



INSIGHT

3RD QUARTER 2025

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2026 Scholarship Program
Committee Updates
Stars for Heroes
USA Cares





INDEPENDENT HARDEE'S FRANCHISEE ASSOCIATION

scholarship program

Who May Apply?

• Employees of Independent Hardee's Franchisee Association members, children* of employees, or legal spouses of employees who have a minimum of six (6) months employment with the franchise as of the application deadline date. Employees must remain employed at the time awards are paid.

\$2,000 Awards

Undergraduate study at an accredited 2 or 4 year College, University, or Vocational-Technical School



ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY:

January 16, 2026

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FALL 2025

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About the IHFA

IHFA was founded in 1997 to provide a unified voice for Hardee's franchisees. While serving as a resource for franchisees of all sizes and locations, IHFA provides input and feedback to Hardee's Foods Systems. Today the IHFA provides input into Hardee's operational decision-making, including the successful launch of the Thickburger® in 2003.

Calendar of Events

2026 IHFA Convention & Tradeshow
October 26-28, 2026
Kansas City Marriott Downtown

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Greetings IHFA Membership,

As I write this final letter as your IHFA President, I find myself reflecting on the journey we've traveled together. When I stepped into this role in January 2023, we faced significant challenges: executive turnover at CKE, financial pressures across our system, and legitimate questions about whether our concerns were being heard.

Today, as I prepare to pass the leadership torch, I'm able to report meaningful progress – not because problems have disappeared, but because we've fundamentally shifted how franchisee concerns are incorporated into brand decision-making.

The Progress We've Made

Looking back at what we identified as critical needs, the movement has been substantial. We pushed for transparency around franchisee financial health – CKE now shares company unit financial statements and has acknowledged the need to fix business economics before demanding investments. We advocated for operational flexibility – hours of operation discussions now incorporate volume-based considerations rather than blanket mandates. We demanded accountability in capital spending – remodel requirements have evolved from rigid mandates to conversations about tiered approaches and ROI validation.

Perhaps most significantly, we insisted that franchisee financial health become a primary consideration in corporate decision-making. This isn't just rhetoric anymore – it's embedded in how CKE leadership frames proposals and evaluates initiatives.

The financial reality remains challenging. System EBITDA fully loaded sits between 1-3%, with the bottom 60% of units generating zero or negative cash flow. But here's what's different: we're having honest conversations about these realities, and CKE leadership is incorporating them into planning rather than dismissing franchisee concerns as resistance to change.

A Different Kind of Leadership

I want to be direct about something I've observed: this current CKE leadership team operates differently than their predecessors. They've demonstrated a willingness to listen that represents a meaningful departure from past regimes.

Does this mean we agree on everything? Absolutely not. But what's changed is the quality of dialogue. When we present franchisee positions backed by financial analysis, they engage with the substance rather than simply pushing predetermined solutions. Our ongoing collaboration agreement negotiations – particularly around the digital transformation structure – show this shift clearly. While still being finalized, they've been open to meeting our asks and incorporating performance-based accountability into the framework.

They've shown willingness to share data, acknowledge past program failures, and incorporate franchisee feedback into

revised approaches. When we highlighted the disconnect between remodel requirements and unit-level cash generation, they explored tiered approaches based on financial reality rather than retreating to corporate mandates.

This means the conversations themselves have fundamentally changed. We're being heard, our analysis is being respected, and franchisee financial health has moved from talking point to actual decision-making criterion.

Gratitude and Moving Forward

Serving as your IHFA President has been one of the greatest honors of my professional life. To be entrusted with voicing the collective concerns of this franchise community and representing your interests in complex negotiations – these responsibilities have been both humbling and energizing.

I'm grateful to every franchisee who shared their struggles and insights, to the IHFA Board members who devoted countless hours to analysis and strategy, and to the CKE leadership team for their increasing willingness to engage authentically with franchisee concerns. Real partnership requires both sides showing up honestly and working through difficult issues.

To Sam Munger, my successor: you inherit an organization with clearer communication channels, more data transparency, and a corporate partner more willing to engage authentically than we've seen in recent years. The challenges remain significant, but the tools for addressing them are stronger than when I began this journey.

To the broader IHFA membership: thank you for the trust you placed in me. The work of building a sustainable, prosperous Hardee's system continues, and it will require dedication from all of us – franchisees and franchisor alike.

The future isn't guaranteed, but it's ours to build together through honest dialogue, mutual respect, and relentless focus on what actually works in our restaurants and our communities.

With deep gratitude and continued optimism,

Frank Heath, Jr. IHFA President



Frank Heath, Jr.
Atlanta, GA

On behalf of the franchisee stores, it was our sincere honor to present a check in the amount of \$500,000 to USA Cares to support their mission of supporting veterans and their families. We are also pleased to report that an additional \$300,000 has been distributed to local veterans' organizations in the Hardee's communities.

That is outstanding and a reflection of the deep commitment of these Franchisees to our veterans and our country!

We would also like to recognize the other franchisees in the top 10 collections:

1. Jack Kemp – Phase Three Brands
\$159,000
2. Buddy Brown & Todd Pahl – Capstone Restaurants
\$142,000
3. Jon & Sam Munger – Northland Management
\$96,000
4. Bill Boddie – Boddie-Noel Enterprises
\$69,000
5. Frank Westermajer – Westar Foods
\$53,000
6. Tom McGinnis – Heritage Assets
\$51,000
7. Julia Scoggins – J & S Restaurants
\$47,000
8. Don Wollan – Paradigm - \$41,000
9. Bryan Hogge - Restaurant Management Corp
\$29,000
10. Brian Bonfiglio & Cameron Miller – Superior Star
\$26,000



HOW STARS FOR HEROES HELPED TRENT REBUILD WITH USA CARES

USA Cares extends its deepest gratitude to IHFA and CKE Restaurants for their incredible dedication to supporting our nation's heroes through the Stars for Heroes campaign.

Thanks to this nationwide effort, thousands of customers joined in to make a real difference in the lives of veteran families facing critical needs. The generosity and compassion shown through this campaign help prevent evictions, foreclosures, and other hardships for veterans and their families, providing stability when it's needed most.

At a recent community event, USA Cares had the opportunity to connect with Trent, a veteran who once came to us facing unemployment and a car repossession. Thanks to generous donors from IHFA and CKE Restaurants, we were able to help him get his car back and connect with a stable job.

Now thriving, Trent stopped by to give back and share a powerful message of gratitude: "Thanks to USA Cares, I was able to get my car back from repossession and find a great job and recover from my unemployment. So, thank you so much for that."

Moments like this show what Stars for Heroes is all about, people coming together to make life better for those who've served. Through continued support from Carl's Jr., Hardee's, and caring communities nationwide, veterans like Trent can move forward with hope and stability.



STARS FOR HEROES

The Stars for Heroes campaign celebrating the power of giving back. This year, a little over \$800,000 was raised from franchisee restaurants alone. A check for \$500,000

was presented to Matt Castor, CEO of USA Cares, and another \$300,000 was distributed to local veteran organizations.



The 2025 Convention kicked with updates from CKE and included deep dive sessions with the franchisees on Digital Sales Channel and Maximizing the Value of iLumen, and culinary tastings. Franchisees were able to network with associate members, both new and old, in the Tradeshow Tuesday afternoon. On Wednesday, IHFA members met for the annual membership meeting followed by a Q & A session with CKE and an afternoon exploring the beautiful San Antonio Riverwalk.

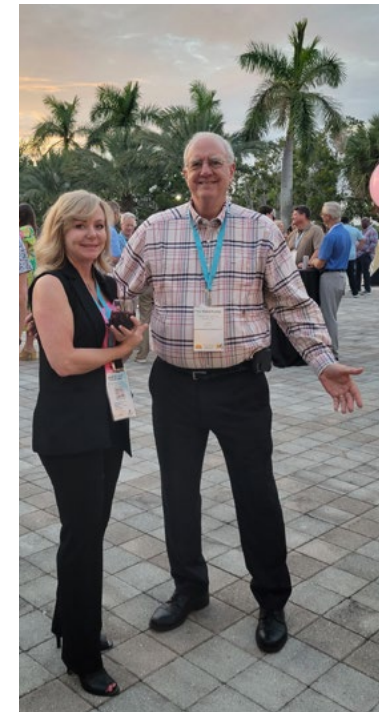
Wednesday night's Celebration Dinner provided an opportunity for our franchisees, CKE partners, and associate members to step away from the kitchens, the drive-thrus, and the day-to-day grind to simply celebrate individual and collective accomplishments for the past year. The theme throughout the evening showcased a community of dedicated individuals who take pride in working together for the betterment of all, and in delivering outstanding guest experiences, each & every day.

The evening started with recognition from IHFA President Frank Heath to two special board members who are rolling off of the IHFA Board of Directors.

Dave Bowar has been in the Hardee's system for 53 years, and has served on the IHFA Board of Directors for 4 years. Dave has been "All in" during his tenure, often using humor and humbleness to respectfully assert his concerns and ideas for addressing issues.



Tim Haberkamp has been in the system for 59 years and has spent 20 years on the IHFA Board of Directors building relationships with both franchisees and the Hardee's suppliers. Those relationships have turned into long-term friendships build on respect and trust. Tim's sound operational experience has been beneficial to the system over the years. We will truly miss each of them and their valuable contributions, both to the board, and to the system as a whole.



Michel Shay was the recipient of the 2025 William L. Boddie award. Michel is a true pioneer in the Hardee's Brand. He started as a team member/crew person back when he was young and worked his way through the ranks finally being given an opportunity to become a Franchisee. He has been on the Board since 2013 with many years serving on a variety of committees. He always welcomes the opportunity to serve his fellow franchisees with the best intentions for the brand, and he has gained respect from his fellow board members with his quiet, but wise insight.



DIGITAL SALES EXCELLENCE AWARD

New this year, the Digital Sales Excellence Award recognized franchisees who have the highest percentage of digital sales in the Hardee's system and excel in the key areas of order accuracy and avoidable wait time.

- **Tim Haberkamp,**
Haberkamp Fast Foods
- single store operator.
- **Jack Duckett,**
Trico Development Corporation,
- 2 – 5 restaurant group.
- **Bryan Hogge,**
Restaurant Management Corporation
- 6 to 25 restaurant group.
- **Jon & Sam Munger,**
Northland Management
- 25+ restaurant group.



STAR SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Lamb Weston

FRANCHISEE OF THE YEAR

The Franchisee of the Year award recognizes franchisees who achieved the highest combined Operations Balanced Scorecard and sales growth over the last 13 periods. The award represents the highest standard of excellence in the system recognizing that it's not just about running great restaurants. It's about leading with excellence & passion.

- **Monica Tanner,**
ARW LLC
- single store operator.
Monica recently completed a full remodel of her restaurant.
- **Mike Whitaker,**
Mike Whitaker Group
- 2 – 5 restaurant group.
Mike's team, led by Curtis Combs, consistently excels in operations excellence & innovation.
- **Mark Lelli,**
C&C Food Systems
- 6 to 25-unit group
- **Tom McGinnis,**
Heritage Assets
- 25+ restaurant group.
Tom is currently completing the reimagining of his entire network and YTD leads the brand at 5.8% SSS and 4.5% transaction growth.



MAYO BODDIE SR. OPERATIONS EXCELLENCE AWARD INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

Bryan Hogge,
Restaurant Management Corporation (RMC)

MAYO BODDIE SR. OPERATIONS EXCELLENCE AWARD

DIAMOND GROUP	1500131	FORT SMITH 1	4.85
NORTHLAND MANAGEMENT	1506204	GREEN BAY	4.59
MIKE WHITAKER GROUP	1503130	SOMERSET 2	4.57
CAPSTONE RESTAURANT GROUP	1505345	PARKERSBURG 5	4.46
STEVE GOODMAN GROUP	1506506	HARLEM	4.45
NORTHLAND MANAGEMENT GROUP	1500212	TERRE HAUTE 2	4.44
PRASAD NANNAPANENI	1505535	STERLING HEIGHTS	4.43
CAPSTONE RESTAURANT GROUP	1501812	ROGERSVILLE	4.41
JOHN MCGINNIS GROUP	1500303	CORBIN	4.4
MIKE WHITAKER GROUP	1503377	HYDEN	4.4

The Innovator of the Year award recognizes someone who has pushed the boundaries to make the brand better; a franchisee who exemplifies an innovative spirit and continually demonstrates their commitment to the Hardee's brand.

For more than 3 decades, Mr. Hogge and his team have been a committed franchise partner, and today his team is recognized as one of the system's most engaged and forward-thinking operators. With 14 restaurants, they have built a reputation as a trusted testing partner, actively collaborating with the REX team on operating procedures, with training leadership on management development programs, and serving as an advisor to help guide the Zenupt platform design.

Earlier this year, they also piloted the paperless training initiative ahead of system launch, and tested multiple new menu items, including Cold Brew. RMC continually provided forward-thinking ideas to our Marketing and Culinary teams, helping bring new sandwiches like Hot Honey and Cordon Bleu to market. Their willingness to ideate & test have continually helped shape our menu.

Innovation also extends into their operations, where they have been a pioneer in bringing forward new kitchen equipment, are currently experimenting with AI solutions in their drive-thru, while consistently offering actionable feedback that moves the brand forward; all the while operating with excellence; boasting AUVs of \$1.5M, QA scores above 95%, and digital sales topping the 11% mark.

WILBUR BODDIE HARDEE FOUNDERS AWARD

Julia & Mark Scoggins
J & S Restaurants

CKE recognized J & S Restaurants for going beyond great operations, and representing the heart behind the Hardee's brand pairing strong operational performance with a deep commitment to serving the communities in which they operate. Through their family foundation, they raise and distribute nearly \$1million annually, supporting causes across all levels of the education system, including student scholarships, Student of the Month programs, All Pro Dads, and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library which provides free books to children through the age of 5.

Additionally, the local children's hospital, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, United Way, Habitat for Humanity, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes are all beneficiaries of their giving. Their civic mindedness extends beyond just providing funds as evidenced in this franchisee's quarterly newsletter highlighting a culture of employee pride, engagement, and service.

Nearly all of their restaurants are fully reimaged, averaging an impressive 96% QA score, and maintaining a 97% Star University core training completion level. Their guests experience consistently high levels of service as demonstrated by their 3PD wait time which averages just 2.3 minutes and boasts a Net Sentiment score of 52 ... leading to an impressive 5.2% SSS & 2.5% SST growth rate.





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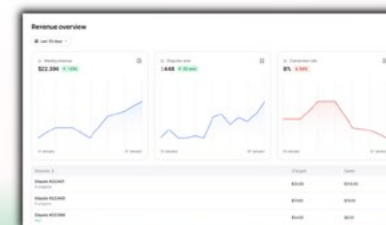
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WINNER



BISCUIT BAKER COMPETITION

Hardee's sells over 100 million biscuits annually. This takes passion, discipline, and true ownership of our tradition. This competition celebrates the heart of Hardee's: our people, and recognizing the finalists of the Biscuit Baker Competition is always the highlight of the Celebration Dinner.

Clint Adkins of New Beginnings Restaurants won the 2025 competition and was awarded a check for \$10,000. The runners up each received a check for \$2,500.

- Tammy Getchey, Phase 3 Brands
- Martha Mahaffey, Mountain Star
- Amanda McIntosh, J & S Restaurants

PROCESS:

- Recertification for all Biscuit Bakers across the Brand
- Participating Franchisees hold DISTRICT challenges & select their winner
- Participating Franchisees submit their BAKERS to CKE to participate in the REGIONAL Challenges, hosted by Franchisees based on geography
- After the judges have tabulated ALL the scores from the Regionals, the Biscuit Challenge Team take the Top 4 Scoring Bakers and they become THE FINAL 4
- FINAL 4 Bakers travel to Franklin to determine WHO the WINNER is.

BAKERS ARE EVALUATED ON:

- Written Test
- Procedures
- Length of Time to mix, roll and get to the oven (should be under 15 minutes)
- # of biscuits produced
- Biscuit Specifications (they pick their best pan out of 3)
 - Height
 - Weight
 - Diameter
 - Appearance
 - Taste



Amanda McIntosh has been a dedicated Baker for three years. In her spare time, Amanda enjoys spending time with her family and participating in outdoor activities.



Clint Adkins has been a Baker at Hardee's since 2012 and is known for his reliability and dedication. Married to his partner Scott for seven years, Clint is a proud pet parent to two dogs and two cats. Despite battling cancer over the past year and recently completing radiation treatment, Clint continues to work with a positive attitude and a great personality.



Martha Mahaffey began her career at Hardee's in 1994. She is a highly trained employee who has worked across numerous stations and roles, demonstrating versatility and expertise.



Tammy Getchey has been with Hardee's for eight years. She was born and raised in Henry County and has one son. Outside of work, Tammy enjoys fishing, camping, and making biscuits.

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MARKETING UPDATE

Jack Kemp – Marketing Co-Chair; Pam Spivey – Marketing Co-chair

The IHFA annual conference, held in San Antonio in October, provided a forum for networking, celebration, exchange of information, a review of CKE's current marketing and menu work, and plans for the coming year.

The CKE Leadership team reviewed several workstreams that are underway, all geared to informing and guiding various brand initiatives to improve Hardee's position in consumers' consideration set and our performance in an extremely competitive environment.

Burger Improvement is a top priority. Incorporating consumer feedback, collaboration with several agencies, and franchisee feedback, this work focuses on every aspect of the burger, including the meat patty, cooking method, builds, and procedures, with the goal of developing a best-in-class signature burger to anchor the burger platform.

An additional workstream focuses on menu architecture, i.e., determining how to best merchandise our menu items to highlight signature products, encourage trade-up and add-ons, inform pricing strategy, and present guests with an appealing, easy to navigate menu.

Significant efforts are also being directed towards product innovation for both dayparts. The QSR category is highly dependent on "new news" – successful limited-time offers drive trial among non-users, attract infrequent users, and boost frequency and average check among current users. Recognizing that LTOs are critical to capturing traffic and share of visits, CKE Marketing is taking a multi-disciplinary approach to identify innovative and compelling product ideas that will progress through concept testing with consumers to identify the strongest candidates for further development and testing. Product innovation work includes agency guidance, franchisee input, and collaboration among internal departments.

The media team, led by Scott Sutton in partnership with media-buying agency PMG, is focused on optimization of media buys, for greater reach, efficiency, and effectiveness. Expanding the strategy of leaning into sports, the media team will prioritize advertising on high-visibility sports events, continuing with Thursday Night Football and college football placements, and expanding Hardee's advertising presence in other major sports.

All of these key projects will converge under the umbrella of a newly-crafted brand positioning statement that will serve as a lens through which all initiatives will be viewed to ensure they support a believable, ownable, and consistent message to our target audience. As a marketing tool,

brand positioning statements serve as an internal guide for marketing and product decisions, clarifying who the brand serves, what it provides for its customers, and how it speaks to them. Still a work in progress, the positioning statement will soon be finalized and begin guiding decisions for next year.

CALENDAR PREVIEW:

The marketing calendar for the upcoming year will feature six promotional windows, including four system windows and two local windows to be determined by DMA vote. Window 1 will focus on value messaging, with Original Bag being the primary media message. The Brioche Breakfast Sandwich will be added to the menu as a new core offering and Smoked Sausage will be added as a core item in the Southeast. The beverage line will be expanded with the addition of Iced Coffee as a permanent, all-day offering.

The calendar for the remainder of the year is still in development, but will incorporate LTOs that have been previously tested or are currently in test.

ARE YOU READY FOR SOME RACING?!

NASCAR is back in the mix for Hardee's. As many of you will remember, there was a time when Hardee's had a major presence in NASCAR, with Cale Yarborough and Dale Jarrett driving the Hardee's #28 car for many seasons. NASCAR is a great fit for both Hardee's geography and customer base. Hardee's customers' index to NASCAR is the strongest of all the QSR brands, including our most direct competitors, helping to quantify the potential benefits of this partnership. Additionally, there is a high index for Hardee's customers who are NASCAR fans and their usage of other QSR restaurants, suggesting that building awareness and affinity among these guests represents an opportunity to gain market share from some of our competitors through a NASCAR partnership. NASCAR's

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loyal fandom skews younger than the average Hardee's customer, with 40% under the age of 45, compared to 33% of Hardee's customers. NASCAR provides us with the opportunity to engage with this younger fan base and increase our reach and relevance among this group of QSR customers. Additionally, NASCAR fans align very well with the key Hardee's opportunity segments identified in the most recent segmentation study.

NASCAR's reach is broad, with fan estimates at 80 million, and average race viewership between 1.5-2.5 million viewers per race. Some races, like Daytona, Talladega, and Charlotte draw far more viewers – the estimate for the 2025 Daytona 500 was over 6 million viewers. In addition to advertising during races, the partnership includes exclusive rights to league marks for promotional purposes, driver and track activations, access to the NASCAR email database for specific promotions, and IP rights. As of this writing, the media and marketing teams are finalizing the details of our brand's association with NASCAR and looking forward to taking full advantage of the partnership. Stay tuned as this program takes shape and puts Hardee's back at the races!

BISCUITS RULE!

In any conversation about the things that make Hardee's special, the famous made-from-scratch biscuit always comes up. Hardee's made-from-scratch buttermilk biscuits are foundational to our brand, an iconic product that is one of our most recognizable quality pillars. At the recent conference, the highlight of awards night was the celebration of our top biscuit bakers. Four regional winners, Clint Adkins, Tammy Getchey, Amanda McIntosh, and Martha Mahaffey took the stage for the announcement of this year's Champion. Clint Adkins of New Beginnings Restaurant Group in Bedford, Indiana, took the crown. Clint rose to the top of expert biscuit bakers from across the Hardee's system who mixed, rolled, cut, and baked their best biscuits in a series of competitions culminating in the Final Four competition held in Franklin earlier this year. Clint walked away from the stage with bragging rights, a check for \$10,000, and a huge smile!

TUESDAY IS TENDERS DAY!

Tender Bender Tuesday, an in-app promotion aimed at boosting My Rewards sign-ups and building frequency among our loyalty members, launched at the beginning of Window 6 with media support throughout the window. Featuring an offer for BOGO 3PC Tenders every Tuesday, the promotion will continue through June 2026, allowing time for the Tuesday-only deal to become established and

to generate habitual Tuesday visits among My Rewards members. Support for the Tender Bender promotion includes in-restaurant merchandising, personalized member communications, influencer content, press release, and support on the December FSI.

Tender Bender Tuesday is also being supported through engagement with Six Pack, a popular sports entertainment and media brand that hosts one of the largest college tours in the country, with live events on campuses, in arenas, and in stadiums. With a robust Instagram following and engagement with campus micro-influencers, the Six Pack partnership will provide visibility at campus events and the opportunity to push app acquisition to younger consumers. Seventy-one percent of Six Pack's social media reach is among the 21-25 year age group.

FOLLOW 'THE RIZZ'!

The Rizzler, who highlighted the Pulled Pork Frisco Burger a few months ago in his Hardee's debut, is a 9-year-old social media personality, who originally went viral for his signature "rizz face", a combination of one eyebrow down, one up, and a sucked-in cheek expression. Hardee's first Rizzler campaign garnered over 33 million impressions in the first seven days. The Rizz has a broad audience of over 1 million followers on Tik Tok and 1.5 million on Instagram. Currently, The Rizz is promoting the app-exclusive Rizzwich Meal, which consists of a Grilled Cheese Bacon Burger, fries, and a shake. Look for more of The Rizz, as he is now exclusive to Hardee's in the restaurant category.

The purpose of the marketing committee is to represent the franchise owners' voice and to influence key marketing, advertising, and media decisions to enhance the Hardee's brand and support the common goals of increased sales, transactions, and profits. Comments and questions from the franchise community are always welcome.

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IT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Bob Larimer – IT Co-Chair; Cameron Miller – IT Co-Chair

THE CASE FOR CHANGE (POSSIBLE NEW POS IN 2026)

As you have probably heard, CKE is currently reviewing and making plans to move to a singular POS system. In this article, I will document everything I know about the proposal and give some comments on my perceptions of the plan. CKE had some missteps with prior POS related projects, but it is my hope that CKE can create an environment of trust by involving the franchisees in the decision process and the build portion of the project.

Last year, a small council that included individuals from the franchisee community for Hardee's and Carl's was formed. We met bi-weekly and reviewed many of the POS vendors that provide web-based POS systems. We eventually narrowed the candidates down to two finalists (Qu and Xenial XPOS which recently has been rebranded as Genius).

Both solutions are state of the art web-based POS systems and will serve our brand for many years to come. After meeting with the two boards for approval, a final decision will be made on whether to proceed with plans to move to new POS. Communications and Q&A will be forthcoming to the franchise community, once the decision to proceed forward has been established.

Below are a few of the observations that came out of the many meetings regarding POS.

WHY MOVE TO A SINGULAR POS SYSTEM:

- The brand currently operates with seven different POS and menu management systems, causing fragmentation, high maintenance costs, and frequent technical issues. Many of these issues have been documented and their impacts on sales have been analyzed.
- Consolidation is expected to decrease the total cost of ownership, retire the complex MIM data architecture, and deliver a more consistent customer experience. (MIMs are the ID numbers that are programmed in the various POS systems to allow for proper mappings to support digital channels and reporting).
- Cloud-based POS platforms also offer dynamic menu management, integrated payments, inventory, labor management, and enable smoother digital touchpoints (web, mobile, kiosk).

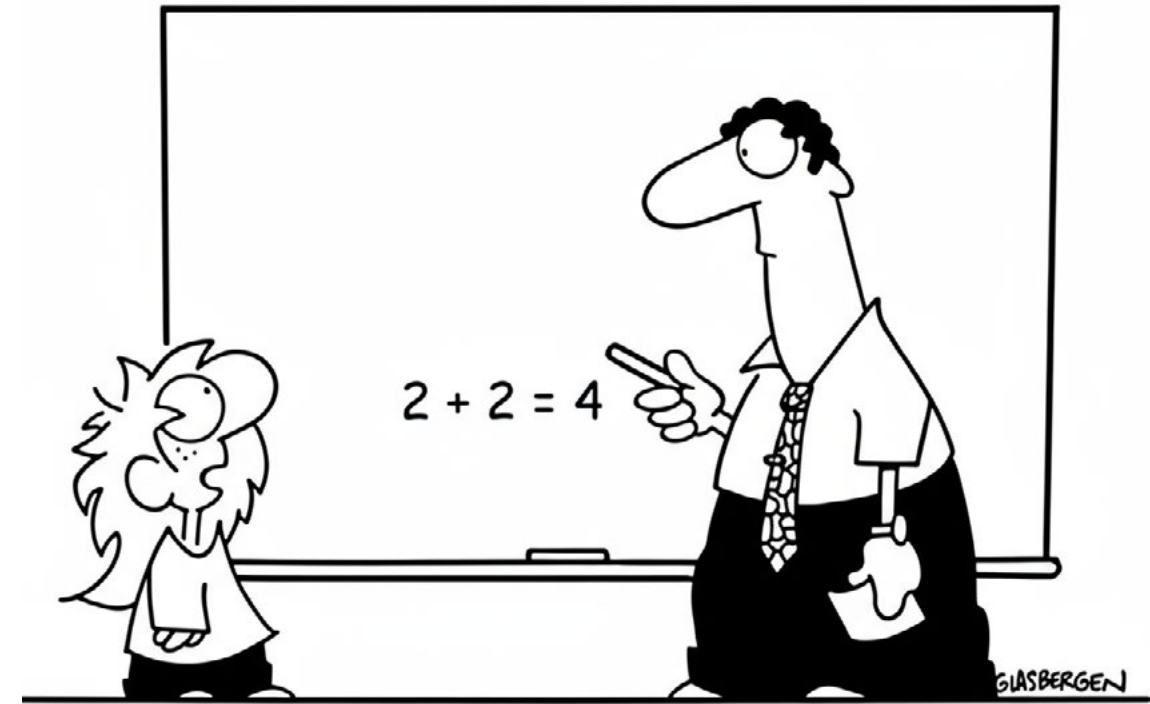
HERE ARE THE CURRENT PAIN POINTS WITH THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT:

- Menu management complexity: Diverse menu builds and the legacy MIM system make maintenance unreliable and complicated. Reporting accurate numbers requires constant maintenance and validation of the many franchisee's data points that are created from multiple POS systems.
- Combo/upsell limitations: Current systems hamper menu promotions and upselling, impacting both guest experience and revenue. This is most applicable on the digital channels for our brand.
- Frequent app and loyalty order failures, particularly with the PAR Brink POS, resulting in significant lost revenue.
- Increased SaaS/support costs and contract risk: Prices for legacy providers like PAR are rising sharply as old contracts expire. Current Par pricing was based on the entire brand utilizing ParBrink, which never materialized. ParBrink accounts for about 25% of the installations for both brands.
- Xenial IRIS has been in production for over 25 years and there will be an End-of-Life date put on the product. This would make supporting the product very difficult and it will be easier to transition with plenty of "runway" in front of us before it is officially retired.

KEY BENEFITS OF STANDARDIZATION:

- Eliminates fragmented menu and POS systems, reducing risk and simplifying maintenance.
- Consistent hardware and support lowers costs and ensures reliability.
- Unified payment platform delivers best-in-market transaction fees.
- Automation of menu/pricing updates and centralized data management unlock future use-cases and data-driven decision making.
- Additional incentives: Free hardware, ADA-compliant kiosks, \$295 credit per restaurant for digital menu boards (if we choose Genius).

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“How can I trust your information when you’re using such outdated technology?”

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

- Franchisee skepticism based on past under-delivery and the desire for local control over menu management. CKE has acknowledged past missteps with over promising and under delivering with POS management and support.
- Some self-supported operators have perpetual licenses and ultra-low support costs, making new SaaS models difficult for them. We are working on the ROI and TCO models to address these concerns.
- Transitioning data and reports through MIM retirement will require diligence and system updates for BI, accounting, and the reconciliation processes.
- True savings depend on system-wide adoption; vendor pricing is contingent on committed volume (85–90% needed for preferential rates).
- Some franchisees are utilizing the IRIS back-office for labor and food costing. This could create challenges if they do not migrate to a web-based back-office system such as Crunchtime or Restaurant 365 prior to the new POS deployment.

VENDOR COMPARISON AND EVALUATION

- An RFI process considered six vendors (NCR, Oracle, PAR, Xenial/Genius, Toast, Qu), evaluated using criteria such as cost, complexity, support, technical fit, and user experience.
- Genius/Xenial scored highest for cost and user interface, bolstered by native integration options, free hardware (with payment exclusivity), and direct menu/BoH compatibility.
- Q POS offers some advantages for custom development and flexible cloud design but faces friction in migration and less favorable cost structure—hardware is discounted but not free, SaaS/support is higher per device, and payment processing is twice the Genius/Xenial rates. We continue to work with Qu to address some of the pricing discrepancies.
- Both considered finalists passed rigorous franchisee and corporate council review and could serve our brand well, but Genius/Xenial's established footprint and vendor track record made it the preferred platform for most.

IT UPDATE CONTINUED...

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

- Urgent need to migrate off legacy PAR POS by end of 2026 or incur major cost increases. The contract has expired, and Par is raising the monthly fees significantly in 2026.
- Franchisees must review proposals and provide binding commitments to enable vendor negotiations.
- Lab environment and pilot programs to begin before the end of 2025, ensuring implementation readiness. A franchisee committee has been formed to assist in building the new POS system to ensure our needs are met and to provide oversight. This will truly be a joint effort between CKE and the franchise community to build a world class POS system.
- Continued communication and follow-up meetings to validate financial and technical scenarios, and to finalize costs and scope for kiosks and integrations.

The items listed in the article are the most critical items that will assist us in making a good decision for the brand. There are many more conversations to occur before we can decide and create a solid plan for moving forward with a singular solution for both brands. Our number one goal is to provide a POS system that has little to no capital investment for the franchisees. We also feel we can lower the cost of POS related items for most franchisees by creating exclusivity with a single POS provider for POS and credit card processing.

The introduction of free hardware (printers, kitchen systems, and POS terminals) will also make these proposals look attractive. In the short term, this will reduce the cost of maintenance and truck rolls while providing best of class hardware solutions for our restaurants.

Web-based POS will also make it easier to deploy new technologies as the integrations will be more easier to establish and maintain.

An exclusive credit card processor will also bring down the cost of transaction fees and can have an impact on the interchange fees we pay.

In conclusion, the IT Committee is working to build trust between the franchisees and CKE to develop a POS system that works for both brands. If properly configured and deployed, a new web-based POS systems could potentially reduce our POS related IT costs and make managing restaurant POS and our digital channels easier. This will allow for better and more accurate data that should enhance the General Managers and above store leaders' ability to manage the profits of their restaurants.

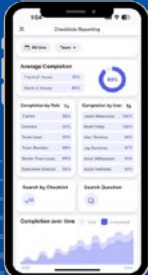
Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have regarding POS or any other technical questions. boblarimer@boddienoell.com



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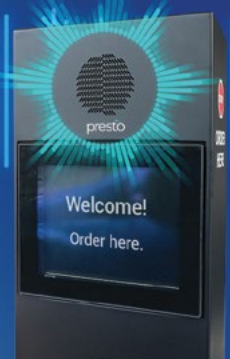
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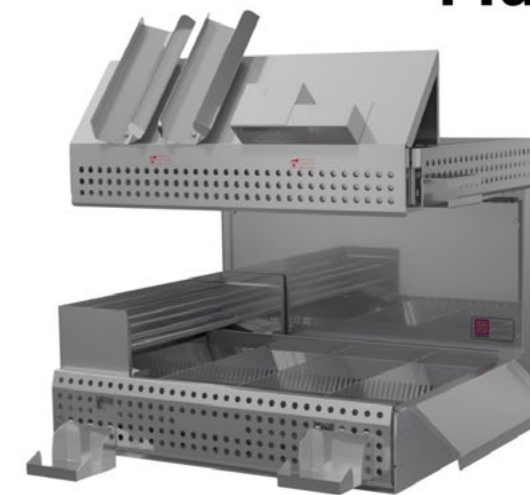
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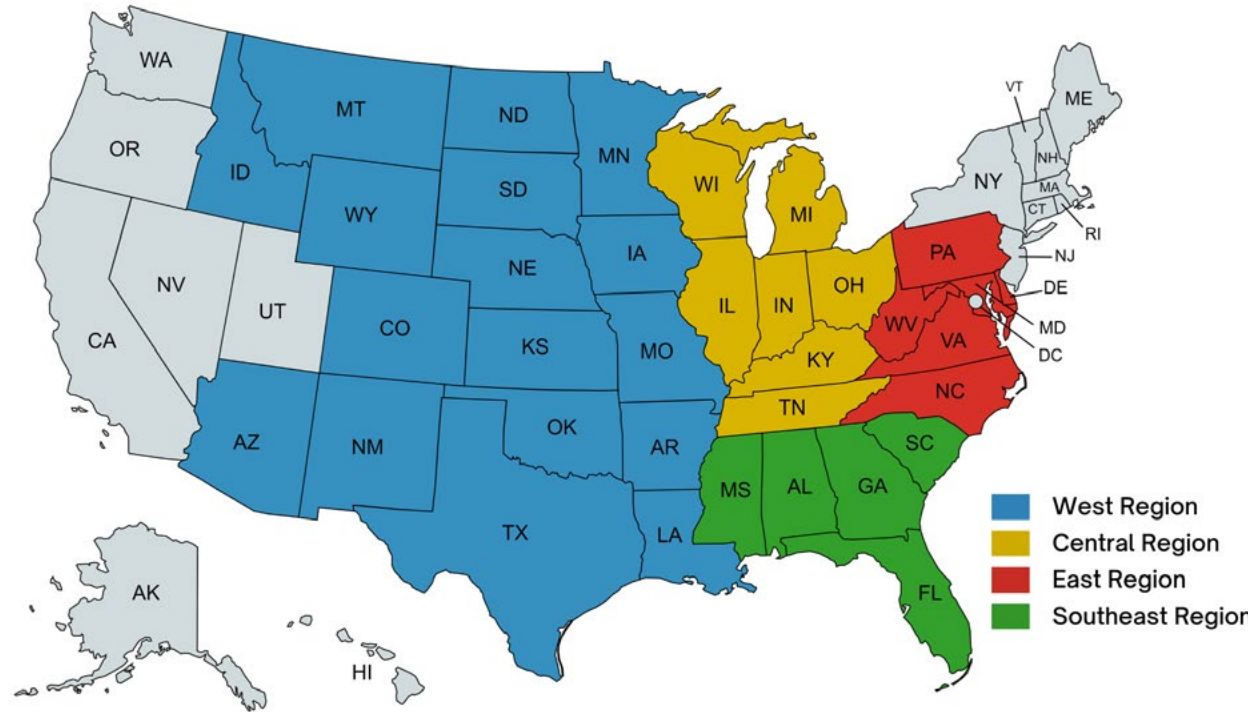
Product	CURRENT Hold Time	NEW Hold Time
French Fries	7 Minutes	15 Minutes
Hash Rounds	10 Minutes	15 Minutes
Jalapeno Poppers Bites	20 Minutes	30 Minutes
Onion Rings	10 Minutes	15 Minutes
Fried Zucchini	10 Minutes	15 Minutes
Crispy Curls	7 Minutes	15 Minutes

FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT ENGINEERED WITH INNOVATION



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