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Kona Ice Stands Out Among The Elite in
Entrepreneur Magazine’s Franchise 500®

Ranks as #1 New Franchise;
Rapidly Expanding Gourmet Shaved Ice Brand Caps Off Historic Year
Featured on Distinguished List of Top Franchise Companies

FLORENCE, Ky. – The mountain of momentum behind Kona Ice is erupting.

Entrepreneur magazine has named the beloved mobile gourmet shaved ice concept to its Franchise 500® list, what is widely considered the “best and most comprehensive franchise ranking” in the industry. Kona Ice’s impressive first year as part of the rankings includes coming in as the #1 “New Franchise.” It is 112th overall, and remarkably #26 in the “Fastest Growing Franchise” category.

This prestigious award validates all the progress Kona Ice has made in the past year and the five years since its launch. The brand has added more than 100 trucks in the past nine months, nearly one truck every three days. “With almost 350 trucks on the road and projections calling for more than 500 trucks on the road by the end of 2013, there’s no way we could have continued to fly under the radar,” said president and CEO, Tony Lamb. “We’ve spent the last 12 months penetrating top tier U.S. markets, updating our iconic trucks and introducing the Kona Mini, an innovative new push cart service station. We've certainly advanced our objectives in a lot of ways and this level of recognition helps prove that we're a leader in our field.”

In the ranking’s dessert category, Kona Ice ranks among the top five in the sector, surpassed only by some of the nation’s largest frozen dessert brands such as Dairy Queen, Baskin Robbins and Cold Stone Creamery.

To be eligible for the Franchise 500® ranking, a franchisor must have a minimum of 10 units, with at least one in the United States. All companies, regardless of size, are judged by the same objective criteria including financial strength and stability, growth rate and size of the system, number of years a company has been in business, length of time it has been franchising, startup costs, litigation, percentage of terminations and whether the company provides financing. These objective factors are plugged into the magazine’s exclusive Franchise 500® formula, with each eligible company receiving a cumulative score. The 500 franchises with the highest cumulative scores become the Franchise 500®.
“The ranking is tremendous,” adds Lamb. “But, of course, we’re never fully satisfied. We are working hard to carry this momentum into 2013 and expect to have similar success with the growth of Kona Ice in the upcoming year.”

The newly released Kona Mini is one crucial component that will propel growth in 2013 and beyond. A miniature replica of the truck, the Mini is designed to serve indoor and smaller outdoor venues such as little league games, zoos and shopping malls. More accessible to the masses in communities coast to coast, the Mini is helping the brand overcome seasonality challenges and space limitations.

Recent updates to the trucks are also expected to help the brand extend its reach. In it’s sixth generation, Kona trucks feature complete LED lighting throughout the vehicle, as well as numerous environmentally conscious additions. The new model blends the same engaging tiki top, eye-popping façade and fun calypso music with some new enhancements. These additional bells and whistles are helping the brand reach a new level of engagement with its customers.

Such noteworthy expansion will help the brand further its community outreach efforts. In 2012, Kona Ice gave back more than $2 million to the communities it serves and expects to reach $12 million by early next year. The brand has donated a total of $10 million dollars since it’s inception in 2007. Fostering this devoted fundraising are the partnerships Kona Ice cultivates with school groups, community-based organizations and local sports teams. During fundraising events, Kona Ice gives a percentage of sales back to the organizing group. Or, groups can buy pre-paid Kona Ice cards at a discount and sell them for full price to raise funds.

Providing entrepreneurs interested in investing in the franchise a full suite of support services ranging from initial and ongoing training to sales and marketing programs, the affordable Kona Ice franchise fee is only $15,000. Plus, Kona Ice offers its owners financing programs for the purchase of trucks and the minis. Ideal franchise candidates are outgoing individuals, husbands and wives, parents and children, and other two-person teams who love the idea of serving the community.

About Kona Ice
A true community ally renowned for facilitating endless fundraising options, Kona Ice has given more than $10 million dollars back to neighborhood schools, organizations and teams since its inception in 2007. The brand’s iconic truck offers customers a one-of-a-kind experience, featuring the opportunity to create their own Kona Ice on the self-serve Flavorwave™, while enjoying the soothing sights and sounds from the tropics. Currently, there are 300-plus franchise units in more than 40 states. For more information about booking Kona Ice for a fundraiser or event, visit www.kona-ice.com. To learn more about available franchise opportunities, visit www.ownakona.com or call (800) KONAICE.