



May 2, 2016

El Pollo Loco Names John Dawson Chief Development Officer

COSTA MESA, Calif., May 02, 2016 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [El Pollo Loco](#) (Nasdaq:LOCO), the nation's leading fire grilled chicken chain, today announced the appointment of John Dawson to the position of Chief Development Officer, effective immediately. Mr. Dawson possesses more than 25 years of development and quick service restaurant industry experience. In this role, John will be responsible for all aspects of the brand's restaurant development program including strategic market planning, franchise sales, real estate and construction for both franchise and company restaurants.

A photo accompanying this announcement is available at

<http://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/70cf1a96-9770-4151-b987-3ce1f9e77a2e>

"It's a very exciting time for El Pollo Loco and we're thrilled to have John join our executive team as he brings a broad base of experience to this role. He has helped several high profile brands achieve meaningful growth and we look forward to the many contributions he will make as part of our team," said Steve Sather, President and CEO of El Pollo Loco. "We are confident that he is the right person to lead the strategic development of new markets and help us further penetrate our existing markets."

Mr. Dawson most recently held the position of President and Chief Executive Officer of The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf where he was responsible for their global operations with over 900 locations in 24 countries. Prior to that role, Dawson spent eight years at Dunkin' Brands, where he held various leadership positions, ultimately serving as the Global Development Officer of Dunkin' Donuts. In that role, he crafted, implemented, and executed an aggressive growth strategy for Dunkin' Donuts and led the day-to-day operations of franchising, development, and construction. Prior to joining Dunkin' Brands, Dawson served as Vice President of Worldwide Restaurant Development at McDonald's Corporation, responsible for setting the strategic direction for McDonald's global development. He earned a B.A. in both Economics and Political Science from Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, California and received a Master's degree in Real Estate Development from University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Mr. Dawson stated, "It is with great enthusiasm that I take on the role of Chief Development Officer at El Pollo Loco. I have always been impressed with the iconic status of this Southern California favorite and see tremendous growth potential ahead. It's exciting to be a part of this dedicated team, focused on driving growth within our current markets as well as forging new territories ahead."

ABOUT EL POLLO LOCO

[El Pollo Loco](#) (Nasdaq:LOCO) is the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant chain renowned for its masterfully citrus-marinated, fire-grilled chicken and handcrafted entrees using fresh ingredients inspired by Mexican recipes. With more than 430 company-owned and franchised restaurants in Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas and Utah, El Pollo Loco is expanding its presence in key markets like Houston and Dallas through a combination of company and existing and new franchisee development. Visit us on our website at ElPolloLoco.com.

Contact:

Christine Beggan, ICR

Christine.beggan@icrinc.com

(203) 682-8329