Darden Restaurants Appoints Gerald 'Chip' Kunde II Vice President of Government Relations

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Darden Restaurants, Inc. (NYSE: DRI) today announced the appointment of Chip Kunde as vice president of Government Relations.

Kunde is charged with developing relationships with key stakeholders at the Federal and state levels to build awareness of Darden Restaurants' business model and the economic impact on the communities in which Darden operates. Furthermore, Kunde will lead Darden's efforts to help craft public policy that recognizes the important contributions of the casual dining industry and Darden, in particular.

Kunde joins Darden, the company that owns and operates Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Bahama Breeze, and Seasons 52 restaurants, from the International Dairy Foods Association, where he spent four years as senior vice president of legislative and economic affairs. As an integral part of the senior management team, Kunde oversaw planning and implementation for federal and state legislative advocacy, including milk pricing policies and economic analysis, grassroots and political programs for the leading trade association representing the dairy processing industry.

"Strong government and community relations are imperative to Darden's efforts to grow our existing businesses and build new powerful brands," said Senior Vice President, Government and Community Affairs, Bob McAdam. "Chip will play a pivotal role in fostering relationships with federal office holders and state decision makers as well as sharing important policy issues with Darden's management."

Prior to his post at the International Dairy Food Association, from 1997 to 2003 Kunde was vice president of government and state affairs at the Grocery Manufacturers of America. From 1992 to 1997, he served as executive vice president at the Connecticut Association of Realtors, Inc. and has also held various positions at the National Association of Realtors and Freddie Mac. Kunde launched his career in government relations with the Dole for President Campaign.

Kunde, who joins Darden effective August 9, 2007, will report directly to McAdam.

Kunde graduated with a master of Public Administration, Executive, and Legislative Management from George Washington University and a bachelor of arts in political science from the University of Florida.

Darden, headquartered in Orlando, FL, owns and operates over 1,400 restaurants. The company is the 25th largest employer in the United States with nearly 150,000 employees. Darden is also the world's largest casual dining company with $5.7 billion in annual sales.

SOURCE Darden Restaurants, Inc.

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