Alexy not only has a proven track record of building and growing companies, he also knows our industry very well," said Robert M. Korzenski, President and Chief Executive Officer, Solo Cup Company. "I look forward to his contributions and counsel as he brings the customer perspective to our board room."

Source: Solo Cup Company

Railmark Acquires Dinner Train Company Florida Rail Adventures LLC

Railmark's RAIL ENTERTAINMENT USA INC. subsidiary announced that it has acquired the assets and operations of Florida Rail Adventures LLC and commenced operations on March 19th. Railmark's iconic Star Clipper Dinner Train®, the first and oldest dinner train in North America, will begin its 26th season in the Orlando, Florida market, moving from the Metro-Detroit, Michigan market where it has been since 1985. The Star Clipper Dinner Train made its debut run on August 4, 1984 in Osage, Iowa and since that time has entertained over 2,000,000 passengers. Railmark's other branded rail entertainment trains such as its family oriented excursion trains, adult entertainment trains and its unique Pullman Palace Bed & Breakfast operation, will relocate to the Eustis, Mount Dora and Tavares, Florida area, all lake front communities along the train's primary route and located just northwest of Orlando. Railmark has named Mr. Neil Bagaus Vice President of Rail Entertainment USA Inc. & General Manager of the Company's Florida-based retail train operations. Mr. Bagaus has spent a good majority of his career in retail train operations and Railmark welcomes him as an important part of its management team. Mr. B. Allen Brown, Railmark President & CEO comments, "We are looking forward to integrating our themed trains into the Orlando, Florida market and building upon the successes of our predecessor's trains, such as the Orlando Magic Express operated on certain home game nights. Railmark's experience and expertise will transform this historic railroad into an important rail oriented tourist attraction in the central Florida market."

Source: Railmark Holdings, Inc.

CKE Restaurants®, Inc. Receives Takeover Proposal and Designates Party as Excluded Party

CKE Restaurants, Inc. announced that it has received an alternative takeover proposal to acquire all the outstanding shares of the Company. The board of directors of the Company has determined, after consultation with the Company's financial and legal advisors, that the Takeover Proposal is reasonably expected to lead to a "Superior Proposal," as such term is defined in the Agreement and Plan of Merger (the "Merger Agreement") that was entered into on February 26, 2010 with affiliates of Thomas H. Lee Partners, L.P., and that the party that submitted the Takeover Proposal has qualified as an "Excluded Party," as such term is defined in the Merger Agreement. The board of directors of the Company, in consultation with the Company's financial and legal advisors, has not determined that the Takeover Proposal constitutes a Superior Proposal under the Merger Agreement. The received Takeover Proposal is subject to several conditions, including completion of due diligence and the negotiation of a mutually acceptable definitive agreement, and did not include evidence of a committed financing. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that the Takeover Proposal will ultimately lead to a Superior Proposal as discussions and negotiations with the Excluded Party could terminate at any time. The board of directors of the Company has not changed its recommendation with respect to the Company's pending merger with affiliates of Thomas H. Lee Partners, L.P. pursuant to the Merger Agreement.

Source: CKE Restaurants, Inc.

Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Announces New CEO

Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Restaurant and Market, Inc. announced Tim Busald has been appointed president and chief executive officer. "Our team has built a company culture which consistently delivers an exceptional dining experience for our guests," said Busald. "We have great employees, highly committed operators and a superior executive staff. I am excited to lead this team as we continue to build the Bubba Gump brand worldwide." Also announced was the appointment of Gail Taggart to the post of executive vice president and chief strategic officer. Taggart most recently served as vice president of operations and development. "Tim is precisely the right person for this role," said Chairman of the Board Gordon Miles. "We are thrilled that he accepted the position and are confident Tim and Gail will be very successful. The board approved their appointments unanimously." As one of the founders of Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Restaurant and Market, Inc., Busald has led operations for the company since its inception in 1996. His reputation for innovation and commitment to quality directly influenced the company's impressive record

of same store sales growth and continuing service excellence. Taggart, also one of the company's founders, has been instrumental in the company's expansion into international markets. Her success in coordination of new store openings and forward thinking approach to brand management has her well suited for this new role. "This brand enjoys worldwide recognition and is well established as a leader in every market we have entered", said Taggart. "We see tremendous opportunity for domestic and international growth in the coming months."

Source: Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Restaurant and Market, Inc.

Sysco Names William B. Day Executive Vice President, Merchandising and Supply Chain. Alan E. Hasty Promoted to Senior Vice President, Merchandising

Sysco Corporation announced that William B. Day, currently senior vice president, merchandising and supply chain, will be promoted to executive vice president, merchandising and supply chain. Sysco also announced that Alan E. Hasty, currently CEO of Sysco Cleveland, will be promoted to senior vice president, merchandising. Both promotions take effect July 4, 2010, the beginning of Sysco's fiscal year. "Our merchandising and supply chain activities are cornerstones of our business," said Bill DeLaney, Sysco's president and chief executive officer. "Bill and Alan have been outstanding leaders in many areas of our business, with an emphasis on working with our suppliers, and we look forward to their contributions as we continue to optimize our core business." Day, 53, began his Sysco career in 1983 as a staff accountant at Sysco Memphis, was promoted to assistant controller of Sysco Corporation in 1999, and became vice president, supply chain management in 2003. Hasty, 51, began his Sysco career in 1981 as a marketing associate for Sysco Orlando. In 1994 he was appointed executive vice president of Sysco Virginia, and in 1995 was promoted to president and CEO of that company.

Source: Sysco

Bruegger's To Give New Look To Bakeries

Bruegger's Bagels, the 295-unit bakery chain, will introduce its new bakery prototype, with an updated look. The company said that it will renovate hundreds of bakeries at a total cost of more than \$10m over the next three years. The company said that the first prototypes will be completed in Charlotte, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh by April 30, and intends to complete 50 remodels in 2010. The bagel maker believes that the new design further spotlights its New York-style bagels. The new design was developed by WD Partners, a Columbus-based design and development firm. The new prototypes will feature a brick and stone hearth in the bagel display area and guests can watch bagels being kettle-boiled and baked in the traditional style. The ordering station is inspired from European bakeries, with a range of baked goods, including desserts and breads. Jim Greco, CEO of Bruegger's Bagels, said: "This design represents the future of our bakeries. Our guests have given us so much over the years, we're happy to give them a new way to enjoy Bruegger's. "To show our appreciation to the community, we'll also launch a fundraiser for the local children's hospitals in conjunction with the grand re-openings."

Source: Food Business Review

Ruby Tuesday: Brand Revamp Paying off

Ruby Tuesday said its upscale repositioning is starting to gain traction with consumers, leading the company to its best quarterly sales performance in three years. The 884-unit chain will continue to build promotions around its more premium menu items, such as lobster and steak, as it seeks to grow its average check from \$12 to a range of \$12.50 to \$14.50, chief executive Sandy Beall said in a conference call with investors. Same-store sales at company stores fell 0.7 percent for the quarter ended March 2, but Beall noted that comps turned slightly positive in January and February, despite severe winter weather that gripped much of the country. Same-store sales at franchised branches declined 5.3 percent. Ruby Tuesday

began an extensive rebranding process in 2007 that has resulted in a menu overhaul and redesigned restaurants with a greater focus on the bar. Beall pointed to the addition of such upscale items as lobster tails and a four-course brunch menu, as well as the installation of high-definition flat-screen televisions in the bar areas as “contributors to the momentum in our business.” “We believe our repositioning efforts and investments in quality menu options, combined with targeted and effective marketing, are driving improved results,” he said. Ruby Tuesday is continuing to push its higher ticket items with such specials as a \$13.99 steak and lobster dinner on Tuesdays and a bundled weekend dinner for two, which includes a shared appetizer, two entrees and a shared dessert, for \$19.99 a person. Analysts said the promotions would likely help the chain encourage customers to spend more. “We believe that these initiatives continue to emphasize the company's premium positioning, increasing guest perception of value while contributing to a higher average check,” said Brad Ludington, an analyst with KeyBanc Capital Markets. Ruby Tuesday said it would not develop any new corporate-owned restaurants in 2010 and noted it would close a total of 14 for the year, including one in the fourth quarter. The closings are part of a previously announced plan to close 30 restaurants over time as their leases expire. However, domestic franchisees are expected to open two to three new units this year and international franchisees will open three to five restaurants.

Source: NRN.com



Burger King Names Michael Kappitt North American CMO.

Burger King has named Michael Kappitt chief marketing officer for North America. The post is newly created for Mr. Kappitt, who filled in for the departed CMO Russ Klein on company earnings calls since late last year. A Burger King spokeswoman said the chain is still searching for a global CMO. While it is growing internationally, Burger King still does the bulk of its business in North America. According to Kantar Media, it spent \$310 million in U.S. measured media alone during 2009. Mr. Kappitt joined the Miami-based company in 2002 as director-field marketing. He rose through the ranks quickly, becoming director-national promotions in 2003, and VP-consumer insights and performance analysis in 2004. He became senior VP-global business intelligence and strategy in 2007. Prior to Burger King, Mr. Kappitt spent 13 years with Vanguard Auto Rental, eventually serving as senior director-menu management. Burger King has suffered disproportionately to fast-food counterparts over the last year, in part because of its premium positioning that helped drive sales in 2007 and 2008. The chain has worked hard since last fall to pump up value offerings, particularly with a dollar double-cheeseburger promotion. However, premium-product news, such as the launch of its Whopper Bar concept earlier this year, has seemed to garner more attention. Same-store sales continued to suffer, down 5% for the first two months of this year worldwide; same-store sales in the U.S. and Canada fell 8% during the period. The company pointed to inclement weather in the central and eastern U.S., where 75% of its restaurants are located. According to one franchisee, sales have improved in the last month, thanks to the launch of Burger King's premium Steakhouse XT burger, which takes aim at casual dining products, and national advertising for its breakfast menu. Later this year, Burger King will begin rolling out more premium products, including ribs.

Source: AdAge.com

Texas Roadhouse's Appetite for Expansion

Tough economic times haven't lessened Texas Roadhouse's appetite for expansion. The fast-growing casual dining chain is planning to expand its business outside the U.S. In an interview with CNBC, CEO G.J. Hart said, "Where we are in the United States right now, we still have a lot of runway to go, but felt like it is going to take us a few years to really understand the international markets as the next phase for us." Hart says the company, which competes against rivals such as Famous Dave's of America and Brinker International's Chili's, could grow to as many as 800 restaurants in the years ahead. The chain currently operates more than 300 restaurants in 46 states. True to its name, the restaurant, which features steak and barbecue ribs, is most heavily concentrated in Texas. Hart's expansion plans will focus on countries in Asia, the Middle East and Mexico, where he said he believes the restaurant's concept will be most appealing. The company will begin its expansion through a partnership with M.H. Alshaya to build 35 restaurants throughout the Middle East over the next 10 years.

Source: CNBC.com

Starbucks Eyes Japan Growth, India Market

Starbucks is planning aggressive growth again in Japan after having shored up its profit margins and is eyeing a partner to enter the Indian market, the head of the world's largest coffee retailer said. Chief Executive Howard Schultz also told Reuters in an interview that Starbucks would launch an iced version of its Via brand instant coffee in the United States, adding to a product line it says will turn into a multi-billion dollar business. Schultz was in Tokyo to promote the launch of Via in Japan, the world's largest instant coffee market and therefore seen as a key test for the product. Via was introduced in the United States and Canada last year and the United Kingdom last month. Starbucks will begin selling Via from Wednesday through its roughly 870 stores in Japan and eventually expand distribution to include grocery shops and other retail channels, Schultz said. The launch will coincide with a new focus on growth in Japan, where decisions over the past few years to slow the pace of store expansion, review its cost structure and raise prices have firmed up profit margins following a slide into the red in 2003. "We are nowhere close to saturation in terms of the number of stores we are going to have in Japan. We are going to start growing the company again, being aggressive," said Schultz, declining to give a specific target for its number of stores. Starbucks has made subtle changes to tailor Via for different markets. The suggested serving size is smaller in Japan than in the U.S. because Japanese don't drink as much in one sitting, and it used a check mark on the packaging instead of "X" on packages in the U.S. because "X" has a negative connotation in Japan. "For customers of Starbucks stores this comes to a third the price of a regular cup of coffee. From that standpoint it would be a match for those looking to save money," said Naoto Yoshida, who analyses the coffee market at research firm Fuji Keizai. "If they tried to take this to a regular retail channel at this price I think it would struggle to gain acceptance given the wide gap with the price of existing products." Schultz reiterated his view that Starbucks could in the future have "thousands of stores" in Greater China, up from around 700 now, and said two of its next major targets in Asia would be India and Vietnam. Schultz declined to comment on speculation that it would tie-up with Jubilant Foodworks to enter the Indian market. Media had reported in late January that the two firms may form an alliance. "At some point in the near future we will make the right announcement and the right partner in India," he said. "We are enthused about India. We are enthused about Vietnam." Schultz also said the company will launch an iced version of its Via brand instant coffee. A spokeswoman later confirmed it would roll-out the product in late June in Canada and the U.S. Via helped the company post the first quarterly gain in U.S. same-store sales in two years during the October-December fiscal first quarter. Ahead of the company's announcement of its second quarter results next week, Schultz said that overall the "momentum in Starbucks' business is pretty good."

Source: Reuters



Quiznos launches Operating Partner Program

Quiznos has launched nationwide its Operating Partner Program that allows entrepreneurs with prior restaurant management experience to earn the opportunity for full ownership while operating a Quiznos location. The program is available for an initial up-front fee of only \$5,000. The Operating Partner Program is designed to serve as a catalyst for both company and economic growth, as Quiznos seeks to partner with up to 200 qualified entrepreneurs nationwide. A significant benefit of the Operating Partner Program is that operators receive a salary and benefits from Quiznos while they work their way toward full ownership of the restaurant. "The experience and passion of qualified candidates paired with Quiznos' strong brand equity and world-class operational model is a powerful combination," Rick Schaden, Quiznos' founder and CEO, said in a news release. "The primary objective of the Operating Partner Program is to engage with solid restaurant operators with entrepreneurial drive and excellent industry experience. We know by doing so we ensure the highest operational standards and consistently deliver on a promise of quality to our customer, which ultimately elevates our entire brand." The program includes a Quiznos-funded financing initiative, intended to alleviate the limits of the current lending environment for qualified applicants. Through the program, Quiznos will contribute the balance of the investment, with the store's operating profits paying down Quiznos' contribution and providing the operating partner with an opportunity for full ownership in as little as two years.

Source: Fast Casual

Jamba Juice Names New President of Stores and Vice President of Franchise Operations to Management Team. Bruce Schroder and Richard Coats join Jamba Transformation

Jamba, Inc. announced the appointment of two executives to help lead the Company's ongoing transformation strategy. Appointed to the new position of President of Stores is Bruce Schroder, who was formerly Chief Operating Officer of the beverage company Adina for Life. Additionally, Richard Coats joins Jamba Juice Company as Vice President of Franchise Operations and brings over 25-years experience in multi-unit restaurants and franchise operations, most recently at Burger King. "Among Jamba's key priorities as we evolve from a made-to-order smoothie company to an active, healthy lifestyle company are stores that provide the highest level of customer service in an environment that enhances the customer experience and the growth and strengthening of franchisees who will extend Jamba into new geography, sites and formats. Attracting top talent for these positions helps assure our success," said James D. White, President and Chief Executive Officer, Jamba Juice Company. Mr. White continued, "Bruce Schroder and Richard Coats bring a depth of experience and breadth of knowledge that are exceptionally well-aligned with our needs for future growth. We are excited to have them on the team and look forward to their contributions to management, our team members, and our franchise partners."

Source: Jamba, Inc.

McDonald's Wants to Rewrap Restaurants

Internal memo emphasizes cash incentives for updates; consultant says chain wants to be like Starbucks. As McDonald's Corp. moves more deeply into the cafe world of lattes, frappes and smoothies, the Oak Brook-based hamburger chain is attempting to speed up the remake of its U.S. restaurants into cozier places to linger and spend money, according to an outside expert. Richard Adams, a franchise consultant, said a 2010 pilot program offers a higher level of corporate financial assistance to McDonald's franchisees willing to revamp their restaurants inside and out. Adams heads Franchise Equity Group, a San Diego-based consulting firm. Normally, McDonald's prevails upon franchisees to remodel when their contracts are up for renewal. That occurs with 300 to 400 restaurants nationwide each year, Adams said. But the company is sweetening its typical financial contribution in an effort to bring another 400 to 600 restaurants into the remodeling pipeline, said Adams, citing an internal McDonald's memo that spelled out terms of assistance. The revamps could boost a restaurant's annual sales from \$2.3 million to \$3.1 million in four to five years, the memo stated. Adams said there's no guarantee remodeling will translate into more sales. Nationwide, the company has 14,000 restaurants, of which 85 percent are franchises. Adams estimates that a franchisee's cost might range from \$600,000 for remodeling to \$1.5 million for rebuilding. This comes shortly after franchisees retooled to handle coffee drinks, at a cost of up to \$100,000 per restaurant. McDonald's would not confirm or deny the contents of the memo. Spokeswoman Danya Proud said remodeling efforts are part of "an evolution of the restaurant redesign that started back in 2003."

Source: chicagotribune.com

Qdoba Enters Market, Plans as Many as 10 Stores

Qdoba Mexican Grill® has signed a long-term lease for 2,500 square feet at Great Hills Market in the Arboretum area for its first location in the Capital City. The fast-casual restaurant plans to open five to 10 stores in the area over the next few years, according to Kortney Otten of Q-Up Texas, LLC, the local franchise operator. Qdoba, an artisanal Mexican restaurant, will open its first store in mid-July. Located at the northwest corner of Great Hills Trail and Highway 183, Great Hills Market is a 154,000-square-foot shopping center that houses tenants including: Petco, T.J. Maxx, Macaroni Grill, Pier 1 Imports, La Madeleine and others. "We think that the Great Hills Market is a great area that caters to our typical guest – an area that offers a variety of businesses, things to do and places to see," Otten says. "There is always something going on around Great Hills, and we are looking forward to being a part of that action." Qdoba's local area developer, Glenn Levine, has substantial franchise experience; previously he worked with franchises including Subway, Arby's, and Domino's. Andrew Scroggie and Adam Zimel with The Weitzman Group's Commercial Retail Division served as exclusive leasing agents for Great Hills Market. SCC Interests represented Q-Up Texas.

Source: GlobeSt.com

Bruegger's Gets a Makeover

This month, Bruegger's Bagels will introduce its next generation bakery prototype, paving the way for an updated look that will become a staple for the bagel leader. The first prototypes will be completed in Charlotte, North Carolina, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh by April 30, with plans to complete 50 remodels in 2010. Over the next three years, Bruegger's will renovate hundreds of bakeries at a total cost of more than \$10 million dollars. The new design, developed by Columbus, Ohio-based design and development firm WD Partners, further spotlights Bruegger's New York-style bagels. The new prototypes will feature a brick and stone hearth in the bagel display area, and guests can watch bagels being kettle-boiled and baked in the traditional style. The ordering station will take a cue from European bakeries, with a wider array of fresh baked goods, including desserts and freshly baked breads. "This design represents the future of our bakeries," says Jim Greco, CEO of Bruegger's. "Our guests have given us so much over the years, we're happy to give them a new way to enjoy Bruegger's. To show our appreciation to the community, we'll also launch a fundraiser for the local children's hospitals in conjunction with the

grand reopenings." For its grand reopenings, Bruegger's will partner with Children's Miracle Network and the local children's hospital in each of the five cities introducing a redesign. During the week of April 26–May 2, a portion of proceeds from every bagel dozen purchased at any bakery in Charlotte, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh will be donated back to the Children's Miracle Network hospital in that city. To showcase the new bakeries, Bruegger's will also host a celebration in each market including a "bagel cuisine" demonstration by Bruegger's Chef Philip Smith, recently featured on the Food Network's "Unwrapped."

Source: QSR



Wingstop Restaurants Inc. Sold to Roark Capital Group

Wingstop Restaurants Inc. has been sold to an affiliate of an East Coast private equity group. Terms of the deal between Richardson-based Wingstop and Atlanta-based Roark Capital Group weren't disclosed. Founded in 1994, Wingstop had been 64% owned since 2003 by a Massachusetts private equity firm called Gemini Investors, according to Wingstop's president and CEO, James Flynn. Earlier this year, Gemini said in a filing in the Federal Register that one of its funds, Gemini Investors IV LP, planned to "provide equity and debt financing to finance the acquisition" of Wingstop. In an interview Monday, Flynn referred questions about that filing to Gemini. "I have no idea about that," he said. Gemini's president, James Goodman, was not immediately available for comment. With more than 440 restaurants operating in the United States and Mexico, Wingstop clocked around \$305 million in revenue last year. Flynn said he expects 2010 sales to be closer to \$360 million. The company said in a news release Monday that it plans to open more than 60 restaurants this year.

Source: Dallas Business Journal

Ruby's, Sonic Bring Back Carhops on Roller Skates

As summer approaches, two chains, Sonic Drive-In and Ruby's Diner, are re-embracing roller-skating carhops whose jobs are as much to entertain experience-hungry customers as to roll out the grub. Last week, the 48-unit Ruby's opened its first location with skates-wearing carhops whisking folks their orders. A week earlier, Sonic rolled out a national ad campaign featuring four roller-skating employees who brag about the chain's food and fun — as Sonic attempts to return to its skating roots. It's a point of distinction "with a nostalgic twist," says Annika Stensson, a spokeswoman for the National Restaurant Association. The idea is to offer enough of a twist to get someone to steer into a Sonic or Ruby's instead of the familiar and far more heavily advertised McDonald's. •Sonic. Skating carhops were common at Sonic stores in the 1960s and '70s, but the 3,500-unit chain left them behind in the 1980s and '90s. Now, it's trying to bring them back to most locations, CEO J. Clifford Hudson says. That's because customer surveys show folks are happier — and even spend more money — at units that have skaters than at those that don't. "They even say the food tastes better" at stores with skaters, he says. The average Sonic with skaters pulls in \$50,000 more in annual sales vs. one without, he says. •Ruby's. The chain just opened its first unit with skating carhops in Anaheim, Calif. It's considering a second in nearby Orange, CEO Doug Cavanaugh says. "The only thing left these days is to be remarkable. And what's more remarkable than girls on roller skates?"

There's been a learning curve. The parking lot gets so busy on weekends that the store hired an attendant to keep order. Folks have been driving off with trays still dangling from their windows. And one carhop broke an arm in training. The insurance premium for just the one store is \$20,000 a year to have skaters, all 10 of whom refuse to wear safety gear. "They choose not to wear it," Cavanaugh says. "They want to show off their 23-year-old glory."

Source: USA Today

NRA Honors Chefs Taki Sawi and Yono Purnomo with 2010 Faces of Adversity Awards

Congratulations to Santorini Greek Kitchen owner Taki Sawi, who was honored by the National Restaurant Association. The association's Faces of Diversity Awards celebrate diversity in the restaurant and foodservice industry, and Sawi received the award at a ceremony at the Association's 2010 Public Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C.

"Diversity is a key ingredient of our industry's current and future success," said Dawn Sweeney, president and CEO of the National Restaurant Association, in an announcement. "Taki Sawi exemplifies the best of our industry and the opportunity it provides." According to the restaurant association release, Sawi left his native Egypt to help support his extended family in Jordan. He moved to Indianapolis after getting married and opened a small restaurant. Inspired by time spent in Greece, where he met his American wife at the restaurant in which he worked, he focused on Greek cuisine. Yono Purnomo, for more than 30 years a vibrant and valued presence in the Capital Region restaurant scene, was also honored with an American Dream Award from the National Restaurant Association at a ceremony in Washington. "Yono Purnomo exemplifies the best of our industry and the opportunity it provides," she said. "To be able to live (the) American dream — it's very meaningful for somebody like me (from) another country," Purnomo said on the phone on his way to the ceremony. "Cooking is how I share my heritage. I'm so proud and humbled." In a tribute video played at the ceremony, Purnomo described wanting to be an airline pilot. After failing three tests, however, a career in the air wasn't to be. "So I ... forget about that, and I went into hotel/restaurants," he said in the video. Purnomo grew up in poverty in Indonesia and went to work as a waiter for the Holland America cruise line. The Faces of Adversity awards program, created by the restaurant association and PepsiCo Foodservice, celebrates diversity in the restaurant industry in two categories — the American Dream Award and the Inspiration Award. The American Dream Award honors individuals from diverse backgrounds who epitomize the American dream. The Inspiration Award goes to restaurant companies that "demonstrate leadership and vision as an advocate of diversity and inclusion."

Source: NRA/IndyStar.com/Timesunion.com



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