



## **Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza Turns 82 on Its Three Year Anniversary**

*Leading Fast Casual Pizza Chain 'Sold Out' of Traditional U.S. Franchise Territories*

August 31, 2015 – Los Angeles, Calif. – Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza, the nation's largest and fastest growing build-your-own pizza chain, today announced highlights and financial results covering its first three years in business. The fast casual pizza chain, known for its chef-driven recipes and casually hip restaurants, also announced that, except for one unassigned territory, it no longer has areas available for franchise development in the continental U.S. With its nationwide franchisee selection complete, the company plans to open between 85 and 135 new restaurants each year – targeting the opening of its 1,000 location before its tenth birthday.

The first Blaze Pizza restaurant opened in Irvine, Calif. on August 6, 2012. The following year, the company grew to 10 locations and began expanding beyond California. In just three years of operation, the company has now grown to 82 locations in 20 states, including the major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Las Vegas, Miami and Washington, D.C.

### **Third Year Anniversary Highlights:**

- 'Sold out' of all domestic territories to 44 experienced multi-unit franchise groups that are developing Blaze Pizza restaurants in nearly every market in the U.S.
- Grew system-wide sales to \$70.3 million in the third year of operation, an increase of 350% over system-wide sales of \$15.6 million in year two. <sup>(1)</sup>
- Achieved average unit volumes (AUVs) of \$1.55 million, roughly double many of the large national pizza chains. <sup>(2)</sup>
- Achieved year-to-date comparable same store sales increase of 12.7%. <sup>(3)</sup>
- Added its first international franchise partner in an agreement to expand the company into Canada with a plan to open 60 restaurants.
- Secured its first airport location in a deal with HMSHost to open a Blaze Pizza restaurant in Houston Intercontinental Airport.
- Announced plans for a new 5,000 square foot flagship restaurant at Disney Springs in Walt Disney World Resort at Lake Buena Vista, Fla., scheduled to open in 2016.

“When we set out to build our franchise network, our goal was to limit our franchising to about 50 elite-level multi-unit operators,” said Jim Mizes, president and COO of Blaze Pizza. “Since 2012, we have received over 5,000 franchise inquiries and, from this pool, we have found 44 exceptional franchise partners. This group is now one of our core strengths that are helping us build Blaze Pizza across the country.”

### **About Blaze Pizza**

Blaze Pizza® is a modern day “pizza joint”, serving up artisanal pizzas that are both fast and affordable. By taking pizza back to its roots, the innovative fast-casual concept has quickly become one of the hottest restaurant chains in the country, with fans lining up each day for their custom-built pizzas, freshly made salads, blood orange lemonade and s’more pies. Restaurants feature an interactive assembly-line format that allows guests to customize one of the menu’s signature pizzas or create their own, choosing from a wide selection of fresh, high-quality ingredients – all for about \$8. The generously-sized 11-inch pizzas are then sent to a blazing hot open-flame oven – the centerpiece of the restaurant – where dedicated pizzasmiths™ ensure the thin-crust pies are fast-fire’d® and ready to eat in just 180 seconds. Each restaurant makes its own dough from scratch using a proprietary recipe developed by Executive Chef Bradford Kent (the “Pizza Whisperer”), which requires a 24-hour fermentation period to produce his signature light-as-air, crisp crust. For pizza fans with specific dietary needs, Blaze Pizza offers gluten-free dough and vegan cheese.

The company’s commitment to “intelligent choices for its pizzas, people & planet” reflects its core belief that guests deserve a better way to enjoy fast food. Blaze carefully sources its ingredients – with almost all of its food free of artificial colors, flavors, preservatives and fillers. Restaurants are thoughtfully designed and are constructed with both recycled and sustainable materials, use eco-friendly packaging and feature energy-efficient lighting. The company’s dress code encourages individual expression, and each month the company awards bonuses of one-half percent of sales (\$350,000 in the past year) to its best performing restaurant crew members.

Now ranked as the overall #2 brand in the Fast Casual Top 100, Blaze Pizza is building momentum and developing a cult-like following as it expands across the country. Founded by Elise and Rick Wetzel (co-founder of Wetzel’s Pretzels), the concept is backed by investors including LeBron James, Maria Shriver, Boston Red Sox co-owner Tom Werner and movie producer John Davis. For more information, please visit [blazepizza.com](http://blazepizza.com) and [facebook.com/blazepizza](https://facebook.com/blazepizza) or [click here](#) to see our TV commercial.

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- (1) Includes sales from restaurants operated by franchisees and as reported to the company.
- (2) Fiscal year 2014 results. Of the ten restaurants in the reporting group, five (50%) met or exceeded this average. A new franchisee's results may differ from the represented performance.
- (3) Year-to-date as of 8/2/15. Comparable same store sales is based on the operations of 26 restaurants and reflects the change in year-over-year sales in our comparable restaurant base. A restaurant enters our comparable restaurant base following its 12th month of operations.