



Press Release

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For immediate release

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Columbia Ranked 43rd Best Place for Restaurateurs in Nation

Also Ranked Missouri's Top in Per Capita Restaurant Sales.

Columbia—Restaurant Business Magazine's just released annual site-survey ranks Columbia, Missouri as the 43rd best spot in the nation to open a new restaurant, beating out all other metropolitan areas in the state. It also ranks Columbia 48th in the nation in per capita restaurant sales.

Columbia's Restaurant Growth Index placed it at number 43 in the nation. Lawrence, Kansas and Madison, Wisconsin (two towns often compared to Columbia) ranked 67th and 68th respectively. St. Louis ranked 150th while Kansas City came in at 164th. This ranking is largely the result of recent growth in Columbia, its new position as a regional destination for dining and shopping, and its high level of per capita restaurant sales.

Columbia was also ranked Missouri's top in per capita restaurant sales (48th in the nation) with \$1,420 in per capita sales and \$196,616,224 in overall restaurant sales. According to this survey data, people dine out more in Columbia than any other town in Missouri, including St. Louis and Kansas City.

The survey was conducted by Restaurant Business Magazine in cooperation with Claritas, a California-based market research firm. Together, they developed what they call a "Restaurant Growth Index" which was used to rank all U.S. metropolitan areas. This index is based on a range of factors that lead to success in the restaurant industry including high levels of disposable income, overall restaurant sales, and the number of coffee shops in the area.

"These are the very factors that make Columbia such a great restaurant town," said Carrie Gartner, Executive Director of the Downtown Columbia Associations. "We're certainly not surprised when a restaurant wants to locate here because we're the growth area in Mid-Missouri."

"We see the power of downtown restaurants every day," Gartner continued. "During the Twilight Festival alone, restaurants pull about \$700,000 into the local economy."

In downtown Columbia, the growth of restaurants has been significant. In the early 1980's, downtown boasted a mere 12 restaurants, two of which sold only ice cream. Today, downtown has over 70 restaurants and bars and is a well-known regional dining destination.

The entire report can be downloaded from http://www.restaurantbiz.com/restaurantbusiness/reports_analysis/index.jsp or by contacting Claritas at 1 (800) 234-5973.