



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hamra Enterprises Opens First “Panera To Go” Location in Joliet

JOLIET, Ill. – Just in time for the holiday season, shoppers at the Joliet Mall will have a new dining option with the opening of a Panera To Go location, fully enabled for digital convenience and Rapid Pick-Up®.

For Hamra Enterprises, a nationwide, family-owned, restaurant operator headquartered in Springfield, Mo., this is the first Panera To Go location, and the first for Illinois. Hamra Enterprises now operates two Panera bakery cafés in Joliet. The Joliet Mall location marks the third Panera Bread opening in Chicagoland for Hamra in 2023, with full-service bakery cafés opening earlier this year in Huntley and McHenry. The Joliet location is the 92nd Panera bakery café for Hamra Enterprises, which now owns and operates 197 restaurants nationwide under four different brands.

The new Panera To Go is a digital-only bakery café, with a reduced front of the house and where guests can easily pick up orders via Rapid Pick-Up®. The new format allows Panera to meet the demands of shoppers and other guests on-the-go, ordering on-site through kiosks and on the Panera app, making it optimal for customers ordering ahead.

“The response we’ve received from our recent openings in Chicagoland has been tremendous, from guests, to new team members, to community leaders,” said **Mike Hamra, CEO of Hamra Enterprises**. “We are excited to bring our first Panera To Go to Joliet, and look forward to serving new guests, and being a part of the community.”

Hamra Enterprises owns and operates 197 restaurants across the eastern half of the United States under the Wendy’s®, Noodles and Company®, Panera Bread®, and Caribou Coffee® brands. Of those, 26 Wendy’s® restaurants and 38 Panera Bread® cafés are in the greater Chicago area.

About Hamra Enterprises

Hamra Enterprises is a dynamic organization owned and founded in 1975 by the Hamra family with its headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, and includes four restaurant brands with more than 7,400 employees in 11 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Mississippi, New Hampshire and Tennessee. Hamra Enterprises is committed to providing the highest quality products and services within the hospitality industry, creating exceptional experiences for people and communities by engaging each of its restaurant neighborhoods through community service, fundraising, and other philanthropic partnerships such as Boston Children’s Hospital, Make-A-Wish® of Illinois, Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital. Since 2010, the Chicagoland Panera Bread cafes, with the support of their guests, have donated \$1.2 million to Make-A-Wish® of Illinois. This has made possible the granting of wishes to more than 100 Wish Families in Illinois, including McHenry County. For more information, visit hamraenterprises.com.