

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **US Franchise Systems Once Again Earns Fair Franchising Seal from American Association of Franchisees & Dealers**

**San Diego, Calif.:** The American Association of Franchisees and Dealers (AAFD) has announced that US Franchise Systems (USFS) has earned recertification for the AAFD's prestigious Fair Franchising Seal for all three of its brands, Microtel Inns and Suites, Hawthorn Suites, and Best Inns and Best Suites hotel brands. USFS was first presented with the Seal in 2001.

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

In order to earn the 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. Not only did USFS' respective brand franchise agreements conform to the AAFD's Fair Franchising Standards, but with 96% of its franchisees responding to the survey; USFS franchisees collectively voted a resounding 97.2% in favor of re-certifying USFS to retain the award.

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. With the Seal, franchise buyers have a legitimate standard by which to judge a franchise opportunity – an effective vote of confidence and approval by the system's own franchise owners."

Said Mike Leven, president and CEO of USFS, "What makes this particularly meaningful is that our own franchisees were the ones to vote for us to once again receive the AAFD Seal, a recognition that reflects on fairness and what I believe to be the backbone of our entire organization."

USFS – with nearly 500 properties open or under construction worldwide – is one of the nation's fastest growing hospitality systems, in part due to its reputation for treating franchisees with respect and fairness. For example, USFS was the first to be recognized by the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) for exemplary franchise practices, and has also been cited by the American Hotel Foundation and American Express for its fair franchise agreement, which has become the model for the license agreement of the future.

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*USFS Retains AAFD Fair Franchising Seal...2/*

US Franchise Systems, Inc. is headquartered in Atlanta, Ga. In November 2000, business interests of the Pritzker family of Chicago, Ill., which also own other hospitality businesses and assets, including Hyatt Hotels, as well as numerous manufacturing, health-care, natural resources and other businesses and assets, recognized USFS' potential and acquired the company. All USFS hotels are independently owned and operated. For additional information, visit [www.usfsi.com](http://www.usfsi.com).

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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