Black Bear Diner Strengthens Leadership to Accelerate Franchise Growth, Names Nicole Durham-Mallory VP of Development

Veteran franchise development leader joins the brand as Black Bear Diner builds on strong momentum and prepares for its next chapter of growth



Black Bear Diner - Layton, UT

REDDING, CA, UNITED STATES, September 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Black Bear Diner, the beloved family-dining concept known for generous portions of home-style comfort food, a cozy cabin atmosphere and genuine hospitality, today announced that Nicole Durham-Mallory has joined the company to lead Franchise Development. The addition strengthens Black Bear Diner's leadership team as the brand builds on strong diner level sales momentum and prepares to accelerate its next chapter of growth.

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>
> *Anita Adams, Chief Executive Officer of Black Bear Diner*

Durham-Mallory brings more than 22 years of experience with Dine Brands Global and deep expertise in franchise development, franchisee support and restaurant growth. Most recently, she served as Vice President, Sales Administration at Dine Brands, where she worked closely with franchisees and cross-functional teams to support restaurant expansion and strengthen development capabilities.

"There is so much excitement and opportunity around Black Bear right now, and Nicole is joining us at exactly the right time," said Anita Adams, Chief Executive Officer of Black Bear Diner. "Our existing franchise-partners continue to invest and grow with us, we are welcoming new partners into the Black Bear family, and we

believe there is tremendous opportunity ahead. Nicole understands how to build strong franchise relationships while growing a brand the right way, and we are thrilled to have her help us build on the momentum already underway."


Nicole Durham-Mallory, VP Business Development - Black Bear Diner

Building on Strong Momentum
Founded in Mt. Shasta, California, in 1995, Black Bear Diner has grown from a single neighborhood diner into a nationally recognized family-dining brand with more than 170 diners across 15 states. The company has continued to expand through a balanced mix of company-owned and franchised development, with growth coming from longtime franchise-partners reinvesting in the brand, new multi-unit partners joining the system and continued company investment in new diners.

The brand sees meaningful runway ahead, both by adding diners in markets where Black Bear already has strong awareness and loyal guests and by bringing its signature "diner done differently" experience to new communities. The company is also continuing to invest across the business to support that growth, including restaurant operations, technology, marketing, menu innovation and a flexible new-unit prototype designed to create more opportunities for development.

"Growth for us has never been about simply putting more dots on a map," Adams added. "It is about finding the right franchise-partners, the right communities and the right sites, while protecting the generous food, genuine care and authentic sense of home that our guests love about Black Bear. We want every new diner to feel unmistakably Black Bear. It's been an extraordinary couple of years, with the opening of nine new diners in 2025 and another five in 2026, with our franchise partners playing an important role in that growth."

Expanding the Black Bear Family
In her new role, Durham-Mallory will focus on expanding Black Bear Diner's franchise development pipeline, building relationships with prospective franchisees and multi-unit operators, and working alongside existing franchise-partners as they evaluate additional growth opportunities. She will also partner across the organization to help ensure new development

supports the brand's standards for operations, hospitality and long-term franchisee success.

“What immediately stood out to me about Black Bear Diner is how much heart there is behind the brand,” said Durham-Mallory. “It has a differentiated concept, passionate guests, experienced franchise-partners and a tremendous amount of opportunity still ahead. I am excited to help build on what is already working, introduce Black Bear to new operators and communities, and grow the Bear family in a way that stays true to what makes this brand special.”

Black Bear Diner opened its first franchised diner in 2002, and franchise-partners have remained an important part of the brand's growth for more than two decades. As the company looks ahead, the focus will remain on disciplined expansion, strong franchise relationships and preserving the one-of-a-kind guest experience that has defined Black Bear Diner for more than 30 years.
For more information about Black Bear Diner franchise opportunities, visit www.blackbeardinerfranchise.com.

About Black Bear Diner
Founded in 1995 by Bruce Dean and Bob Manley in Mt. Shasta, California, Black Bear Diner has spent more than 30 years bringing home-style comfort food classics, exceptional guest service and a unique cabin-inspired atmosphere to the dining experience. The full-service concept, open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, offers an extensive all-day menu anchored in hearty portions, quality ingredients and excellent value, with service rooted in genuine hospitality. Black Bear Diner has been consistently recognized for its growth and performance, including FSR Magazine's Reader's Choice Award for Best Legacy Brand and recognition from Nation's Restaurant News for customer service, growth and disruption in family dining. Franchise Times has called Black Bear Diner one of the “smartest-growing brands” in the country. Today, Black Bear Diner operates more than 170 diners across 15 states and continues to focus on serving generous, home-style food and creating a warm, welcoming experience for guests and communities. For more information, visit www.blackbeardiner.com.

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