Red Lobster and Euro RSCG McConnaughy Tatham Launch Festival of Crab Advertising and Promotion

ORLANDO, Fla., July 9 -- Red Lobster will launch new advertising and a new promotion on July 9 featuring "Chef Ned" who is passionate about the restaurant company's summer Festival of Crab.

The six spots (three television and three radio) are part of the larger "Go Overboard" creative campaign that Red Lobster first launched in November targeting Americans' growing passion for seafood.

Those original spots, which were created and produced by Chicago-based EURO RSCG McConnaughy Tatham, most recently featured a seafood-passionate chef walking out of the ocean to serve a fresh lobster to Red Lobster guests. The ad enjoyed strong consumer acceptance and helped set the direction of the upcoming Passionate Chef series, featuring Chef Ned spreading the good word about Festival of Crab.

"The chef in our recent 'Out of the Sea' ad really struck a chord with guests," said Ken Mills, vice president of marketing at Red Lobster. "It said all of the right things about Red Lobster: 'that we are the seafood experts and that we will go overboard to satisfy our seafood-passionate guests.'"

The new television spots, "Guided Tour"(:30), "Welcome Wagon"(:15), and "Patent Office"(:15) feature Chef Ned in his chef's whites serving in such quirky capacities as a tour guide, an inventor and a Welcome Wagon representative while passionately discussing the finer points of Crab Stuffed Portobello, Crab & Shrimp Cobb Salad and other succulent crab dishes that will be featured in the Festival of Crab promotion.

Radio ads "Once Upon a Time" (:30) and "Personal Ad" (:30 and :60) introduce Chef Ned as a story-teller spinning an appetizing fairy tale for a child about two Portobello mushrooms meeting a chef like him. In the other spot, Chef Ned places a personal ad, discussing his passion for seafood, especially crab. He's trying (with great success) to find that special someone with whom he can share his dreams and his crab creations.

"These new ads reflect Red Lobster's genuine passion for serving great seafood meals," stated Gary Epstein, president and CEO of Euro RSCG McConnaughy Tatham. "We're excited about the potential of our passionate chef brand icon."

Festival of Crab -- which also kicks off on July 9 -- also reflects Red Lobster's commitment to serve its guests the freshest, most delicious seafood. During the eight-week promotion, guests can enjoy two new crab appetizers and four new crab entrees, such as Crab Portobello and Crab & Shrimp Cobb Salad.

The promotion provides the company with a signature promotion in its fiscal first quarter taking advantage of the abundant summer crab season and complements Red Lobster's signature fourth quarter Lobsterfest promotion held in the spring.

The new installments of the $60 million plus television campaign will run throughout the summer on network and cable television stations, including MSNBC, The Food Network, A&E, VH1 and USA Network.

Similarly, Red Lobster's radio initiative provides new synergy for building brand equity for the company. Red Lobster leads the casual dining category in radio expenditures of almost $17 million for the "Go Overboard" campaign.

Since 1980, seafood consumption in the United States has risen 22 percent to 15.3 pounds per person in 1999, according to 2000 data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Seafood is the entree of choice when Americans dine out at casual dining restaurants, according to a 2000 Darden Market Structure national survey of guest preferences. With record sales and profits in fiscal 2001, ending May 31, Red Lobster serves more seafood occasions than all other casual dining seafood restaurants combined.

Red Lobster is the largest restaurant company owned by Darden Restaurants Inc. (NYSE: DRI) of Orlando. Darden also operates Olive Garden, Bahama Breeze, and Smokey Bones BBQ and Sports Bar restaurants. Red Lobster first opened its doors 33 years ago in Lakeland, Fla. For more information, visit the Red Lobster Web site at www.redlobster.com.

Chicago-based Euro RSCG McConnaughy Tatham creates advertising and marketing programs for a number of the most recognized brands in the world. Euro RSCG McConnaughy Tatham was founded in 1946 under the name of Tatham-Laird and Kudner (TLK), which was acquired by Euro RSCG Worldwide in 1989.
Euro RSCG Tatham acquired Chicago advertising creative powerhouse McConnaughy Stein Schmidt Brown in October of 2000 to form Euro RSCG McConnaughy Tatham, a unique, creatively driven branding agency. With billings of over $500 million in 2000, Euro RSCG McConnaughy Tatham is the fifth largest agency in Chicago today.

The agency's blue-chip client base includes Red Lobster, Alberto-Culver, Walgreens, AT Kearney, Carrier Global, ConAgra Grocery Products, Havas InterActive, Beltone, and Dean Foods, among others.