



Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza Announces Expansion to New York and Connecticut

Build-Your-Own Pizza Chain Grows Pipeline of Franchise Stores to 24 in Four States

February 26, 2013 – Pasadena, Calif. – Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza, a leader in the fast casual build-your-own pizza category, today announced that Lessing's Hospitality Group, one of New York's leading restaurant and catering companies, has signed an agreement to develop ten franchise stores in the New York Metro area, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland counties and southern Connecticut. This most recent agreement brings Blaze Pizza's total number of franchise stores under development to 24 locations – with several planned to open this spring. This new commitment will allow Blaze Pizza to make its debut in two new states, further expanding its growing national footprint.

"We believe that Blaze Pizza is well positioned to capture the leadership position in the rapidly emerging build-your-own pizza category," said Michael Lessing, COO of Lessing's. "It's very exciting to be involved in the rollout of a young, well-developed concept and we know that they value our experience and input." Mark Lessing, EVP Restaurants & Franchising for Lessing's added, "We believe that this delicious, handmade, artisanal pizza will do very well in the New York area among all generations seeking a fast casual pizza for lunch or dinner." A sixth-generation, family owned and operated food service business, Lessing's was the first company to serve Coca-Cola in Manhattan. Lessing's full-service restaurants include four-star Mirabelle, the waterfront View Restaurant, and trademark "Main Street" locations including Post Office Café, Maxwell's, Library Café and Finnegan's.

"The addition of stores in New York and Connecticut will really help in our plans to build Blaze Pizza into a national brand," said Elise Wetzel, President of Blaze Pizza. "We are very pleased to welcome Lessing's to our growing Blaze Pizza family." The New York and Connecticut stores will be part of a plan to build a concentration of Blaze Pizza restaurants in the Northeast, including New Jersey, Massachusetts and Washington DC.

Lessing's Hospitality Group is the fourth area developer in Blaze Pizza's growing franchise network. Blaze Pizza is on track to have 20 area developers under contract by the end of 2013.

The first New York restaurant is scheduled to open in Long Island this summer in a location that has not yet been announced.

Blaze Pizza uses an assembly line format (similar to Chipotle Mexican Grill®) to create artisan pizzas at lightning fast speed – all for only \$6.85. Each Blaze Pizza restaurant makes its own dough from scratch using a recipe that requires a 24-hour fermentation period to produce its signature light-as-air, crisp crust. Guests watch as each perfectly proofed dough ball is pressed into a generous 11-inch crust. Next, they travel down the assembly line to “co-create” a signature pizza or design one of their own -- with over 40 artisanal toppings to choose from. Pizzas are “fast-fire’d” in a blazing-hot oven and ready in a scant 120 seconds. Blaze Pizza’s menu also features signature salads, fresh lemonades, craft beer & wine and house-made S’more Pies. For pizza fans with specific dietary needs, Blaze Pizza offers gluten-free dough and vegan cheese.

About Lessing’s

Owned and operated continuously by the Lessing family since the company’s founding in 1890, Lessing’s has long been one of the Northeast region’s leading providers of food and beverage services to colleges, businesses, and the general public through a variety of dining and hospitality operations. Lessing’s three divisions - food service management, restaurants, and catering, employ more than 1,000 people. The company operates in over 120 locations, including eight full-service restaurants and a hotel, and provides catering services for countless weddings and other special events. Lessing’s serves hundreds of thousands of guests each year and is renowned for its integrity and commitment to the local communities in which it operates. For more information, please visit www.lessings.com.

About Blaze Pizza

A creation of Elise and Rick Wetzel (founder of Wetzel's Pretzels), the concept is backed by investors including Maria Shriver, movie producer John Davis and Boston Red Sox co-owner Tom Werner, and includes the talents of highly acclaimed Executive Chef Bradford Kent. Blaze Pizza’s seasoned executive team brings QSR experience from numerous concepts including Buffalo Wild Wings, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Panda Express, McDonald’s, and Carl’s Jr. The company, which Forbes.com named a “*Hot New Restaurant Chain from an Established Brand*,” is registered to sell franchises in 36 states and is currently accepting applications to develop franchise stores across the country. For more information, please visit www.blazepizza.com or www.facebook.com/blazepizza.

Blaze Pizza, LLC

530 S. Lake Ave, Suite 280

Pasadena, CA 91101
