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The recovery has begun...lets not blow it! Mid-term election important to restaurant industry success

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The restaurant industry that we see has two faces. There are very visible signs that the recession is slowly abating and people are adjusting to the new 'normal'. National Restaurant News reports that restaurant operators are seeing more dining-out and pick-up in the first quarter of 2010 as evidenced by The Cheesecake Factory, one of the more upscale and pricey concepts in the hard hit casual-dining segment. Reports for the first quarter show increased traffic helped boast same store sales to positive territory for the first time since 2007, up 2.7% for the chain of 148-units.

Specializing in the sale of food and beverage has resulted in one of our most active of our last 30 years in business. Of our 12 active brokers, 60% complain of being overwhelmed with activity, between responding to inquiries, servicing existing clients, and prospecting for new inventory. New restaurants are opening up everywhere...chains and independents are benefiting by scooping up good deals. Franchisors are gobbling up locations from landlords who have been encouraged to now be more reasonable and mom and pop's are chugging along with lightened hearts.

Just a few of the new restaurants opening soon:

Deux Ave., Boston

The Gallows, Boston

Tasty Burger, Boston

Joe N' Jakes, Norwood

Ava Cucina, Cohasset

Asia Grill & Sushi, Marshfield

Wicked, Dedham

Panera Bread, Newton

Canary Square, Jamaica Plain

Tina Express, Falmouth

Lakeside Grill, Shrewsbury

Bull, Cambridge

Primebar Grill, Wayland

Port 305, Quincy

We live in the best part of the country...great summers and falls, mild winters, and sometimes we get wonderful springs (if we don't go from winter directly into summer as we saw last year). We very, very rarely see a tornado, no wild fires, very few hurricanes, few days of blistering heat and it doesn't snow in June like it sometimes does in Colorado. You can walk down almost any commercial block, almost anywhere, and find a pizza and sub shop, go a few feet and find a breakfast and lunch place, a few more feet and you'll find a convenience store, a few more feet a full-service restaurant, around the corner are a Ninety-Nine and a Bertucci's, and just up the road

are a plethora of upscale, mid-range, and inexpensive array of dinner houses...Asian, American, Brazilian, Mexican, Italian, etc ad nauseum.

When you stop to really 'look' you'll quickly realize that the food and beverage industry drives our country. It keeps millions and millions of people employed. And most importantly, the availability of all these food choices brings convenience and happiness to all of us. "I work all day, I don't have time to cook, I'll just pick something up on the way home."

What other industry could someone rent a store, open a breakfast place or pizza shop and make \$100,000+ per year...while only speaking broken English? I've never seen such a demand for the average mom and pop businesses...maybe because they've figured out that its better to be dealing with cash than reams of credit card receipts.

Finally, there's a sense that seems to be permeating the State of optimism and that things are finally getting better.

However, there's the other side of the coin. We have a government out of control...both at the federal and the local level. At the federal level we have an administration that is destroying the incentive to become a successful restaurateur with unending new regulations and mandates, the pandering to unions and environmentalists, and with, it seems, everyday bringing forth new incremental taxes, misguided policies, and reforms that are stifling one of our biggest employers...the Holy Grail of our economy. Restaurateurs have never had to sustain the onslaught of government mandates for the elimination of trans fats, the control of salt in our cooking, calorie counts on menus, increasing health insurance costs, paid sick days, and the list goes on and on. **GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE.**

As the tax consequences of the recently passed laws and more and more pressure is applied to add a Value Added Tax, the larger operators will suffer and only the strong will survive.

That said, Americans need a little R&R, they have a propensity to spend rather than save, and they love to go out to eat. For the average person, or the company with a new food concept, the restaurant industry is one's best opportunity to acquire wealth and taste success.

The upcoming mid-term elections are the most important ever and the results will stage the success or failure of our most important industry. Whether Republican or Democrat, independent, or tea partier, your vote will never be more valuable to our state and to our economy.

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