



**connor  
concepts**  
Superior Dining Experiences. **Everyday.**



*Connors*  
Steak & Seafood

## **Concept & Strategy**

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*The objective at Connor Concepts is to develop and operate a regional system of restaurants offering guests a distinctive dining experience – creating a loyal customer base and generating a high level of repeat business.*

Through fulfillment of our objective, we provide an excellent opportunity for the development and success of our team members while creating exceptional investment growth for our partners.

## **The Chop House**

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This steak house concept positions itself in the market between fine dining and family fare, combining premium offerings and friendly service in a casual, relaxed atmosphere.

Chop House guests receive good value and hearty menu items. Our fare is “better and different,” using fresh ingredients prepared in-house and featuring steaks and chops grilled in our unique Montague™ ovens. Service strives to be second to none with an intensive training program for team members. The atmosphere is inviting with rich woods and earthen-colored décor. Fireplaces, alabaster chandeliers and gas lamps accent the warm environment.

## **Connors Steak & Seafood**

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Emphasizing a blend of traditionally favored entrées and fresh, uniquely prepared items, Connors Steak & Seafood is capable of responding to the increasingly sophisticated tastes of our guests. Connors Steak & Seafood offers a great price value based upon product quality, portion size, and distinctiveness. We intend to utilize and expand this concept to satisfy a marketing position with a slightly more affluent customer base than The Chop House. Connors Steak & Seafood is stylish while retaining the warmth and inviting atmosphere preferred by the casual diner.

## **Menu – The Chop House**

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The Chop House offers guests familiar food prepared in a unique manner with a passionate focus on excellence. We take no shortcuts in preparation and purchase only the highest quality products, while offering great price value. When possible all items are homemade and prepared with fresh ingredients, including soups, salad dressings, sauces, desserts and more.

Our menu is better and different in that premium aged, uniquely seasoned, USDA Choice steaks are grilled in Montague™ ovens at extreme temperatures exceeding 1800 degrees in order to sear in juices and natural flavors. Prime Rib is seasoned and slow roasted until fork-tender. USDC inspected fish is grilled and topped with a variety of seasonal vegetables and fruit toppings. Our Colossal-Sized Onion Rings are hand-breaded and hand-battered using an 11-step process. Other guest favorites are the featured 12 oz. French-Cut Pork Chop, Fall-Off-The-Bone BBQ Baby Back Ribs, Grilled Chicken Salad, Steakburger, hand-breaded Baked Boston Schrod, and Caramel Fudge Cake.

Our executive chef continually develops innovative items for the menu to meet evolving trends and offer patrons fresh and interesting flavors. Our menu is intentionally limited and easy to execute ensuring quality – our highest objective. Guests may have their meal prepared in accordance with dietary needs and are also offered “small plate” portions of many of our popular entrées.

Chop House entrées range in price from \$7.00 to \$30.00, and our appetizers range in price from \$6.00 to \$13.00. The average check per guest, including alcoholic beverages, is approximately \$20.00. Sales of alcoholic beverages, featuring a nice variety of liquor, wine and beer, comprise about 10% of revenue. Lunch and dinner contribute approximately 35% and 65% of revenue, respectively.

## **Menu – Connors Steak & Seafood**

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The Connors Steak & Seafood menu offers a balanced blend of traditional American favorites and trendy entrées that excite the senses and create memorable dining experiences. Chefs are trained to prepare specially seasoned, premium cuts of aged beef. Our steaks and fresh seafood are grilled over mesquite wood to enhance the richness in flavor. A variety of impressive recipes have been created to please the most sophisticated diner. The menu is highlighted by dishes such as the signature Lobster Crab Bisque, Pan Seared Ahi Tuna, Shrimp Florentine Pasta, Chicken Piccata, Steamed Alaskan King Crab Legs, Coldwater Lobster Tail, and our signature Boursin Filet. We offer a variety of fresh vegetables and can accommodate guests with special dietary needs.

In addition to our core menu, Connors Steak & Seafood offer a variety of lunch and light eating favorites such as Baby Spinach & Strawberry Salad, Reuben Sandwich and specially seasoned, Mesquite Grilled Burgers. Menu pricing for Connors Steak & Seafood ranges from approximately \$9.00 to \$35.00 per guest. While the average is approximately \$30.00 per guest, alcoholic beverages comprise about 20% of total sales and lunches account for approximately 30% of total revenue.

A focal point of the restaurant’s atmosphere is our Exhibition Kitchen, while the Cook Line and Seafood & Dessert Bar offer tempting aromas, add visual appeal and entertain guests as they anticipate their dining experience.



Boursin Filet (Connors Steak & Seafood).



Sweet Corn Tamale Cakes (The Chop House).

## Potential Sites & Guidelines for Expansion

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- Approximate 6,000-7,500 s.f. building (Chop House); 7,500-8,500 s.f. (Connors)
- Visibility, accessibility, ample signage, traffic count 40k+ per day
- 145+ dedicated parking spaces
- Site size approximately 1.5 to 1.8 acres
- Within 300 mile radius of Knoxville, TN (now expanding in Southeast with Florida being a key state)
- Major metropolitan area (MSA population 600,000+)
- Anticipated annual net sales volume \$4M+ (Chop House); \$6M+ (Connors)
- Availability of our niche in market
- Population of 250k people within 5 mile radius
- Daytime population of 100,000 people in a 5 mile radius
- Median income level \$60k+ per household
- Able to do at least 30% sales at lunch
- Within 1 mile radius of retail center with strong traffic generators
- Education of adults minimum 50% with some college
- Labor pool available (university or college nearby)



Connors Steak & Seafood in Fort Myers, FL.



Connors Steak & Seafood in Huntsville, AL.



Sunrise at Connors Steak & Seafood in Fort Myers, FL.



Connors Steak & Seafood in Huntsville, AL.



Seafood display at Connors Steak & Seafood in Knoxville, TN.



Connors Steak & Seafood in Huntsville, AL.



## **Mike Connor — President & Chief Executive Officer**

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Mike began his restaurant career with Steak & Ale in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1973. He continued in management with the Norman Brinker-owned restaurant chain for almost 10 years working in Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and Texas. In 1982 along with the Regas' of Knoxville, Mike started and served as president of the Grady's Restaurant chain in Knoxville. Over the next seven years Grady's opened seven additional restaurants (averaging \$3.6 million each in annual sales) and merged with Mike's old mentor Norman Brinker and the Chili's group in 1989. Mike continued to serve as the concept head of Grady's and opened seven more restaurants in the next two years. In 1987, Ken Blanchard (The One Minute Manager) selected Grady's, along with several large companies, to participate in a video he produced entitled "Legendary Service." In 1992 Mike left Brinker and formed Connor Concepts, Inc., which developed The Chop House restaurant, specializing in heavily-aged, hand-selected, uniquely-seasoned steaks and chops. The first Chop House in Knoxville was opened with several associates from Grady's, and has been very successful. To date Connor Concepts, Inc. has opened twelve Chop House restaurants in Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia and Ohio (averaging \$4.0 million in annual sales). The company also owns and operates the Connors Steak & Seafood brand of restaurants (averaging \$6.5 million in annual sales), which are located in Alabama, Florida and Tennessee. Mike is married to Carol Gray Connor. Together they have four children: Mandy, Ryan, Brett and Patrick. Mike is Chairman of the Finance Council for the Catholic Dioceses of East Tennessee. Mike currently serves on the board of the University of Tennessee's Retail, Hospitality and Tourism Management Curriculum. He was a member of the Leadership Knoxville class of 1990 and was selected the "Restaurateur of the Year" in 2003 by the Tennessee Restaurant Association. Mike was inducted into the East Tennessee Business Hall of Fame in 2012.

## **Bo Connor — Executive Vice President & Chief Operations Officer**

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Bo is a veteran restaurant entrepreneur with over 35 years of experience in high volume, multi-unit concepts. After graduating from the University of Tennessee with a BS degree in Business Administration, Bo has been involved in the development of many successful operations, including Steak and Ale, Bennigan's, Grady's, Regas Restaurant, The Chop House, and Connors Steak and Seafood. Bo began his career under the leadership of Norman Brinker at Steak and Ale. He rose through the ranks from assistant manager in Chattanooga to Regional Manager of operations in the Georgia / Alabama region. Bo left S&A to join his brother Mike as a partner at Grady's Restaurants. After Grady's was sold by the partnership to Brinker Inc., Bo joined Mike and Kevin Thompson to form Connor Concepts Inc., which developed The Chop House and Connors Steak and Seafood brands. Bo is currently Chief Operating Officer overseeing all operations of the 15 restaurant company, employing over 1,200 team members. Bo is also very active in the Tennessee hospitality industry and the local community. He is Chairman of the Board at Visit Knoxville (CVB), he is on the board and the executive committee of the Tennessee Hospitality Association and The Greater Knoxville Hospitality Association and he serves on the Government Relations Committee for the Knoxville Chamber Partnership. Bo has served as culinary / restaurant management curriculum advisor for the University of Tennessee, Pellissippi State, and Walter State community Colleges. Bo was awarded the "Restaurateur of the Year" for the State of Tennessee (2013).

### **Nicki Dawson — Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer**

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Nicki's professional career includes more than 20 years of financial reporting, consulting, auditing and tax experience. After graduating with both Bachelors and Masters Degrees from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and earning her CPA license, Nicki worked for international accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand (now PriceWaterhouseCoopers) for several years, gaining financial statement audit experience in a variety of industries. After serving as Director of Accounting in a high tech company during the dot-com era, she spent fifteen years in regional and local CPA firms in Knoxville and Nashville. Along the way, she was fortunate to gain the opportunity to work with Mike Connor and Connor Concepts. In addition to supervising the preparation of the company's income tax returns and financial statements, Nicki worked as an advisor or "part-time CFO" to the company for over seven years before coming on as the CFO in January 2013. She serves on the Knox County Industrial Development Board, the Knox County Health & Education Board, and both the Finance Committee and Board of Advisors of Emerald Youth Foundation.

### **Kevin Thompson — Senior Vice President of Operations**

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Kevin's professional career began with Del Taco in California where he successfully facilitated their nationwide expansion as Regional Supervisor. In 1980, an opportunity presented itself to join Mike Connor at Steak & Ale in Dallas, Texas. Kevin and Mike later decided to partner and relocate to Knoxville, Tennessee and develop a new concept, Grady's Goodtimes. Grady's was a seminal example of the emerging "casual dining" segment and quickly expanded to seven restaurants and \$22 million in revenues. Brinker International acquired Grady's in 1989. In 1992 Kevin joined forces with Mike and Bo Connor to form Connor Concepts, Inc.

### **Brian Keyes — Senior Vice President of Operations, Information Technologies Director**

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Brian began his professional career in restaurant management in 1984. Upon completion of college degrees (B.S. *cum laude* Virginia Tech '81 & M.S. Tennessee '84), Brian was the first team member promoted to Manager under Mike Connor at the original Grady's in Knoxville, Tennessee. Brian relocated with Grady's numerous times and opened many new restaurants. He was promoted to General Manager in 1988 and Area Director in 1991. In 1993 Brian joined The Chop House team and has mainly been responsible for multi-unit supervision with Connor Concepts, Inc. In addition to operations, some other areas Brian is responsible for are: human resources, management information systems (POS), menu and web site development and design, training and manuals. Brian is also a food safety instructor and he certifies all management personnel through the National Restaurant Association's ServSafe seminars. Brian currently serves on the boards of the University of Tennessee Retail, Hospitality & Tourism Management Curriculum and the Pellissippi State Culinary Institute. He is past president of Knoxville's Franklin Square Merchants Association.

### **Brent West — Senior Vice President of Operations, Real Estate Director**

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While attending the University of Tennessee in 1992, Brent joined the Connor Concepts team. He began as a Server at the first Chop House, located in Knoxville, Tennessee. After graduation, Brent was promoted to a management position and assisted in the opening of several new locations. Brent was promoted into a General Manager role after a few years and has since worked in multiple

locations. He has often taken over stagnant locations and improved operations, sales, and profit to above average performance in short periods of time. Brent supervises five locations and oversees the company's real estate projects which consist of scouting the site, design and development, and lease negotiations. Brent also assists in financing new projects and the company's banking needs.

### **Al Varlan — Senior Vice President of Operations (Connors Steak & Seafood)** ---

Al began his professional career in restaurant management in 1987. Shortly after graduating from The University of Tennessee with a B.S. in Marketing, Al joined Grady's and managed two different locations from 1988-1993. He joined Mike Connor in 1993, helping to open several Chop House locations as General Manager in Kingsport and Chattanooga, Tennessee. Al worked with NASCAR Café as General Manager, then Area Director, then Vice President from 1997-2003. In 2003, Al rejoined Connor Concepts, Inc. to open The Chop House in Fountain City, Tennessee. As General Manager and Area Director, Al has opened six of the company's fifteen current Chop House and Connors Steak & Seafood venues. He currently serves as Concept Head for Connors Steak & Seafood.

### **Tony Watson — Senior Vice President of Menu, Facilities, Purchasing** ---

Tony began his career in 1976 with The Hungry Fisherman group in Knoxville and very quickly progressed to Line Supervisor. Seeking a more growth-oriented concept, he accepted a position at TGI Fridays where he was Master Bartender, then Kitchen Manager. In 1987 Tony joined the Grady's Goodtimes team as Kitchen Manager. After the Brinker purchase, he was promoted to Back of House Coordinator responsible for kitchen layout, small wares planning and procurement, Opening Team Coordinator for the back of house, and new Team Member recruitment and development. He also assisted with R&D at the Dallas test kitchen. Tony has created menus and back of house operations procedures for such concepts as Cheers, TW Lees, Captains Quarters, J. Alexander's, Chops Grill, Regas, The Chop House, NASCAR Cafe and Connors Steak & Seafood. In his current position, Tony's duties include overseeing menu R&D, purchasing, contracts and rebates, FF&E procurement/replacement, small wares planning and ongoing restaurant remodel projects. Other ancillary duties include new restaurant budgeting and design, overseeing construction, installation of FF&E items, facility maintenance, and assurance of seamless new restaurant startup and operation.

### **Mark Davis — Vice President of Menu, Facilities, Purchasing** ---

Mark's restaurant career began with Darryl's 1808 in North Carolina where he worked as a server, line cook and Kitchen Manager. In 1990, Mark joined the kitchen staff of Grady's Goodtimes in Charlotte. During this time, Mark gained valuable experience assisting in several new restaurant openings and met Kevin Thompson, the current Vice President & Co-Founder of Connor Concepts, Inc. After its formation in 1992, Mark joined Connor Concepts and became the Head Chef for their second location in Kingsport, TN. Mark relocated and also served as Head Chef for units in Chattanooga, TN and Dayton, OH. In 1997 he was promoted to Food and Beverage Director for NASCAR Café in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Responsible for coordinating all kitchen operations and new restaurant openings, Mark facilitated concept expansion into Florida, Tennessee, and Nevada. Mark rejoined Connor Concepts in 2003 as Corporate Chef. Mark's main responsibilities are coordination of back-of-house training at new restaurant openings and menu planning and implementation.

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