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## **El Pollo Loco Heats Up Tucson Market with New Franchise Partner**

### **PLM Restaurants to Open Six New El Pollo Loco Restaurants and Acquire Two Existing Locations in Tucson**

COSTA MESA, Calif., June 16, 2016 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- El Pollo Loco (Nasdaq:LOCO), the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken chain, today announced it has signed a franchise development deal with new franchise partner PLM Restaurants L.C., who will open six new restaurants by August 2019 in the Tucson, AZ area. In addition to opening new restaurants, PLM Restaurants has also completed the acquisition of two existing El Pollo Loco restaurants in the Tucson market.

"The Tucson community has embraced El Pollo Loco with open arms and we've grown a strong fan base in the area," said Steve Sather, President and CEO of El Pollo Loco. "We look forward to partnering with PLM Restaurants and its President David Harper, who has 39 years of industry experience, to continue building the brand's presence."

PLM Restaurants is owned by franchise partners David Harper and Stephan Ralston. Harper is also President and Owner of Meridian Restaurants. Since inception, Meridian has grown its business significantly and currently owns and operates a total of 82 Burger King Restaurants located in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota and Arizona. The development deal with El Pollo Loco marks the first step for Meridian in diversifying its portfolio.

"El Pollo Loco has a great track record of success due to the amazing food and strong leadership team and we're thrilled to join the El Pollo Loco family. The brand is steeped in tradition as evidenced by the long tenured leaders who have been with the company for their entire career and that speaks to the great culture that exists," said Harper. "We're confident El Pollo Loco's signature citrus-marinated, fire-grilled chicken and Mexican-inspired entrees will resonate with the residents and visitors of Tucson and we're excited to open our doors to the community."

El Pollo Loco is currently seeking highly qualified, multi-unit operators in Northern California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Texas and Utah. For more information visit <https://elpolloloco.com/franchising/>.

#### **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 435 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](http://ElPolloLoco.com).

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