Applebee's to Open Milestone Restaurant in Harlem, New York

December 14, 2009

Nation's Largest Casual Dining Chain Celebrates 2000th Restaurant

LENEXA, KS, Dec 14, 2009 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) -- Applebee's Neighborhood Grill and Bar is celebrating the opening of its 2000th restaurant today, the first casual dining concept in the world to reach this milestone event. Harlem, New York's famed 125th Street, a neighborhood with a vibrant cultural and artistic history, will be home to the 2000th restaurant.

"Applebee's has a strong commitment to supporting the neighborhoods we serve," said Mike Archer, president of Applebee's Services, Inc. "We're excited to get to know the 125th Street neighborhood in Harlem, with its rich history and close-knit community."

A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for 11 a.m., Dec. 14, at the restaurant at One West 125th Street in Harlem. Grand opening festivities included a VIP party to benefit the Harlem Week Scholarship Fund/Grant program, which provides funds for deserving students to attend college.

"The opening of Applebee's on the famous 125th Street adds to the increased legacy of Harlem's reputation for great and diverse foods as well as for fine restaurants," said Lloyd A. Williams, president and CEO of the Harlem Chamber of Commerce. "More importantly, Applebee's on 125th Street will provide much needed management and employment opportunities for our community as well as allow Harlem residents, business persons, tourists, church goers and students to spend a larger portion of their disposable income within our own community."

The 2000th Applebee's is being opened by Apple-Metro, Inc., which owns and operates Applebee's on Manhattan and surrounding boroughs, including three of the highest-grossing Applebee's in the system. Apple-Metro was honored as the 2009 Applebee's Franchisee of the Year.

"Small businesses are being heralded as key to our economic recovery and every franchise Applebee's location is essentially that, a small business in their neighborhood, bolstering its local community's economy daily while providing an unequaled level of casual family dining," said Zane Tankel, president and CEO of Apple-Metro. "Apple-Metro, Inc. currently employs over 3,000 associates, all hired from the communities surrounding our restaurants. We are thrilled to be bringing both a small business -- and jobs -- to the famous 125th Street neighborhood in Harlem."

Applebee's is committed to keeping jobs in the neighborhood; all of the nearly 200 positions in its 2000th restaurant are being filled by a Harlem resident.

"Applebee's continues to grow in this tough economic environment," said Archer. "As we open our 2000th restaurant, we have a lot of momentum behind our brand, with new menu offerings, solid marketing improvements and a fiercer-than-ever commitment to be the number one casual dining choice in neighborhoods across America and the world."

Applebee's credits the success of its prudent growth strategy on a number of differentiating factors, including:

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--  Unwavering commitment from franchisees.
--  Enhancing and evolving marketing and menu strategies.
--  Ensuring operational excellence.
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The first Applebee's restaurant was opened in 1980, when Bill and T.J. Palmer took a second mortgage on their home and borrowed $50,000 to launch the business. To fulfill a dream of nationwide expansion, they sold the Applebee's concept to W.R. Grace and Co. In 1988, Applebee's International, Inc. became the restaurant chain's franchisor when franchisees Abe Gustin and John Hamra purchased the rights to the Applebee's concept from W.R. Grace and Co. At the time, there were 54 Applebee's restaurants.

About Applebee's Services, Inc.

Applebee's Services Inc., and its affiliates, franchise and operate restaurants under Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar and is a DineEquity, Inc. (NYSE: DIN) brand. Additional information on Applebee's can be found on the company's Web site at www.applebees.com.

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