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## **Melting Pot looking for new franchisee to build up-to-date Greensboro location**

The Melting Pot is seeking a new franchisee, which could take the fondue restaurant out of Greensboro.

Front Burner Brands, the Tampa, Fla.-based restaurant management company that operates The Melting Pot restaurants, is seeking a franchisee to open a new restaurant in the Triad — going so far as to offer a 40 percent discount off the initial franchise fee.

Dan Stone, the chief business and people development officer for Front Burner Brands, wants to close the store at 2924 Battleground Ave., and open a new one in the city or elsewhere in the Triad. Stone said the Greensboro restaurant's current franchisee is not in the position to build a new restaurant.

The Battleground restaurant is more than 20 years old, and Stone said the type of sites the company sought then are different from the ones they seek out today. There are more than 130 Melting Pot restaurants in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Southeast Asia, including six in North Carolina.

"It's in the best interest of the brand that we position ourselves in a stronger retail area within the market, and that we develop a newer, more modern store that is representative of The Melting Pot brand of today," Stone said.

He said the current franchisee, Kevin Burbine, is a good operator of the restaurant, but it is in an older building and money is needed to update it. It is just under 3,000 square feet and seats 92 people, Stone said. Other Melting Pot restaurants range from about 4,500- to 6,000-square-feet, he said.

"It's one of the smaller stores we have in our system today," Stone said, adding that it's not serving this market as effectively as it could. Other restaurants in the chain also have lighting, decorations and furnishings that are more modern, he said.

Burbine declined to comment when reached Tuesday.

Stone said the company put out a call for franchisees a year ago and got some interest, but no one completed the process.

He said the company is open to the store being located outside Greensboro, but within the Triad region. Stone said The Melting Pot maintaining a presence in the Triad is dependent upon finding a

new franchise partner in this market. Front Burner Brands does not develop company-owned stores, he said.

Stone said the company would like for the restaurant to be in an area where there is a lot of retail traffic.

“We like to be in strong retail hubs with strong tenant synergy,” he said.