



# The Franklin Press

Established 1886

Volume 125, Number 32

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

www.thefranklinpress.com

Franklin, North Carolina 28734

75¢



Press photo/Barbara McRae

Jeff Rigsby gets ready to open his Franklin restaurant — the newest in his growing franchise group.

## Bojangles' new Franklin store creates 30 jobs

By **Barbara McRae**  
mcr@thefranklinpress.com

Jeff Rigsby has built his life around chicken.

He worked for 15 years with a competitor before starting with Bojangles 16 years ago as an area director. In 2001, he bought six stores in Asheville.

Today he owns 18 Bojangles in the South Carolina upstate and Western North Carolina — including his latest, the Franklin store, which opens today (Wednesday, April 22).

The Columbus, Ohio, native moved to South Carolina 22 years ago and still makes his home there. But he spends a lot of time in Western North Carolina, where he is steadily building his business.

"My goal is to build two restaurants a year," Rigsby

said. His is the third largest franchise group in Bojangles.

"We've been looking in Franklin for two years," he said. "We like communities like this." Pluses include the 441 corridor and the economic growth the town enjoys.

The new restaurant will help that economic growth along. Rigsby will employ 30 people, and he says he treats his employees well.

"Some of our managers have been with us for 10 or 12 years," he said. "We have a good package for employees. We offer medical benefits to all full time staff. We're concerned about our employees' quality of life. We help our managers blend their work and life."

All the Franklin managers live in the local area.

Rigsby said the reason for the chain's success is that all

three parts of the business — breakfast, lunch and dinner — are strong.

"That's what keeps me passionate about Bojangles as a brand," he said.

The restaurant centers around chicken, with signature offerings like biscuit 'n chicken that have built "almost a cult following" for the brand.

And, yes, he still eats chicken every day himself.

Rigsby said many items, including rice and biscuits, are made from scratch, and breakfast is available all day. For the health-conscious, there are vegetables, salads and grilled items. A family of five can eat for \$16.99, he said.

And that is part of the reason why the economic downturn hasn't stalled the company. "We've done well through recessionary times,"

Rigsby said.

The chain is now 400-strong and is adding 50 restaurants per year, including some in China, Honduras and Mexico.

Rigsby owns restaurants in Bryson City, Sylva, Spruce Pine and other WNC areas, and hopes to add others soon.

He believes in supporting the communities he's in.

"We want to give back," he said. "It's the right thing to do, and it makes things better. We try to spend our marketing money at the grassroots level."

The Franklin Bojangles is located on 441-south, just past Franklin Plaza. Mountain Energy operates the adjacent convenience store and gas station. The restaurant is open from 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the week, and until 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.