



August 14, 2010

El Pollo Loco Announces Executive Management Change

EPL Intermediate, Inc., parent company of El Pollo Loco, Inc., announced that Steve Carley, President and CEO of El Pollo Loco, Inc., has tendered his resignation effective as of September 12, 2010 from all of his positions with the Company and of El Pollo Loco, Inc. to pursue other opportunities. A strong brand leader with more than 28 years of marketing and operations expertise, Carley joined El Pollo Loco as president and CEO in April of 2001. During his tenure with the Company, he brought the brand an entrepreneurial spirit with a culture of discipline and aligned employees around clearly defined performance criteria. Upon Carley's departure on September 12, 2010, Steve Sather, El Pollo Loco's Senior Vice President of Operations, will assume the role of Acting President and CEO of El Pollo Loco, Inc. and continue to serve in his current position. "Steve Sather's passion for our brand, restaurant leadership experience and strategic acumen will provide El Pollo Loco strong and effective leadership," Carley said. "I couldn't be more pleased or supportive of Steve." Sather joined El Pollo Loco in January of 2006 as Vice President of Operations. He is known throughout the restaurant industry as a results-oriented leader. Prior to joining El Pollo Loco, Sather was senior vice president of retail operations for Great Circle Family Foods, LLC, the franchise operator of Krispy Kreme Doughnuts in Southern California. Earlier, Sather was chief operating officer for Rubio's Restaurants, Inc. and held senior management positions with Rally's Hamburgers, La Salsa Holding Company and Taco Bell.

Source: El Pollo Loco

Red Robin Announces Stephen E. Carley Will Be Appointed Chief Executive Officer

Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, Inc. announced that Stephen E. Carley will be appointed Chief Executive Officer, effective September 13, 2010 or such earlier date as may be agreed upon by the Company and Mr. Carley, implementing the planned succession of Dennis Mullen. Mr. Carley will also be appointed to the Board of Directors as of such date. Mr. Carley has significant experience in the restaurant, food-service and consumer products industries, including serving as the Chief Executive Officer and President of El Pollo Loco Inc. since April 2001. "The Red Robin Board of Directors is pleased that Steve is joining the Company. Steve brings relevant restaurant and management experience to our team and we look forward to his future contributions to the Company," said Pattye Moore, Red Robin's Board Chair. "I am pleased to join the Red Robin team. This is a great brand that has a unique position among consumers. I am looking forward to working with the board and the entire management team to continue Red Robin's growth and focus on delivering fun and memorable dining experiences in an exciting, high-energy, family-friendly atmosphere," said Stephen E. Carley. Prior to El Pollo Loco, Mr. Carley served in various capacities, including various senior management positions at Taco Bell Corporation. Dennis Mullen will continue to serve as Chief Executive Officer and a member of the Board of Directors until the effective date of Mr. Carley's appointment, at which time Mr. Mullen will also resign from his board position. "We would like to thank Denny Mullen for his many contributions to Red Robin, including bringing stability to the

Company in a difficult situation by his acceptance of the CEO position. Denny's leadership and professionalism have been important to the Company during these turbulent times," concluded Ms. Moore.

Source: Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, Inc.

Papa John's Announces Appointment of Tom Sterrett to Senior Vice President, International

Papa John's International, Inc. announced the appointment of Tom Sterrett to Senior Vice President, International. Sterrett will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the company's international operations, consisting of more than 700 restaurants in 28 countries. Sterrett has been with Papa John's for more than 15 years serving in a variety of operations roles, most recently as Papa John's Division Vice President for the South division since 2008 where he helped lead the division to record sales and profits. "Tom is an extremely talented operator, with tremendous operations experience, and we are pleased to have him lead our growing international business," said Jude Thompson, Papa John's president and co-CEO. "Tom knows what it takes to run successful Papa John's restaurants, markets and franchises. With a very solid international leadership and support team already in place, I am confident that our international business will thrive under his leadership." "As our international business continues to gain momentum, our goal is to consistently make and deliver the same quality pizza around the world as we do in the US," said Thompson. "Tom has done an outstanding job on the domestic side of our business, and has proven he is committed to profitable sales and growth. I look forward to working with him as he replicates our domestic success in markets throughout the world."

Source: Papa John's International, Inc.

Subway Franchises Customize to Accommodate Drive-Thrus

It's been estimated that 60 to 80 percent of quick-service restaurant business is generated via the drive-thru component – no surprise considering the industry's convenient and speedy nature. But some QSRs are formulated differently. The Subway restaurant chain, for example, prides itself on customization, generated by an in-store process in which customers can watch their creations being made by "sandwich artists." Still, plenty of Subway franchisees have incorporated a drive-thru, relying heavily on technologically advanced menu boards to effectively communicate a customized experience outside. Others have taken things a bit further – renovating their buildings to feature an elevated ramp for cars to get a better view of a second sandwich station visible through a large picture window. Some have called the concept a "drive-view." Harold Jackson, based out of Northwest Ohio, is one of those franchisees. His store in Lima, Ohio opened about three years ago with a drive-view and the reaction has been overwhelmingly positive.

"At first, I think customers were confused, but everyone loves it. When I look at what it's done for us, it was by far the best decision I could have made when opening the store. Sales are much higher than I could have anticipated with that second point of sale," Jackson said. Jackson predicted the component would generate between 20 and 25 percent of sales. He said the numbers have gone "way beyond" that prediction and almost half of his business is conducted outside. Costs to create the drive-view came mostly from the duplicity in machinery and the glass. He said it wasn't much higher than a regular drive-thru component he added to another one of his stores in Bluffton, Ohio. The Bluffton store, however, has since closed its drive-thru because of numerous issues. "We had fits with it. People would pull up to the speaker and it'd be very difficult to pull an order from them. It is an interstate location, too, so a line would back up quick. It wasn't a fast process and it was frustrating. We were getting more complaints than sales, so we closed it," Jackson said. According to Les Winograd, public relations specialist at Subway's Franchise World Headquarters, the viewer window was first designed about 10 or 15 years ago, and most of them are outside of the U.S. "As of late July, there were 1,852 Subway locations with a drive-thru, out of 33,000 in the world. We do not have a count on regular versus viewer window-types of components, but we do know many viewer window drive-thrus are in Puerto Rico and some are in British Columbia," Winograd said.

Source: QSR.com



Taco Bell Linked to Salmonella Outbreak in Ohio

A salmonella outbreak linked to Taco Bell has sickened at least 25 Ohioans, 10 of whom were hospitalized. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has not named the restaurant chain involved in the investigation - the agency refers to it only as a Mexican-style fast-food chain - but officials in multiple states have said it is Taco Bell.

The illnesses are from outbreaks of two different kinds of rarely seen salmonella, Hartford and Baildon. Health officials say there's likely no continued risk of infection, as both outbreaks have tailed off. The Ohio Department of Health helped study the illnesses, said spokeswoman Jen House, but nobody so far has been able to definitively link the infections to a particular product. "We can't locate any one item or one ingredient," House said. In a written statement, Taco Bell chief quality assurance officer Anna Ohki said that there's no reason to avoid eating at the company's restaurants. "We take food safety very seriously and our food is perfectly safe to eat, so our customers have absolutely no cause for concern," she said. Because of the short shelf life of produce - which might have been what was contaminated - and the comingling of products from multiple sources, finding an original source of contamination can be difficult, the CDC said. The last reported case in Ohio was in early July, House said. None of the cases was in Franklin County. Licking and Fairfield counties reported one case each, she said. Nationally, at least 155 people have been sickened by the two strains of salmonella bacteria since April, the CDC said.

Source: THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Wendy's/Arby's Plans 180 Restaurants in Russia

Wendy's/Arby's Group Inc said it plans to open 180 restaurants in Russia over the next 10 years, becoming the latest U.S. fast food chain to look to that market for growth. The company has announced several deals in the past 15 months that reflect its intention to aggressively expand abroad, including a plan announced in June to open 100 Arby's restaurants in Turkey in the next decade. Compared to rivals such as McDonald's Corp and KFC parent Yum Brands Inc, Wendy's/Arby's has a modest international presence, with only about 300 of its 10,000 restaurants located outside North America. The company will open the Russian restaurants with local franchisee Wenrus Restaurant Group Ltd. Wenrus is an affiliate of Russia's Food Service Capital, which runs 28 restaurants in Russia, Ukraine and Britain, including Goodman Steak Houses. Wendy's/Arby's Chief Executive Roland Smith said in a statement on Tuesday that Russia "offers significant long-term expansion potential" and that the company chose Wenrus because of its knowledge of Russia's food service market. The Russian restaurants will be dual-branded, meaning they will offer food from both chains' menus, such as hamburgers and roast beef sandwiches. The first restaurant will be in the Moscow area and is set to open sometime in 2011, a company spokesman told Reuters. In addition to the Russian and Turkish deals, the company last year announced plans to open restaurants in Singapore, the Middle East and North Africa in hopes of capturing the growth that international sales have given its rivals. In May, Wendy's/Arby's reported a narrower first-quarter loss as a slight increase in Wendy's North America same-restaurant sales mitigated some of the 11.5% drop in same-restaurant sales at Arby's restaurants. Wendy's/Arby's Chairman Nelson Peltz, the chain's largest shareholder, said in June that an unnamed party had expressed interest in a potential deal, raising speculation that the chain could be the target of a potential takeover.

Source: Thomson Reuters 2010/Financial Post



Saladworks Coming to North Carolina. Salad Franchise to Open Three Stores in Wake County

Saladworks announced an agreement with a multi-unit developer for three locations in the Wake County, NC area. The first Saladworks location in this market is slated to open in early 2011. The new Saladworks franchisees are father-and-son team, Baldev and Unmesh Patel. The Patels are no strangers to franchising, as Baldev owns and operates a number of quick-service restaurant concepts and hotels that his son helps to manage. "We chose Saladworks because of the personal connection between the Home Office and the franchisees," Unmesh Patel said. "We're looking forward to working with the corporate team and bringing the Saladworks concept to a brand new market in North Carolina." Saladworks has grown substantially from its humble beginnings in a mall food court in Southern New Jersey. The original salad franchise concept proudly provides its fresh, made-to-order, entrée-sized salads, soups, wraps, and Fusion sandwiches in over 100 locations coast to coast. The Wake County, NC agreement marks another entrance into a new market by the powerhouse franchise, following announcements for stores in Knox County, TN and Orange County, CA. "As we expand our presence across the country, we are excited to be moving into the Southern Region of the East coast with such an experienced and qualified operator," said Saladworks' Founder/CEO, John Scardapane. Saladworks is thrilled to be bringing America's Best Salads to the heart of North Carolina."

Source: SALADWORKS

Moscow Hotels World's Most Expensive, Emptiest

Moscow retained its ranking as the city with the most expensive average hotel room rate in the world, a survey by business travel agency Hogg Robinson Group showed. The average rate in the city in the first half was £256.83 (\$407), Hogg Robinson said in a report on its web site Friday. Geneva followed as the second-most expensive city at £199.11, and closely trailed by Hong Kong at £197.61. "Moscow yet again retains its place as the city with the highest average room rate for the sixth year, despite a fall of 12 percent when measured in local currency," Hogg Robinson spokeswoman Margaret Bowler said in the report. Similar findings were reached by Knight Frank, which put the average rate for four- to five-star hotels at \$237 in the second quarter - also the most expensive worldwide. The indicator was \$230 for Paris and \$216 for Berlin and London. But in addition to being the most expensive, the Knight Frank survey put Russian hotels among the emptiest. The average occupancy of hotels in the Russian capital stood at 58.5 percent during the second quarter, compared with 75.4 percent in Paris, 84.7 percent in London, and 65.8 percent in Warsaw. The high prices scare away many potential clients for Moscow hotels, said Natalya Shlyuyeva, a spokeswoman for Knight Frank. But even with such a low occupancy rate, the profitability of Moscow hotels is on par with those in Europe, she said. The occupancy rate rose slightly from the second quarter of last year, however. Five-star hotels saw a growth of 2.7 percentage points to 54.6 percent, while the occupancy of four-star hotels rose 4 percentage points to 50.4 percent.

Source: themoscowtimes.com/Ehotelier.com

Quiznos Plans International Push

Quiznos is planning to bring its sandwiches to 15 new markets in the next two years, boosting its total international presence to 40 countries and territories. The Denver-based chain, which now has nearly 4,000 restaurants, is focusing on opening new ones in Southeast Asia, Central and South America, the Middle East and Scandinavia. The company estimates it will open several hundred restaurants overseas in the next five years. Quiznos will team up with "master franchisees" who buy the rights to develop Quiznos in certain countries. That strategy puts much of the financial onus on the international partner, who purchases the real estate, builds the restaurants and franchises them out to local operators to run while paying Quiznos annual royalties. Quiznos is tailoring its offerings to local tastes and customs; in Middle Eastern restaurants, the chain serves halal meat, meaning it's derived and prepared in accordance with Islamic law, while in India Quiznos offers more vegetarian sandwiches. The weak global economy is making this a good time to expand abroad, says Lee Vala, chief development officer of Quiznos's international business. "The cost of entry is extremely low at this point around the world, as relates to real estate and that's created opportunities for a lot of entrepreneurs to join Quiznos," Mr. Vala says. Closely-held Quiznos, owned by QIP Holder LLC, declined to disclose how much it's investing in its international push or how much revenue and profit it expects to generate from the overseas stores.

Source: The Wall Street Journal – Asia

Denny's Provides Terms of Incentive Stock Program for Chief Marketing Officer

Denny's Corporation announced the Compensation and Incentives Committee of Denny's Board of Directors approved the following incentive awards to Frances Allen, its newly appointed Chief Marketing Officer: (i) 200,000 performance-based restricted stock units, granted on August 3, 2010, and (ii) a non-qualified stock option to purchase up to 100,000 shares of common stock, to be granted on October 1, 2010 (the first trading day of the calendar quarter following Ms. Allen's start date). The performance-based restricted stock units represent the right to earn up to 200,000 shares of Denny's common stock, based on the closing price of the common stock exceeding specific price hurdles for 20 consecutive trading days, and subject to Ms. Allen's continued employment with Denny's. The stock options will have an exercise price per share equal to the fair market value of the underlying shares as of the grant date. The options will vest in equal annual installments on each of the first three anniversaries of the grant date, subject to Ms. Allen's continued employment with Denny's. The stock options have a maximum term of ten (10) years.

Source: Denny's Corporation

Andrea M. McKenna Joins Friendly Ice Cream Corporation as VP of Marketing, Chief Marketing Officer

Friendly Ice Cream Corporation announced that Andrea M. McKenna, an executive with extensive experience at leading restaurant and retail companies and advertising agencies, has joined the company as Vice President of Marketing and Chief Marketing Officer. McKenna comes to Friendly's following eight years with The Talbots, Inc., a Massachusetts-based retailer of classic women's, children's, and men's apparel, where she served as the senior vice president of marketing. McKenna's innovative use of integrated marketing and social communities drove sales throughout the company's 1,000+ retail stores, catalogs and website. McKenna's restaurant experience includes nine years as director of advertising and sales promotion at Dunkin Donuts, Inc., where she led the coffee and baked goods chain's repositioning and new advertising campaigns. "As we have just celebrated our company's 75th anniversary, we have reflected on the key elements that have supported the longevity of this brand. With Andrea's timely arrival, we are focused on building on the brand's foundations as we create the Friendly's of the future," said company President and CEO Ned R. Lidvall. "Andrea's vision and track record of developing successful integrated programs will be critical to shaping our direction. Her diverse experience working in hospitality, retail and within advertising agencies provides her with tremendously valuable insights into opportunities for our business. I look forward to working with her as we continue to shape the future for our brand."

Source: Friendly's Restaurants



Two Great Foodservice Distributors Join Forces to Serve The Mid-Atlantic As RFS-Tidewater

Reyes Holdings announced that Valley Foodservice, based in Norfolk, Virginia, has joined Reinhart FoodService's Supreme Foods to form RFS-Tidewater through the acquisition of certain assets of Valley Foodservice. Valley Foodservice has been serving Southeastern Virginia, The Eastern Shore, and the Outer Banks of North Carolina for over seventy years. Reinhart FoodService is one of the largest and fastest growing foodservice distributors in the United States, carrying over 50,000 items, including: fresh poultry, seafood, dairy, produce, glassware, and china, utensils, coffee, juices and foodservice equipment. Michael Teagle, President and CEO of Valley Foodservice, said, "The move to join Reinhart FoodService enables us to grow our business and expand our product line." Mark Drazkowski Chairman of Reinhart FoodService said, "We are fortunate to have the opportunity to partner with Mike Teagle and his highly skilled team of managers and the knowledgeable Valley Foodservice sales representatives." John Roussel, Chief Executive Officer, Reinhart FoodService said, "This is a tremendous synergistic opportunity to leverage our existing Virginia business and relationships with Valley Foodservice's business. Together, we are focused on providing uninterrupted service in the marketplace while we work to expand both our service and product assortment for our mid-Atlantic customers." Valley Foodservice was represented in the transaction by Keiter Stephens Advisors, a Richmond based firm specializing in merger and acquisition and financial services to the foodservice distribution industry.

Source: Foodservice Central.com

Pita Pit Pop-Up Building Franchise Buzz

Pita Pit has no locations in New York City, but that hasn't stopped the 180-unit chain from generating some Big-Apple-style media buzz through a pop-up restaurant it temporarily operates outside the building where Fox News Corp. broadcasts its "Fox and Friends" morning show. For the past five Friday mornings, the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho-based chain has been serving breakfast pitas to passersby from the makeshift restaurant and plans to continue service each Friday through the end of August. Vice president of corporate business unit Peter Riggs also will be interviewed on each broadcast. Riggs said the intent of being featured so prominently on television for eight straight weeks was to spread awareness not only to potential Pita Pit customers, but also to franchisee candidates. "Ultimately, we're hoping to get to potential franchisees, but the more blunt-object attitude we have is just trying to get the Pita Pit name out more," Riggs said. "Any time you can increase brand recognition, that's what we're after." The brand debuted its first segment on "Fox and Friends" July 9, and Pita Pit received more franchise applications last month than it had in any month since Pita Pit USA was incorporated in 2005, Riggs said. Originally launched in Canada, Pita Pit first opened in the United States in Syracuse, N.Y., and now has locations in 38 states. "The applications are coming from all over the place," Riggs said, "with the exception of out west, because Fox doesn't tape delay the show, meaning it's coming on at 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. But east of the Mississippi is getting most of the response, and that's great because we're trying to develop more in college locations out there. "In a lot of Western states, there are a couple of major universities, but out east, especially in the Northeast, there are hundreds of towns which would benefit from having a Pita Pit," he said. "Our vendor partners are so excited for us, so we got a lot of people bringing in support from different directions, which mitigated costs for production," Riggs said. "Doing it this many weeks in a row is definitely beneficial. It's a lot harder physically on us, but to repeatedly display the brand and give out pitas — with little things like that, you

really get to drive your message home with full force.” Pita Pit’s marketing firm, No Limit Media Consulting, worked out a similar stint on “Fox and Friends” earlier this year for Huddle House. Chief executive Nick Powills said that even if Pita Pit never awarded a franchise from the experience, it still would have been worth it for the “Fox and Friends” program’s average daily viewership of 1.3 million people. But the brand only needs one franchise sale to recoup its investment, and it’ll probably get it, he added. “Pita Pit has no locations in New York City, and this will give it a location every Friday,” Powills said. “We get the message out there that it’s developing its system even in this economy, and the franchise interest will come in. Sell one franchise, and it covers everything. The goal was, how could we impact Pita Pit’s franchising positively, either on the lead generation side or the due diligence side.”

Source: NRN

E-Brands Restaurants Files for Chapter 11. Operator of High-End Restaurants' Severely Affected by Economy

E-Brands Restaurants LLC, the owner of a dozen high-end restaurants located around the country, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection as a result of economic pressures. According to court filings, E-Brands said its restaurants “have been severely affected by the U.S. macro economy, which has resulted in a transient decline in earnings and cash flow.” The seven-year-old company said net sales fell from \$56.7 million in 2008 to about \$43.8 million in 2009, a 22.8-percent decline. Orlando, Fla.-based E-Brands operates four Timpano Italian Chophouse & Martini Bar locations, three Samba Rooms, two Aquaknox Global Water Cuisine operations, one Canoñita Express, one Taqueria Canoñita and Timpano Tavern, formerly the David Burke Restaurant. Restaurants are located in Florida, Maryland, Colorado and Las Vegas. E-Brands’ related companies — including Timpano of Maryland, LLC; Timpano Acquisition, LLC; Samba Room Acquisition, LLC; Aquaknox, LLC; Star Concepts Acquisition, LLC; and DBEB LLC — also filed for Chapter 11. The companies reported assets of between \$500,001 and \$1 million and liabilities of \$10 million to \$50 million. E-Brands said it is seeking to restructure some \$14 million in debt owed to secured creditors General Electric Capital Corp., General Electric Capital Business Asset Funding Corp. of Connecticut and Bank of America. Among unsecured creditors is T.G.I. Friday’s parent company Carlson, which is owed about \$2.4 million. E-Brands acquired 12 restaurants, including Samba Room, Taqueria Canoñita and Star Canyon, from Carlson in 2003 for an estimated \$20 million to \$30 million.

Source: NRN

CEC Entertainment Taps Veteran Audit Partner as Chief Financial Officer

CEC Entertainment, Inc. today announced the appointment of Tiffany B. Kice to the position of Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, effective August 16, 2010. Tiffany Kice, a Certified Public Accountant, has over 22 years of accounting and retail experience, including spending the past 14 years in public accounting with KPMG LLP where she has served as an Audit Partner since 2006. During her tenure at KPMG, Ms. Kice performed financial statement audits, audits of internal controls, and other related services for several large public companies, including a significant number of multi-location companies in the restaurant and retail industries. CEC Entertainment, Inc. President and CEO Michael H. Magusiak said, “The Board and I are pleased that we have been able to attract a CFO candidate with Tiffany’s qualifications and believe her extensive experience across several consumer-related industries will benefit the Company and its shareholders in the years ahead. Tiffany brings with her a deep understanding of accounting matters, management experience and executive leadership that represent a tremendous asset for CEC.” Ms. Kice stated that “CEC is one of the most recognized and successful brand names in the industry and I am honored to be joining this organization as CFO. I see this as a tremendous opportunity and I am excited to be joining a company with such a long history of success in serving families with young children. I look forward to being a part of CEC’s executive leadership team and working to ensure its future growth.”

Source: CEC Entertainment, Inc.

Red Robin Appoints Glenn B. Kaufman to the Board of Directors

Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, Inc. announced the appointment of Glenn B. Kaufman to its Board of Directors, effective August 4, 2010. Mr. Kaufman is a Managing Member of The D Cubed Group, a private market investment firm with a long-term value creation strategy centered on supporting each company and its executives in driving continuous improvement in business quality. Prior to forming D Cubed he spent 11 years at American Securities Capital Partners, where he was a Managing Director since 2001. During his tenure Mr. Kaufman spearheaded the firm's investing in the restaurant and franchising, and healthcare sectors. He served as Chairman or a Director of Potbelly Sandwich Works, El Pollo Loco, Press Ganey Associates, Anthony International and DRL Holdings. "We are pleased to welcome Glenn to our Board of Directors. With his successful experience both investing and helping to drive performance in companies in our industry and elsewhere, Glenn will be a great contributor to our Board," said Pattye Moore, Red Robin's Board Chair. "As we have previously announced, the Company's Board of Directors has been proactively taking steps to enhance governance and this completes our process to add four new independent board members who all bring significant industry expertise and business experience. Combined with the positive progress we are making toward recruiting a highly qualified CEO, we feel on track in doing the things we need to do to position Red Robin for strong future success."

Source: Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, Inc.

Saladworks Names Jason D. Mattes V.P. of Franchise Development

Saladworks has named Jason D. Mattes as Vice President of Franchise Development. Mattes' franchise career started at Netspace, a nationwide provider of DSL and wireless broadband internet. Before joining Saladworks, Mattes managed a staff at Cruise Planners, the largest home-based travel agent network. At Saladworks, Mattes' main focus is directing the franchise expansion efforts of the Nation's #1 Salad Franchise. "Saladworks has spent the last two years gearing up for national expansion in spite of the economy," said Saladworks' Founder/CEO, John Scardapane. "Bringing Jason on board with his vast experience is a perfect fit for our aggressive growth model, and an integral piece in the puzzle of nationwide expansion." Mattes joins Saladworks as the franchise concept continues to expand in new markets coast to coast. Saladworks' entrance into Orange County, CA and Knox County, TN, are all planned for late 2010 into early 2011.

Source: SALADWORKS

Baskin-Robbins Names Papa John's Veteran to New Post

While many companies continue to downsize, Baskin-Robbins has created a new position to oversee U.S. operations. Bill Mitchell has been named vice president, Baskin-Robbins U.S. He will report directly to Nigel Travis, CEO of Dunkin' Brands, Inc. Mitchell most recently served as president of global operations for Papa John's, where he was responsible for driving the revenues of more than 3,400 restaurants in 29 countries. He was with Papa John's for 10 years. Prior, he worked with AFC Enterprises, which owns Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen, RTM Restaurant Group and PepsiCo. Prior to his immersion in the restaurant industry, Mitchell served as a captain of field artillery in the U.S. Army. In his new role, Mitchell will focus on supporting domestic Baskin-Robbins franchisees with operations and guest services. "Bill is one of the most talented operations executives in the restaurant industry," said Travis. "His experience in all phases of restaurant management, including development and operations, multiunit management, franchisee relations and financial and strategic planning, uniquely qualifies him to further drive Baskin-Robbins' success in the U.S. I am delighted he has joined our team."

Source: PizzaMarketPlace.com

O'Charley's Names David W. Head President and Chief Executive Officer

O'Charley's Inc. announced that it has named David W. Head as its president and chief executive officer, effective September 1, 2010. Head, age 53, was also appointed to the board of directors effective September 1, 2010, increasing the total number of the Company's directors to eleven. An executive with substantial experience in casual dining as well as quick-service, Head most recently served as Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Captain D's Seafood Kitchen, a brand with approximately 550 restaurants and over \$500 million in system-wide sales. Head previously served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Romacorp, Inc., the owner of Tony Roma's Ribs, Seafood and Steaks; and as Chief Operating Officer of major franchisees of Applebee's and Red Robin Gourmet Burgers. "We are pleased to welcome David to our company as its new chief executive officer," said Philip J. Hickey, Jr., chairman of the board of directors and interim chief executive officer. "He is a proven leader with a broad skill set, deep operational experience in the restaurant industry, and an impressive track record refining and repositioning restaurant brands. I look forward to working closely with David to improve our financial performance by building guest loyalty with great food, service and value."

Source: O'Charley's Inc.



Hooters Expanding, Seeks New Locations in Turkey, India, Japan

Hooters, the restaurant chain known more for its buxom waitresses than its chicken wings, fries and beer is looking to bring its "delightfully tacky yet unrefined"—that's their slogan—dining experience to Turkey, India and Japan. Those countries are some of the new markets the casual dining franchise will target in an expansion plan announced Thursday that would increase new restaurant locations by at least 15% to 20% annually for the next several years. Hooters is expanding as the number of U.S. restaurants overall is shrinking amid high unemployment and a sluggish economy. According to a recent report by market research company The NPD Group, roughly 5,000 restaurants, or 1%, closed this spring compared to the same period last year, mostly independently owned operations. Hooters, which has over 455 chains worldwide in 29 foreign countries, hired Colliers International to identify new locations and negotiate lease agreements. "The goal is to double the footprint over the next five years," says Patrick Duffy, chairman of Colliers Retail Services Group. He said the Hooters concept has been "transportable" overseas and that Shanghai is one of their most successful restaurants. Hooters said their ideal locations range between 3,000 and 5,000 square feet and "typically boast retail, office, hotel, tourism, festival, urban and industrial traffic drivers."

Source: The Wall Street Journal

Buca di Beppo Chain Hopes to Find Footing in Massachusetts

Buca di Beppo is expanding its reach into Massachusetts, opening four restaurants in Massachusetts in the fall. The new restaurants — in Dedham, Lexington, Seekonk, and Shrewsbury — will be the first New England outposts for the Minneapolis chain, which runs more than 80 casual restaurants around the

country. "We studied the market of all those small towns around there, and we thought they were absolutely perfect for Buca," said Robert Earl, chief executive of Planet Hollywood Inc., which bought Buca Inc. in 2008. The restaurants, which will employ about 275 people, will replace some former storefronts of Vinny T's, an Italian restaurant chain in Boston, which recently shut down. Each Buca seats about 330 patrons and caters to families and big groups, offering pasta and entrees that serve up to six people and range from \$18 to \$38. Earl said he hopes to open more locations here, including one in Copley Place or at another downtown location in the spring. To appeal to locals, Buca is adding several seafood dishes, including lobster ravioli and mussels marinara, to Boston-area menus. Even though Buca has fared better than its peers, with a 5 percent increase in sales revenue over the year, according to the company, industry analysts say the chain will face difficulty trying to draw Bostonians to another Italian restaurant. Sales at Italian restaurants nationwide declined 5 percent last year, according to Dennis Lombardi, executive vice president at WD Partners, a restaurant and retail consulting firm in Columbus, Ohio. People are eating out less, and when they do, they choose quicker, cheaper restaurants and order less, Lombardi said. As long as the unemployment rate stays high, he added, casual dining sales will continue to decline. "Ideally, they'll provide an even better experience than what's already in the market," Lombardi said, "because you have to lure the customer away from their already chosen options and favorite options." To better compete, Buca di Beppo will need to emphasize takeout, catering, and banquets, said Darren Tristano, executive vice president at Technomic Inc., a Chicago food industry consulting firm. "Quite frankly, it's not hard to make pasta at home," he said. Tristano said Buca di Beppo broadened its appeal in 2005 when it introduced smaller meals serving two or three people. Sales at Buca di Beppo are now equally divided between small and large plates, according to Tom Avallone, Buca's chief executive. But local Italian restaurateurs said customers will probably not choose Buca over homegrown options. "When locals think about Italian food, they want to go out for something authentic, and not necessarily something commercial," said Angela Cornacchio, manager of Gennaro's 5 North Square in the North End. Anthony Gesualdi, owner of Davide Restaurant in the North End, believed that while Buca would not be competitive in Boston's North End, it could succeed in the suburbs. "The suburbs might work better because people don't want to come into Boston because of traveling and the parking situation," he said. "There are just not many restaurants around that serve Italian in those areas."

Source: BostonGlobe.com

Carlson Cos. Buys Partner's Stake in U.K. T.G.I Friday's; CEO Talks Expansion

Carlson Cos. Inc. announced Thursday it has acquired the remaining 60 percent stake in T.G.I.Friday's U.K. operations from its joint venture partner, European buyout firm AAC Capital Partners, for \$50 million. Minnetonka-based Carlson, which partnered with AAC to buy the U.K. restaurants from a franchisee in 2007, exercised its contractual right under that agreement to buy out AAC's stake at a pre-determined multiple of 5.2 times EBITDA earnings. T.G.I. Friday's entered the U.K. market in 1986 and now has 46 locations there. Comparable-store sales at the U.K. restaurants are up 4.8 percent in 2010, following an increase of 3.5 percent in 2009. They have outperformed the chain's U.S. stores, which have seen negative same-store sales in recent years. "The U.K. business has been a strong performer and it has a great management team, so we believe there is continued upside and that it can be a strong platform for us to continue to grow," Carlson President and CEO Hubert Joly said. In addition to buying out AAC's stake, Carlson said it plans to invest another \$30 million to open new U.K. restaurants. It also will spend \$20 million to remodel and maintain existing locations there. The company plans to add at least 160 T.G.I. Friday's restaurants worldwide by 2015, expanding the brand to nearly 1,100 locations in more than 60 countries. Joly said he anticipates growth in existing markets like Taiwan, Korea, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, as well as in areas where it does not have as strong of a presence, such as China, Japan and some European countries. Despite declines in the U.S. casual-dining market in recent years, Joly said there is still an opportunity for domestic expansion, as well. "With about 600 stores in the United States, we're far from having fully captured the U.S. market opportunity," he said. Carlson's T.G.I. Friday's push in the U.K. is part of its "Ambition 2015" initiative, which also calls for the company to expand its hotel portfolio by more than 50 percent by 2015.

Source: Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal

Buffett's Dairy Queen Seeks Ban of Rival to Blizzard

International Dairy Queen, the ice cream maker owned by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc., asked a California court to halt sales of frozen desserts marketed under a name similar to its Blizzard product. Blizz Frozen Yogurt is causing confusion among customers familiar with Dairy Queen's best-selling item, the company said in a filing in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. The request seeks to block Yogubliz Inc.'s use of the Blizz name. Yogubliz filed a pre-emptive suit in May, saying it received threats from Dairy Queen and that the two products are distinct. Dairy Queen "is suffering irreparable harm and damage to the goodwill" of Blizzard trademarks, the company said in a July 26 filing. Yogubliz's product is "likely to cause confusion, mistake and deception among consumers." Dairy Queen, which operates restaurants in every U.S. state but Vermont, was purchased by Omaha, Nebraska-based Berkshire in 1998, according to the company's website. Buffett, Berkshire's chief executive officer, built the parent company with investments in brands like Coca-Cola Co. and American Express Co. Dairy Queen said Blizz Frozen Yogurt would dilute the distinctive quality of the "famous" Blizzard treat, according to the filing. The Blizzard is a "soft serve frozen dairy product blended with candy or cookie pieces or other flavorings," the company said. Blizzard Sales Dairy Queen sold more than 175 million Blizzards in 1985, the first year it was offered, according to the company's website. The dessert specialist made an 8,225-pound Blizzard in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 2005 to celebrate the treat's 20th anniversary, according to the Website. In its complaint, Yogubliz said its product doesn't infringe on Dairy Queen trademarks. The rival offerings are "based on the wholly unprotectible idea of freezing and serving milk and milk-based products with or without flavoring, coloring and/or non-milk products," according to the complaint. Yogubliz said its products received "rave reviews" upon launch and, because they're made with frozen yogurt, are different than Dairy Queen's Blizzard. Yogubliz owns shops throughout California and in Las Vegas. The company said it received a trademark last year for Blizzberry, a blended drink made with fruit, milk and frozen yogurt. A hearing is set for an Aug. 23 in front of U.S. District Judge Gary Klausner. Dean Peters, a spokesman for Dairy Queen, declined to comment. A call to Yogubliz's offices after hours wasn't returned.

Source: Bloomberg/BusinessWeek

Melting Pot Parent Company to Debut New Concepts. Company Changing Its Name to Front Burner Brands

The Melting Pot's parent company said it is forming a new umbrella corporation to better reflect its growing portfolio of restaurants, including two new fast-casual concepts that will debut this fall. The new company, Front Burner Brands, will officially launch in January 2011, a spokeswoman said. The Tampa, Fla.-based Melting Pot, which operates or franchises 144 casual-dining fondue restaurants, said it developed the new brands, Burger 21 and Peel, in partnership with chef Chris Ponte of Café Ponte in Clearwater, Fla. Burger 21 will offer 21 different types of burgers ranging from freshly ground beef to poultry to seafood, as well as hot dogs and salads. It also will feature a milkshake bar serving hand-dipped floats, malts and shakes. At Peel, menu items will include freshly made soups, salads, pizzas sandwiches and pasta. In addition to the two new concepts, Front Burner also plans to grow its six-unit GrillSmith chain, an upscale-casual concept specializing in New American cuisine that debuted in 2007. The six units currently open are located throughout the Tampa area. The changes come as The Melting Pot brand celebrates its 35th anniversary and prepares to expand into Canada and Mexico. The chain has opened one restaurant in Edmonton, Canada, with six more in development in that region as well seven units in development in Mexico.

Source: NRN

Baja Fresh, Canyons Burger Merge to Make New Fresh Mex Burger Concept

Fresh Enterprises has merged two of its premier brands and announced the opening of its first dual restaurant concept in the town of Bozeman, Mont. Baja Fresh, the nationally recognized fresh Mexican chain, and Canyons Burger Company, a fast casual gourmet burger chain acquired by Fresh Enterprises in August of 2009, have opened an entirely new restaurant model, "Baja Fresh Canyons Burger." Baja Fresh Canyons opened on July 15 in a 3424-square-foot retail unit and is located at 1459 N. 19th Ave, Bozeman. With entrees ranging from fresh and made-to-order burritos, tacos and fajitas, to 100 percent Black Angus burgers and fresh cut fries, the new restaurant offers the best of both Baja Fresh and Canyons Burger on one menu. Furnished with hard woods, colorful counter tops, comfortable booths, and a full bar, Baja Fresh Canyons Burger offers guests an upscale dining experience with fast-casual prices and speed. The new Baja Fresh Canyons Burger is owned and operated by husband and wife team, Tim and Heidi Redelsperger, who also own and operate additional business concepts in the Arizona market. The Redelspergers are thrilled to be the first franchisees of the Baja Fresh Canyons Burger brand and have acquired the rights to the restaurant throughout Montana. "We think there is a significant niche for Baja Fresh Canyons in Montana. 'Eat Well. Play Hard. Live Fresh.' is the mantra of the restaurant, and we believe this fits well with the lifestyle here," Tim Redelsperger said. Baja Fresh Canyons Burger is the newest concept to emerge from Fresh Enterprises, which also owns La Salsa Mexican Grill. Fresh Enterprises awarded Tesser, the San Francisco-based brand strategy and retail design firm, the task of cultivating the design and strategy behind the all-new cohesive concept. Baja Fresh Canyons Burger is a pioneering model in the fast-casual segment and has created a new logo, messaging and enhanced environmental design that combines two brands into one.

Source: FastCasual

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