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ZAXBY'S HATCHES FIRST HOUSTON-AREA LOCATION; NINE MORE PLANNED FOR HARRIS COUNTY

Residents of Spring Get First Taste of Chain's Prepared-at-Order Chicken

SPRING, Texas (April 1, 2009) — Zaxby's, a longtime Southeast favorite for chicken fingers and Buffalo wings, and one of the nation's fastest-growing restaurant chains, is hatching its first Houston-area location in Spring. The 470-unit restaurant chain's fifth Texas location opened its doors on Monday at 8103 Louetta Road, a half mile west of Klein High School. The new restaurant operates from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Sunday.

Zaxby's licensees Jim Stokes and Matt Monds have an agreement with the company to open 10 locations in the Houston area, but hope to open even more. They already have their eyes on the next few locations and hope to be able to open a new restaurant every six months. Monds is a former award-winning Chick-fil-A operator who had been looking for a reason to return to Houston.

"We are extremely excited to introduce Zaxby's to the greater Houston area," said Zach McLeroy, Zaxby's co-founder and CEO. "We're confident that Jim and Matt will do a great job of delivering Zaxby's signature food, as providing superior service to the community in true Zaxby's style."

"Our fast-casual concept is perfect for people who are looking for a freshly prepared, delicious meal at a price point that won't put a big dent in their wallets," added Monds, who will oversee operations in the restaurant day to day. Guests order and pick up their meals at the counter and eat in a dining room similar in style to a casual dining restaurant, with comfortable booths and tables. "Our team members provide warm and friendly service that guests want to come back for again and again. And in these unsteady economic times, guests like that."

Zaxby's success is rooted in a simple operating philosophy developed by its founders that has matured into the company's mission statement — "consistently create encore experiences that enrich lives one person at a time." That statement is not only the driving force behind the company's pursuit to provide delicious food and excellent customer service, it's also what helps the company create a fun work atmosphere for employees.

Menu & Restaurant Design

Zaxby's differs from its chicken restaurant competitors because its menu items are prepared at order and offer options to suit each guest's tastes. Zaxby's most popular items are its hand-breaded Chicken Fingerz and Jumbo Buffalo Wings, smothered in a choice of eight sauces with zesty names like Wimpy, Tongue Torch, Nuclear and Insane. The menu also offers innovative Zappetizers — Onion Rings, Tater Chips (home-style potato chips) and Spicy Fried Mushrooms, as well as a variety of Party Platterz perfect for any family gathering or special occasion.

Zaxby's also offers three salads, or Zalads: The House, The Blue and The Caesar. All are prepared at order, with grilled or fried chicken, three kinds of lettuce, shredded cheese, fresh veggies and juicy tomatoes. Customers have a choice of buffaloe or blackened chicken when ordering The Blue. All of Zaxby's Zalads offer more chicken and unique ingredients, such as French-fried onions, and are larger than most salads offered elsewhere. Each Zalad is assembled at the time the order is placed, versus being pre-made and stored in a cooler.

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Zaxby's Opens Spring Location Monday — Page 2

Zaxby's is also bringing its fresh restaurant design to Texas. Guests will notice interior floor-to-ceiling brick walls and large windows providing natural light, all complemented by an eclectic mix of photography and interior and exterior signage. The restaurant is 3,495 square feet and can comfortably seat 90 guests. Zaxby's also provides drive-thru and phone-in services to meet the needs of customers on the go.

"The entire Spring restaurant team is excited with the way the new restaurant looks and feels," said Mond. "I think residents who have never before heard of Zaxby's or indulged in the indescribably good food are in for quite a pleasant surprise. We've had a few employee training sessions where we invited residents and businesspeople of Spring, and we appreciate the warm welcome they've given us."

Texas Growth Areas

Zaxby's laid its Texas foundation in March 2008 with the opening of its first Dallas-Fort Worth location in Mansfield. The chain's second, third and fourth Texas outlets followed in Keller in October, The Colony in November and Richardson in February. Franchise-licensing opportunities are available to help fuel growth in the state. Company officials think Texas markets can support as many as 250 restaurants. Restaurants typically have 30 – 50 team members employed in management, kitchen and cashier positions.

"We are confident that once area residents and entrepreneurs experience our food and service, they will want to bring a Zaxby's to their own communities as well," McLeroy said. "We have many successful licensees who started out as Zaxby's guests who just loved the food."

In addition to the Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth areas, the company is looking at Austin, Beaumont-Port Arthur, Corpus Christi, Laredo, Tyler-Longview and Waco-Temple-Bryan for future development. Interested entrepreneurs can visit zaxbysfranchising.com for more information.

Zaxby's Stats

Zaxby's now operates its 470 restaurants throughout 11 states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Its largest market is Atlanta, with more than 60 locations in the metro area.

Zaxby's is headquartered in Athens, Ga. The company opened its first restaurant in Statesboro, Ga., in March 1990, and by December 2005 observed its 300th opening in Dallas, Ga. In 2007 Zaxby's opened its 400th location in Macon, Ga.

How it All Started

Zaxby's founders Zach McLeroy and Tony Townley looked around their community and saw plenty of fast food or sit-down dining options. Feeling something was missing, they decided to provide the freshest chicken fingers and Buffalo wings in town. That hatched a simple idea to create a fun atmosphere where food quality is of the utmost importance. In 1990, they opened the first Zaxby's in Statesboro, Ga. The concept, one of the early "quick-casual" restaurants, proved successful.

McLeroy and Townley opened four more restaurants, and in 1994, they began to franchise the brand. The food and service were so popular, the Athens, Ga.-based chain has boomed to 470 units in 11 states and continues to grow. For more information visit www.zaxbys.com.

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