

# FAST FORWARD

*A newsletter from the Association of Taco John's Franchisees*

December 2013

*Fast Forward*

## 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION

**T**he Association board of directors is excited to announce that the 2014 Taco John's National Convention will be held in San Antonio, TX, on March 20-23. Our destination, The La Cantera Hill Country Resort, is perched atop one of the highest points in all of San Antonio and overlooks Texas Hill Country. This is a distinctive retreat for business or leisure. From its scenic vistas, you'll see an endless expanse of majestic live Oak groves interrupted only by creamy white limestone outcroppings, emerald fairways, and sparkling pools.

San Antonio perfectly embodies the spirit of the Lone Star State. It's a cosmopolitan city that blends the diversity

of cultures and traditions from Native America, Old Mexico, Germany, the Wild West, and the Deep South. The resort represents this rich history, projecting a style dubbed as "Texas Colonial."

### Event highlights:

- ✓ Share and learn the best practices and ideas for growing sales and profits
- ✓ Learn about the vision and direction for the Taco John's chain
- ✓ Terrific guest speaker
- ✓ Informative breakout sessions
- ✓ Interactive vendor exhibit show
- ✓ Great food, drink, and entertainment

*Continued on page 2*



### *Our Mission*

**"TO PROVIDE OUR MEMBERSHIP AN ENVIRONMENT FOR INCREASING LONG-TERM PROFITABILITY IN SUPPORT OF IMPROVED BUSINESS VALUE AND BRAND EQUITY."**

# 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION

*Continued from page 1*

## THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Primary arrival day, on-site registration, and the welcome reception in the evening.

## FRIDAY, MARCH 21

Opening business session followed by ATJF membership meeting.

## SATURDAY, MARCH 22

The popular vendor exhibit show in the morning with the awards and recognition banquet that evening.

## SUNDAY, MARCH 23

Breakout business sessions, which will be followed by a golf tournament in the afternoon and a closing party that evening.

Remember, you can register for the convention and golf tournament as well as make hotel reservations through the ATJF website—[www.atjf.net](http://www.atjf.net). Don't delay, register today. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the ATJF office at 877-455-4749.

See you this March in San Antonio! 



## REFLECTING ON 2013

*From the President – by Bryon Itterman*

**A**s I sit at my desk thinking of what to say in this article, I realize that 2013 is quickly coming to an end. 2013 has been a year of change for Taco John's, and these changes will affect our businesses for many years to come.

### NEW FRANCHISEE AGREEMENT

For the past couple years, our association has been working on addressing the big issue of a new franchisee agreement document. At the 2012 convention, our Franchise Agreement Task Force met with the TJI Board of Directors to begin discussing the new agreement. After some initial correspondence, those talks were put on hold until a new CEO was in place, creating a period of over a year with no activity.

This July, the process restarted with a meeting between Jeff Linville and Jim Creel from TJI and our Task Force. During the next few months, there were a number of meetings and many proposals drafted up. But, at the end of the day, neither party got everything they proposed. However, each side felt that the overall agreement was better because of the time taken to work together.

### THANKS TO ALL


I want to thank Jeff and Jim for their time commitment on this document that will define our relationship for the next 20 years. I also want to thank the members of the task force: Walt Cressman (chairman), Bruce Cutler, Craig Heath, Rob Smith, and Jeff Brands. With a timeline much longer than the Association

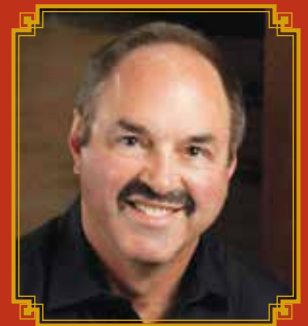
had originally hoped for, this project has taken perseverance. This group met many times and worked closely with Michael and Mark Dady, our attorneys on the project. Their input has been invaluable.

### REVIEWING THE DOCUMENT

The Association Board has reviewed the new agreement with the Task Force and our attorneys. While it doesn't include everything we had hoped for, we support the final document. Each agreement is a contract between the individual franchisee and TJI, so the decision to sign it can be different for each of us.

A summary letter was received from Michael Dady, and I encourage every franchisee to review it. This letter—available on the ATJF website—clearly reviews a number of the major points of the contract. I also encourage everyone to get the advice of counsel before signing this 20-year agreement. If you don't have your own attorney, Mark Dady is willing to work with you on an individual basis.

I hope each of you is looking forward to a blessed holiday season. We all have many deadlines as we approach the end of the year, but we need to take time to enjoy some well-earned family time. I want to wish each of you Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. 



## ATJF DIRECTOR ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the recent election of two directors for the ATJF board of directors are complete. Three candidates were nominated to appear on the ballot. Walt Cressman (MN), Scott Dominiack (SD), and Jerry Frese (KS) deserve special thanks and recognition for their willingness to serve their fellow franchise owners. A total of 302 votes were received with the following results:

**Scott Dominiack – 48.5%, Walt Cressman – 37.5%, Jerry Frese – 14%**

Scott and Walt will fill the two open seats on the board with their 3-year terms beginning in January 2014.

Scott shares the following comments - "The ATJF in its 21 years has accomplished many important things for the good of the franchisees: the old franchise agreement, the new one, business and health insurance, plus many other negotiations with TJI, all to the benefit of franchisees. I feel the next couple of years are pivotal, and I am honored to be part of making sure the franchisee's voice is heard. Thank you for your support."

And, Walt has this to say - "At this time of transition and change within the culture and leadership of Taco John's International, I feel it is important to articulate and communicate the vital issues that affect the franchisees and our perspective to the new management. I believe I can help make a positive difference in how we grow our system and improve our business, together. It is also vitally important that we develop the practical realities and policies of how the new franchise agreement will be applied and implemented at the restaurant level. I look forward to being involved in the discussions with TJI leadership and making sure that what we agreed to in principle is in fact what happens. Thank you for your support and trust over the years, I appreciate it. I consider it a privilege and honor to serve."

And special thanks and appreciation goes to Dale Gossett of Bismarck, ND. Having just completed his second 3-year term (in addition to another set of 3-year terms earlier), Dale will be retiring from the board due to term limits. He has made a significant contribution to the Association and fellow franchisees over the years, having served as ATJF president for two terms, demonstrating strong leadership and dedication. Thank you Dale!

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# Association Directory

## ADVERTISING PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

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<b>Jeff Bremer, Vice-Chair</b>	jbremer@quikserve.com	402-884-2799
<b>Dan Murray</b>	dan@risinghills.com	605-339-9054
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## MENU POLICY COMMITTEE

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<b>Joey Velez</b>	jvelez@tacojohnsofiowa.com	515-278-1818

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## ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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<b>Denise Atkinson, VP &amp; Treasurer</b>	tjsowatonna@ll.net	507-451-2023
<b>Rick Kammerer, VP Marketing Liaison</b>	brewed4me@aol.com	641-420-2230
<b>Scott Dominiack, VP Menu Committee Liaison</b>	scottdom@usa.net	605-692-6900
<b>Gary Wofford Executive Director</b>	atjfranchisees@comcast.net	877-455-4749

These franchisees serve on various boards and strive to represent your interests. Call them with your questions, comments, and concerns. They want to hear from you.

*To learn more about Association membership or committee or Board participation, contact any member of the Board of Directors or the Association office by phone at 877-455-4749 or by email to [ATJFranchisees@comcast.net](mailto:ATJFranchisees@comcast.net).*



# PARTICIPATION IN THE ATJF INSURANCE PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW

One important item to remember when reviewing your insurance is making sure that all the necessary entities are covered. Many franchisees have set up different companies for operations and property ownership or may have different entities that own each location. In the event of property damage or a liability lawsuit, it is imperative that the proper entities are listed as insureds on the policy in order for coverage to apply. It is also important that the landlord and/or mortgagee information is current on your policy. Depending on their interest in the property, insureds may be added as named insureds or additional insureds.

Protecting your assets is one of the most important things you face every day. Purchasing the right insurance results in peace of mind and allows you to concentrate on running your business.

The ATJF Insurance Program through McKinneyOlson Insurance brings you a comprehensive, cost-effective solution. The program is underwritten by Allied Insurance and is available only through McKinneyOlson Insurance.

## Program highlights:

- ✓ Competitive pricing with an A-rated carrier
- ✓ Coverage tailored to fast-food exposures
- ✓ Simplified application
- ✓ Monthly payments
- ✓ Meets all franchise agreement insurance requirements
- ✓ Dividend program
- ✓ Loss control services



**AMY OLSON-MILLER**  
PRESIDENT, MCKINNEYOLSON  
INSURANCE

We currently insure 216 stores under the ATJF Insurance Program. The program continues to grow and attract new members. Twenty-two locations have been added in the last year. Several of the stores that we have recently added were already insured with Allied but through a local agent. The franchisees were pleasantly surprised at the additional coverage and reduced cost they received through the Association Plan. If you aren't currently insured under the ATJF Insurance Program, you should be! Please give me or Lori Hilmoe a call at 1-800-431-6714, and we can work with you to get you on board.

## UPCOMING MARKETING FOR 2014

The Taco John's Advertising Committee (APC) held a meeting Dec. 4 and 5.

The major topics of discussion were revisions to the 2014 marketing calendar and the white space research conducted by Lawrence & Schiller for Taco John's International.

The 2014 marketing calendar will have seven major campaigns and four strike promotions. The market campaigns will start during the football bowl games and playoff season with a Mexi Rolls® and Baja Boneless Wings promotion. The second campaign will again be "fish tacos with a twist" during the Lenten season. During this time we'll encourage customers to try a Santa Fe Burrito or Bowl with fish.

Then, starting in late April, we will be promoting the Flamin' Hot® Cheetos® Burritos. We're going after a much younger customer with this event, and we'll need to adjust our advertising spending to target

tweens. Later in the summer, we will return to the Santa Fe Burritos and Bowls with the added twist of a Breakfast Santa Fe Burrito or Bowl. September is traditionally a big breakfast month, so the fifth promotion will focus on breakfast. Next up is a limited-time offer, the Buffalo Chicken Ranch Softshell. We'll be trying to capitalize on the buffalo flavor many have already tried from our Baja Boneless Wings line and introduce new customers to this flavor. The final promotion will be our annual Nachos Navidad®, which has become iconic with Taco John's.

The four strike promotions in 2014 will be Cinco de Mayo, Wake-Up Wednesday, and two separate occasions of Six-Pack and a Pound®.

The white space research, which was conducted by Lawrence & Schiller for Taco John's International, was done to help us determine where we should be in the Mexican food segment. This interesting research will be presented to the franchisee community at the national convention in

San Antonio in March.

The results are in for the recent APC election. Jim Atkinson and Brian Fuder were re-elected.

And, after a long hiatus, Alex Habeeb will be joining the committee after being elected as a new member. The ATJF also has an appointment this year and has appointed Doug Heidebrink to fill that vacancy.

I encourage all franchisees to attend the ATJF National Convention March 20-23 at the La Cantera Resort in San Antonio. The white space research and marketing strategy for 2014 will be two of the very important topics to be discussed in presentations during this time.

Wishing all a happy and prosperous new year!



**RICK KAMMERER**

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## STEVEN S. LITTLE TO KEYNOTE 2014 CONVENTION

Steven S. Little is a much sought-after expert on the subject of business growth and the future of opportunity. As a former president of three fast-growth companies, he now advises thousands of leaders of growing organizations and communities each year. For over ten years, Steve was also a senior consultant for Inc. magazine.

Little's keynote challenges much of the conventional wisdom regarding how business leaders "should" react to unprecedented uncertainty. He also highlights the emerging opportunities created by the prevailing forces of change. This presentation will provide specific answers regarding those areas in which leaders need to concentrate their time, money, and effort in order to increase their chances for success in today's ever-



evolving world. Short on theory and long on actionable advice, Steve helps both owners and managers position themselves for profitable growth in the 21st century.



growth rates of over 500% during Mr. Little's tenure.

Steve is a graduate of Miami University and has studied at The Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland, and The University of Houston's Future Studies Program. Steve and his family live in sunny Wilmington, NC, and historic Merida, Mexico.

Steve is excited to have been chosen to help get the National Convention kicked off Friday morning, March 21!

He is the author of the best-selling books:

- The 7 Irrefutable Rules of Small Business Growth (Wiley, 2005)
- The Milkshake Moment: Overcoming Stupid Systems, Pointless Policies, and Muddled Management to Realize Real Growth (Wiley, 2008)
- Duck and (re)Cover: The Embattled Business Owners Guide to Survival and Growth (Wiley, 2009)

From 1988 thru 1999, Steve was President of three fast-growth companies. Both FAME, Inc., and Erb Industries, Inc., achieved profitable

### LOCATION COUNT

**TRADITIONAL: 400**

**MEXPRESS®: 3**

**TOTAL: 403**