

## PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 28, 2003**

### **Great Harvest Bread Company to Receive AAFD Fair Franchising Seal**

**San Diego, CA:** The American Association of Franchisees and Dealers (AAFD) has announced that it is awarding its prestigious Fair Franchising Seal to Montana based Great Harvest Bread Company.

The Fair Franchising Seal is awarded to franchisors nominated by their franchisee association or Franchise Advisory Council as having an exemplary record of franchise practices that embodies equity, fairness and service to the organization.

In order to earn the Fair Franchising Seal, the nominated company's franchise agreement must be consistent with the spirit of AAFD's *Fair Franchising Standards*, and the company must receive approval from at least 75% of its franchisees in a confidential survey conducted by the AAFD. Great Harvest's franchise agreement received a rating of 93% conformance to the AAFD's Fair Franchising Standards, and Great Harvest franchisees voted a resounding 99% in favor of granting the award, among the highest score yet received by any franchisor.

"Great Harvest Bread Company has a most admirable culture of mutual respect, openness and cooperation," commented AAFD Chairman, Robert Purvin, in announcing the award of the Fair Franchising Seal. "The AAFD Committee on Standards and Accreditation was most impressed by the fact that Great Harvest's 'culture' is written into its franchise agreement which forms the legal basis for its franchise relationships."

Purvin described the Great Harvest agreement as "a breath of fresh air" and an "outside the box" document that truly respects the legitimate and vital concerns of both the franchisor and the franchisees. "The very purpose of the AAFD Fair Franchising Seal is to recognize and honor companies that are proving that *fair franchising is good business!*"

"We are very proud to have been nominated and honored with the distinguished Fair Franchising Seal," said Michael Ferretti, President and CEO of Great Harvest Franchising Inc. "It is particularly meaningful because it reflects our overall commitment to quality in every aspect of our business. The fact that 99% of our franchisees support this fair franchising endorsement is a tremendous accolade and is evidence that our approach to franchising is well accepted."

Bill Dial, Franchise Agreement Board member and Great Harvest Franchisee from Albuquerque,

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New Mexico stated, "The award of this honor delights our family of bakeries. The hard work of the Franchise Agreement Board and the Franchise Office resulted in a fair and equitable agreement. We all look forward to continued cooperative work to make even greater strides."

Commented Robert Purvin, chairman of the AAFD, "The importance of the AAFD Fair Franchising Seal is that it rewards exemplary practices in the franchising marketplace. The Seal gives franchise buyers a legitimate standard by which to judge a franchise opportunity. Moreover, it represents an effective vote of confidence and approval by the system's own franchise owners."

According to Richard L. Rosen, Chairman of the AAFD Fair Franchising Standards Committee, "The members of the Standards Committee are gratified that the AAFD's Fair Franchising Seal has been awarded to Great Harvest Bread Company. The Fair Franchising Standards were promulgated to set guideposts along which franchisors and franchisees could travel to reach a more equitably balanced relationship. The awarding of the Seal to Great Harvest is another indication that Fair Franchising is not only attainable but, in many cases, a reality."

Great Harvest Bread Company operates more than 170 properties nationwide with locations in 38 states. An additional 30 stores are under contract to open in the next year or so allowing Great Harvest to surpass the 200 store threshold for the first time in its history. "We are fortunate that we receive over 5000 inquires a year for the opportunity to open a Great Harvest bread store, says Andy Bills, Executive Vice President of Great Harvest Franchising, Inc. "I strongly believe that our freedom culture, coupled with the "family" type relationships that we have with our franchisees is what drives this level of interest. The awarding of the AAFD Fair Franchising Seal only strengthens our resolve to continue working hand-in-hand with our bakery owners to improve our business and our relationships."

The American Association of Franchisees and Dealers is the oldest and largest direct member non-profit trade association representing the interests of franchisees and independent dealer networks throughout the United States. Stressing market solutions and franchisee empowerment through independent franchisee associations, the AAFD has grown to represent more than 12,000 franchised businesses nationwide.

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