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Contact: Casey Thorp

Phone: 571-234-5465

Email: [casey@fransmart.com](mailto:casey@fransmart.com)

### **MAZZIO'S FIRST VIRGINIA LOCATION OPENING IN ALEXANDRIA**

Mazzio's Master Franchisees Are Opening The 50-Year-Old Brand's First Store On The East Coast

**Tulsa, OK, March 28, 2012** – Tulsa-based Mazzio's LLC, a fast casual Italian concept with 170 units largely concentrated in the Midwest, is being developed on the East Coast by the master franchisees for the state of Virginia, Raj and Alka Gandhi, owners of RAMK. Their first store is set to open in Kings Crossing on Route 1 in Alexandria, VA, a high traffic shopping center that already includes a WalMart. Mazzio's is estimated to be open there in late October of this year.

Raj and Alka signed on as development agents with Mazzio's in 2011. Together they are the franchisees for popular brands like Exxon Mobil and Firkin Pubs, which gives them over 13 years of business management and finance experience before launching their restaurant development company RAMK. They were looking for a pizza concept to expand with in the Virginia area, and were not satisfied with any of the local offerings. They worked with Fransmart, who is also Mazzios' current franchise development partner, to find the right concept and were able to find the perfect fit.

Since signing on, they have been working on finding real estate sites for their new stores to open in. Their search is currently focused in the Northern Virginia area for the 2<sup>nd</sup> store, which has no estimated opening date yet.

Raj Gandhi said, "We loved the food quality of Mazzio's. While looking for a new brand, we couldn't find exactly what we were looking for from other Italian/pizza brands. Not only it is a kid's friendly restaurant, but also it has that 'something extra' that other brands didn't. The X-Factor, if you will."

The deal was inked with the help of Fransmart, the franchise development company behind the success of many emerging restaurant brands, including the early development for Five Guys Burgers and Fries. According to consumer testing that Fransmart helped in implementing, Mazzios' crust and sauce was preferred by a 100+ sampling of Virginia consumers, in a pizza blind taste test conducted in Fall of 2011 against local regional favorites.

**About Mazzio's Corporation:**

Mazzio's ranks among the top US pizza brands for unit count and system-wide sales. Headquartered in Tulsa, Oklahoma, most of our 170+ restaurants are concentrated in the Midwest, a region known for hospitality, family values and modesty. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we are energized to share our brand with customers across the United States and in select international markets.

Mazzio's Corporation is a privately held Tulsa restaurant company that owns, operates and franchises Mazzio's Italian Eatery and Oliveto Italian Bistro restaurant brands in the United States. The fast casual Mazzio's concept features award winning pizzas, made-to-order pastas, sandwiches and fresh specialty salads and appetizers. The chain, a proven concept flourishing in 8 Midwestern states, recently kicked off their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration with a new focus to expand throughout the entire United States.

Mazzio's was ranked in Chain Leader Magazine's annual "Best Places to Work" report due to the concepts' low General Manager turnover rate (16%) and depth of employee benefits. Mazzio's Pizza has consistently won "Best Pizza" awards in their primary markets for many years and has a very loyal customer base and retains an industry leading Customer Loyalty Index for Overall Satisfaction from SMG.

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