



Affordable Business Concepts, LLC

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Why buy a franchise now?

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National retail franchisors plan Birmingham push

Birmingham Business Journal - by [Lauren B. Cooper](#) Staff

Three national franchise brands announced plans to open additional locations in Birmingham, beefing up their presence in the growing metropolitan area.

They include:

- Hair Salons, one of the nation's largest full-service salons, which plans to open 20 additional locations in the Birmingham area in the next five years, creating more than 200 jobs.
- A home furniture retailer, which plans to open up to three locations in the Birmingham area, adding to its more than 300 locations in the Southeast.
- Tropical Smoothie franchise, which plans as many as 20 locations in the state in the next five years, focusing mainly in central Alabama.

Plans call for more than 40 storefronts to be open in the next five years, employing hundreds of people and leasing valuable real estate frontage in the city and surrounding areas.

Experts in franchising and those involved in the companies planning to open the location said franchises are a proven brand that last the test of time, even in an economic downturn.

Overall, franchises do well when the economy is down, said Terry Hill, vice president of communications for the International Franchise Association.

For example, in the food sector of the industry, he said, people won't stop eating out in economic down times, but they will scale back.

"People are still going to travel and stay in hotels," he said. "They will look for the best value for their dollars and that is where franchises really excel. It can be the same thing in Birmingham as it is in Washington state."

And during tough times, lenders are more willing to take a risk on a proven brand, said Joseph Kassouf, president of The Kassouf Group, the company that holds the rights to open Tropical Smoothie Cafés in Alabama and parts of Florida.

"Economically, with reduced interest rates, now is an excellent time if you are looking for an investment. Anytime you can lessen the risk based on concept, it enables you to secure better financing and better terms."

The franchise association's Hill agreed and said now also is a good time to negotiate up-front costs and training fees with franchisors, he said.

For more information on franchise options available to you, visit:

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