

Word of Einstein Bros. Bagels Franchising Feeds Frenzy for Nationwide Growth

2008-06-26

Southeast Franchising Efforts Spur Investor Excitement, Einstein Bros. Bagels Opens Additional U.S. Territories

Einstein Noah Restaurant Group (NASDAQ:BAGL) , a leader in the quick-casual segment of the restaurant industry, announced today that it is opening new franchise territories nationwide, expanding the growth plans for its flagship brand, Einstein Bros. (R) Bagels. This strategic decision comes on the heels of the brand's initial franchise plan which focused primarily on the Southeastern region of the United States.

"Once word got out that our concept was franchising in the Southeast, the response from experienced restaurant operators and investors from all around the country was extremely positive," said Kevin Kruse, Vice President of Franchise Development for Einstein Noah Restaurant Group. "Now, with our course mapped out for national expansion, we are excited about the growth of this unique brand and look forward to an increased presence nationwide."

With more than 320 company-owned restaurants and 100-plus licensed locations, Einstein Bros. has built a strong presence and loyal following in select U.S. markets. Moving forward, the new franchise strategy calls for additional locations in cities and counties nearby existing company-owned restaurants primarily in the Midwest, New England, East Coast and Southern United States.

"Einstein Bros. is a neighborhood brand that has built a good name around the country with a strong presence of company-owned restaurants, along with licensed outlets primarily in campus locations," Kruse added. "We believe that our guests feel at home when they visit our restaurants. We cannot wait to share that experience and great food with a greater number of guests around the country."

Excitement for the franchise opportunity can already be seen in the south. Earlier this month, two area development agreements were signed that represent eight new locations north of Dallas in Grayson and Collin counties and the three counties near the city of Tyler. Elsewhere, since franchising efforts began less than 18 months ago, Einstein Noah Restaurant Group has inked three additional multi-unit agreements with restaurant franchise investors in Jacksonville, Florida, Augusta, Georgia/Aiken, South Carolina and northwest Arkansas. In total, the signed deals represent up to 37 new Einstein Bros. locations, the first of which opened in Jacksonville on March 30, 2008. Additional franchise openings are slated for late-2008 and into 2009 and beyond.

Known for its award winning bagels and shmeared varieties, made-to-order breakfast and lunchtime sandwiches, five different flavors of Darn Good Coffee(R), hearty soups, fresh innovative salads, baked goods and decadent desserts, Einstein Bros. Bagels has secured its distinctive place among competitors in the rapidly expanding fast casual restaurant category with innovative menu offerings. Moreover, the brand's trendy restaurant decor and contemporary atmosphere is designed to attract a loyal guest base that can feel at home while dining.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

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