



## **BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP® WHERE BEST FRIENDS ARE MADE®, TO OPEN IN JACKSONVILLE!**

May 30, 2002

ST. LOUIS, MO (May 30, 2002) - Build-A-Bear Workshop®, Where Best Friends Are Made™, announced it will be expanding soon to Jacksonville, FL. After opening the premier store in St. Louis with resounding success in 1997 and then in cities throughout the United States over the past four and a half years, Build-A-Bear Workshop® is now bringing its unique entertainment retail concept to a Jacksonville area shopping center, The Avenues. The new store is scheduled to open on June 7.

Build-A-Bear Workshop is based on the premise that nearly everyone, regardless of age, has a special fondness for stuffed animals. At Build-A-Bear Workshop, visitors, or Guest Bear Builders<sup>sm</sup>, create their own stuffed animals as they "choose, stuff, stitch, fluff, name and dress" their way through a series of bear-making stations. A variety of inventive bear merchandise is also available, including hundreds of coordinating outfits and accessories for all bear occasions.

Chief Executive Bear Maxine Clark, former president of Payless ShoeSource, knows what families want in a shopping experience, and the store is her response to happy memories of shopping as a child. Build-A-Bear Workshop's innovative store concept takes children's interactive entertainment retailing to a new level, combining the process of making your own bear with the exciting atmosphere and fun of shopping the way it used to be. "When I was young, it was exciting for me to see all the decorations in the stores, and I loved every minute of it," says Clark. "That excitement was something I wanted to re-create for children and families today."

"We want to provide a fun quality shopping experience for children and families," says Clark. "Besides, we all need to remember what it is to be a kid. We love seeing the smiles on our Guests' faces, sharing their excitement and watching them have fun."

Build-A-Bear Workshop stuffed animals are very affordable, ranging in price from \$10 to \$25. In addition, with every purchase of \$10 or more, each Guest joins the Buy Stuff Club®, which is the Build-A-Bear Workshop frequent-buyer incentive program. For every \$100 spent, Guests receive \$10 off their next purchase.

Clark is looking forward to opening its' first store in the Jacksonville area. She notes, "Our plan is always to open in the premier malls across the country, and we will continue this approach as we open in The Avenues. We have had many Guests in Jacksonville ask us when we will be opening locations in their communities. Now that we are opening this store, we will be able to reach more Build-A-Bear Workshop Guests in the Jacksonville area and we are thrilled to be there."

"One of the reasons that this mall is in the category of premier U.S. malls is the work of its development company, Simon Property Group," says Clark. "The Simon Property Group organization has been wonderful

to work with and we are looking forward to bringing Build-A-Bear Workshop to another one of their properties."

Build-A-Bear Workshop® continues to redefine the concept of mall-based entertainment retail. In doing so, the company has been recognized by the retail industry with numerous awards including: National Retail Federation's International 2001 Retail Innovator of the Year; Global Winner, Arthur Andersen's 2000 Best Practices: Exceeding Customer Expectations; ZD Net Interactive's 2001 Best Places to Work; and St. Louis Business Journal's 2001 Laclede Award: Best Place to Work.

Build-A-Bear Workshop® is an interactive, entertainment retailer that invites customers to create their own customized stuffed animals. The company currently operates 82 stores in 31 states coast-to-coast and plans to have over 100 locations by the end of 2002. The premier store opened in Saint Louis Galleria in October 1997. For more information, call (888) 560-BEAR or visit the company's award-winning Web site at [www.buildabear.com](http://www.buildabear.com).