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Max & Erma's Names Steve Weis Vice President, Operations

Columbus-based exec to help drive casual restaurant chain's reemergence

Columbus, Ohio -- With an aggressive turnaround plan underway, Max & Erma's Restaurants is turning to veteran restaurant leader Steve Weis to guide day-to-day-operations. The announcement was made today by Hazem Ouf, president and CEO of Max & Erma's parent company, American Blue Ribbon Holdings, LLC (ABRH). Ouf will continue to serve as the chain's chief executive. Weis will report to him.

"Steve's experience as a leader with such well-known brands as Pizza Hut, Taco Bell and KFC, combined with his years in the field running franchised Applebee's restaurants, makes him the perfect fit to drive the Max & Erma's turnaround, Ouf said. Max & Erma's currently operates 73 company-owned and franchised restaurants.

Weis joins Max & Erma's from Jillian's Entertainment, where he served as senior vice president for operations. "Max & Erma's has a unique place in the communities it serves and in the casual dining segment," Weis said. "In less than a year, Hazem and his team have made huge strides in rebuilding Max & Erma's, and this is an extremely exciting time to come on board.

Acquired last September by Denver-based ABRH, the casual dining chain, known for its fun, quirky personality, has undergone a remarkable transformation. Double-digit sales declines were reversed, driven by a revamped menu, a new marketing strategy and a renewed focus on guest service.

Weis is a resident of Columbus. "It's very important that the brand's leaders remain close to the communities that helped to make it successful," Ouf added. Max & Erma's marketing, led by long-time Columbus restaurant executive Jennifer Gulling, is based in Columbus. Columbus also is home to training, and the company's regional managers are based here. Max & Erma's employs a total of approximately 900 people in central Ohio.

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