



## Crushed Red Inks First Franchise Development Agreement

**St. Louis, Mo. (February 3, 2015)** – Crushed Red, a progressive Urban Bake and Chop Shop® concept out of St. Louis dishing up chopped-to-order salads and artisan-crafted whole-grain pizzas in an elevated fast-casual atmosphere, announced it has signed a franchise development agreement to open six restaurants in the Denver market over the next five years. This announcement marks the first franchise agreement since Crushed Red launched its franchise opportunity in late-2014.



The new Crushed Red locations in Denver will be owned and operated by the JAM Management franchise group. Led by Jim Merlo, JAM Management plans to open its first Crushed Red restaurant at the Denver Tech Center in May, followed by a second restaurant opening at the Orchard Town Center in Westminster in June of this year. The new Crushed Red locations will be a boon to the Denver area through investment dollars and job creation. Each store will have approximately 25 to 30 employees.

“I’ve been a huge Crushed Red fan ever since my sister took me there when I was visiting her in St. Louis. Every time I go to visit now, I make it a point to stop at Crushed Red. I just can’t get enough,” said Merlo. “From the eclectic décor and urban feel to the innovative, artisan-crafted menu items and speed of service, Crushed Red is a natural fit for Denver and I’m excited for the opportunity to introduce this innovative concept to the local community.”

The menu features both artisan-crafted salads and pizzas as well as the option to customize your own salads and pizzas from a myriad of fresh ingredients. The salads are all chopped-to-order and organically dressed right in front of you. The pizzas are built on the foundation of a whole-grain crust that was developed by Mike Marino, the former national director of baking operations for Panera Bread. The dough is stretched by hand, topped with an organic tomato sauce and then baked in a gas-fired oven and served up piping hot in just 90 seconds. In addition to salad and pizza, Crushed Red also serves all-natural soups and savory appetizers. Wine and beer are also available.

“This franchise agreement marks a significant milestone for Crushed Red as we expand the brand outside of our St. Louis roots,” said Chris LaRocca, founder of Crushed Red and an award-winning restaurateur with more than 30 years in the restaurant business. “We are carving out our own distinctive niche in the fast-casual space that we have dubbed ‘Artisan Fast,’ serving up true artisan flavors – fast – in a welcoming and comfortable environment.”

### **About Crushed Red**

Based in St. Louis, Crushed Red is carving out a distinct niche in the fast-casual restaurant segment dubbed “Artisan Fast.” Founded in 2012 by award-winning restaurateur Chris LaRocca, Crushed Red began franchising in 2014 and serves up chopped-to-order salads, artisan-crafted whole-grain pizzas, all-natural soups and savory appetizers in an elevated fast-casual atmosphere.