



Applebee's Recognizes Franchisees for Restaurant Performance, Innovation and Community Engagement

November 4, 2025

PASADENA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 4, 2025-- Applebee's recently hosted its annual business meeting in Denver on Oct. 13-14 bringing together brand leadership, franchisees, and supplier partners to align on future growth and performance strategies. The event also celebrated outstanding restaurant achievements and community engagement.

"Applebee's has always been about people—our guests, our franchisees, our team members, and our partners," said John Peyton, Applebee's president and Dine Brands CEO. "For 45 years, we've been proud to serve as a neighborhood gathering place across the country. Our annual meeting is more than a business event—it's a celebration of the relationships that fuel our brand and a chance to shape the future together. As we look ahead, we remain committed to keeping guests Eatin' Good in the Neighborhood for generations to come."

Applebee's top award winners for 2025 included:

Apple Mountain for Abe Gustin Franchisee of the Year

This award is in honor of the man who helped Applebee's become one of the nation's most iconic brands in casual dining and recognizes a franchisee that embodies what it means to be *Eatin' Good* and *Doin' Good in the Neighborhood*. **Apple Mountain** was named Franchisee of the Year for its outstanding leadership in guest experience, operational excellence, team member engagement, and its commitment to reimagining every Applebee's location across Utah.

Thrive Restaurant Group for Bill Palmer Heart of Applebee's

This award is named after Applebee's founder and recognizes a franchisee that has shown the greatest commitment to an individual cause or organization over this past year. The 2025 recipient of this award is **Thrive Restaurant Group**, recognized for its exceptional commitment to community impact and charitable giving – especially through its longstanding partnership with the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Since 2002, Thrive has raised more than \$2.4 million, helping grant over 350 life-changing wishes for children facing critical illnesses.

TEAM Schostak Family Restaurants for Lloyd Hill Neighbor of the Year

This award, named after one of the brand's historic leaders, celebrates an Applebee's franchisee that has displayed a tremendous amount of love, compassion, and care for their neighbors through a variety of causes, activities, and initiatives. This year's recipient is **TEAM Schostak Family**, recognized for its unwavering commitment to community and longstanding partnerships with charitable organizations including Make-A-Wish Foundation, Forgotten Harvest, and Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, among others. TEAM Schostak takes pride in their core purpose to create opportunities that make lives better.

About Applebee's®

As one of the world's largest casual dining brands, Applebee's Neighborhood Grill + Bar serves as America's kitchen table, offering guests a lively dining experience that combines simple, craveable American fare with classic drinks and local drafts. Applebee's makes it easy for family and friends to connect with one another, whether it's in a dining room or in the comfort of a living room, Eatin' Good in the Neighborhood™ is a familiar and affordable escape from the everyday. Applebee's restaurants are owned and operated by entrepreneurs dedicated to more than serving great food, but also building up the communities that we call home. From raising money for local charities to hosting community fundraisers, Applebee's is always Doin' Good in the Neighborhood®. Applebee's and its franchise operations together consisted of 1,514 Applebee's restaurants in the United States, two U.S. territories and 15 countries outside the United States as of June 29, 2025. This number does not include 59 company-owned Applebee's restaurants, one domestic Applebee's ghost kitchen (small kitchens with no store-front presence, used to fill off-premise orders) and seven Applebee's international ghost kitchens. Applebee's is franchised by subsidiaries of Dine Brands Global Inc. [NYSE: DIN], which is one of the world's largest full-service restaurant companies.

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