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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Goldner Hawn Serves up Equity Investment for Houlihan's Expansion**

*Cash Infusion Fuels Accelerated Corporate Growth and Continued Franchising Expansion*

**Leawood, Kan.** (5/24/07) – Houlihan's Restaurants, Inc. the nation's leader in stylish, casual dining, announced today that it has received more than \$68 million in growth capital to fund the national expansion of its recently redesigned *Houlihan's* restaurant concept.

The financial transaction results in a significant controlling shareholder position for Goldner Hawn, a private equity firm based in Minneapolis. Wells Fargo Foothill also provided a term loan and growth capital facility. Additionally, the Houlihan's Restaurants, Inc. management team increased its equity investment in the company.

"We are delighted to be partnering with Bob Hartnett and the management team of Houlihan's as they continue to expand the Company's rebranded Houlihan's concept, and execute an aggressive new growth strategy," said Darren Acheson, managing director at Goldner Hawn.

The new Houlihan's design debuted successfully in Illinois a year ago and has since been expanded to three additional markets in Kansas, Texas and Missouri. The redesigned stores feature new architecture, enticing interiors, patio-style dining and a spacious, centerpiece bar.

In addition to the new design concept, the Company has refocused its franchise business and plans to be more selective with future franchisees. "While we will continue to utilize the franchising model, our future franchise deals will be limited to experienced multi-unit/multi-concept developers that have an infrastructure capable of executing sustained development and operations," said Bob Hartnett, Houlihan's chief executive officer. "This proven standard of operating excellence will give us peace of mind that consumers will enjoy the same great dining experience at every Houlihan's location.

"Houlihan's newly positioned brand and redesigned stores coupled with the recent infusion of capital have positioned the Company for rapid growth over the next several years," added Hartnett. The Company currently has more than 30 new corporate Houlihan's locations in various stages of development in the St. Louis, Dallas, Chicago, Philadelphia, Indianapolis and Atlanta markets. According to Hartnett, building corporate stores in new markets helps Houlihan's set the stage for the success of future franchise expansion by establishing brand awareness and ensuring positive representation of the Houlihan's "personality."

**About Houlihan's**

Established in 1972, Houlihan's is a progressive concept that bridges the gap between fine dining and what people have come to expect from casual dining, priding itself on style and quality appropriate for any occasion, any day of the week. Houlihan's offers guests an inviting atmosphere, eclectic menu and energetic bar environment with creative, diverse drink offerings. Inspired by fare around the globe, Houlihan's crafts dishes made from scratch with assertive flavors, offering a unique culinary experience.

Currently, 90 Houlihan's restaurants operate throughout the country, 59 of which are franchised. Houlihan's is owned by Houlihan's Restaurants, Inc. of Leawood, Kan., a pioneer in the full-service, casual dining industry that develops and owns several other upscale casual restaurant concepts including

the Devon and Bristol Seafood Grill and Bar and J. Gilbert's Wood-Fired Steaks. For more information, visit [www.houlihans.com](http://www.houlihans.com).

### **Goldner Hawn – A Different Approach**

Founded in Minneapolis in 1989, Goldner Hawn invests in seasoned, middle-market companies that are headquartered in the Midwest, have capable management teams, distinct market advantages and clear growth potential. The approach of keeping management teams of acquired companies in place, and a history of holding investments for five years or more, makes Goldner Hawn unique in its industry.

Goldner Hawn has made 27 private equity investments through the company's Marathon Fund Partnerships and has established long-term relationships with many of America's leading financial institutions to support its investments. Including the Houlihan's investment, Goldner Hawn investments have total transaction values exceeding \$2.6 billion. Its current investment fund, Marathon Fund V, has committed capital of \$255 million.

More information about the company is available online at [www.goldnerhawn.com](http://www.goldnerhawn.com).

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