



Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza Announces First Endorsement Deal with Global Icon LeBron James
NBA All-Star Expands Role from Founding Investor to Leading Brand Ambassador

October 8, 2015 – Los Angeles, Calif. – Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza, the nation's largest and fastest growing build-your-own pizza chain, today announced that it has signed a multi-year endorsement deal with global icon and NBA All-Star LeBron James. As one of the company's founding investors along with Maria Shriver, Boston Red Sox Chairman Tom Werner, film producer John Davis, and leading investor Paul Wachter, this agreement with James builds on the contributions he has been making to Blaze Pizza as an investor since 2012. Significantly expanding his role, this wide-ranging deal will see James directly involved in the brand's marketing activities through advertising, social media, in-store appearances, and other company campaigns.

"Blaze Pizza isn't your typical pizza chain. Their model is literally changing the future of the fast casual industry altogether," said James. "I initially invested in this company because I knew it was a special idea that offered something people would want. Now I'm excited to go all in with Blaze Pizza in this new role and continue to give people a whole new experience."

In just over three years, Blaze Pizza has grown to 88 locations in 22 states, with James serving as a franchisee in its Chicago and Miami locations along with Larry Levy, Founder and Chairman Emeritus of Levy Restaurants. In addition to his new deal with Blaze Pizza, James' list of endorsement partners includes Nike, Beats by Dre, and Coca-Cola. Terms of the multi-year agreement were not disclosed.

"LeBron is the perfect ambassador for our brand because he embodies everything Blaze Pizza stands for. In everything he does, he is authentic and totally unique," said Rick Wetzel, co-founder of Blaze Pizza. "This deal is extremely meaningful to us because LeBron has been by our side since the day we started, and we're excited to continue to change the industry with his help."

Since opening its first restaurant in Irvine, California in 2012, Blaze Pizza has expanded in several major metropolitan areas including Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Las Vegas, Miami and Washington, D.C. Going forward, the company is scheduled to open on average one new restaurant every four days – with its milestone 200th location projected to open by the end of next year.

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 service 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. With a dress code that encourages individual expression and a “say yes” service philosophy that empowers employees to delight those they serve, the company promotes an unconventional spirit that celebrates individuality and reflects the values of both team members and guests.

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 and facebook.com/blazepizza or [click here to view a company video](#).

Media Contact:

Josh Levitt
Blaze Pizza, LLC
(949) 981-0757, josh.levitt@blazepizza.com

Blaze Pizza®, Fast-Fire'd®, the horizontal logo design, and the proprietary names "Pizzasmith", "Intelligent Choices For Our Pizzas, People & Planet" and related trademarks are the property of Blaze Pizza, LLC.