

El Pollo Loco Heats up National Expansion with Multiple Franchise Development Agreements

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Flame-Grilled Chicken Leader Signs Agreements for 61 New Locations in Five Key States

El Pollo Loco, the nation's leader in citrus-marinated, flame-grilled chicken, recently inked a series of multi-unit development agreements enabling El Pollo Loco developers to open 61 new locations in Georgia, Missouri, Arizona, Virginia and Utah - fueling the flame for the 350-unit chain's continued growth into new markets around the country.

In its largest franchise development agreement since announcing plans in 2004 to expand outside of its West Coast base, El Pollo Loco recently announced an arrangement with Fiesta Brands, Inc. to open 25 locations over the next seven years in the Atlanta DMA. Chris Elliott, CEO of Fiesta Brands, is the former COO of Church's Chicken and former President of Cinnabon. His partner, Joe Uhl, is the former President of JRM, the largest Cinnabon franchise partner.

Other recent development agreements announced by El Pollo Loco include a 10-unit agreement in Norfolk, Virginia, a three-unit agreement in Williamsburg and Newport News, Virginia, an agreement for six units in St. Louis, Missouri, one for 15 units in Utah and another agreement for two locations in Yuma, Arizona. In addition, the company has a pipeline of franchise restaurant commitments in California, Colorado, Illinois, Texas, Oregon and Washington.

'These agreements are great news for the El Pollo Loco brand and our national expansion goals, but even better news for consumers in these new markets,' said El Pollo Loco CEO Stephen E. Carley. 'Fans who 'lived on' El Pollo Loco on the West Coast, or who tried it during a visit there, frequently ask us when we will open in their town. Our answer used to be 'some day,' but it's now a reality as we continue to partner with some of the nation's most experienced multi-unit restaurant developers to introduce El Pollo Loco in new markets.'

Consumers in previously untapped markets are embracing the El Pollo Loco brand, including Midwestern cities like Chicago. After debuting one year ago in the city's Logan Square neighborhood, the second El Pollo Loco location for the Chicago market is set to open this year in Melrose Park.

Furthering the chain's expansion momentum, in mid-November, NEEPL, LLC is scheduled to open El Pollo Loco's first East Coast restaurant in Connecticut with several more planned for the New England area.

El Pollo Loco introduced a 'Next Generation' prototype last year, with broad demographic appeal and design flexibility to drive continued national growth of the 25-year-old proven concept. Future locations plan to incorporate the new prototype elements, including flexible, comfortable seating, upbeat colors and open grill area.

Founded in Guasave, Mexico in 1975, El Pollo Loco, pronounced 'L Po-yo Lo-co,' is famous for the unique preparation of its award-winning 'pollo' -- fresh chicken marinated in a special recipe of herbs, spices and citrus juices passed down from the founding family. The marinated chicken is then flame-grilled, hand cut and served hot off the grill with warm tortillas, freshly prepared salsas, and a wide assortment of side dishes. Rounding out the menu are fresh flavorful entrées inspired by the kitchens of Mexico, including signature grilled burritos, The Original Pollo Bowl(R), Pollo Salads, Tacos al Carbon, quesadillas, and more.

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