



# El Pollo Loco Continues Franchise Expansion in Utah

## Largest Franchisee to Open Six Restaurants by 2018

COSTA MESA, Calif., June 12, 2015 -- El Pollo Loco (Nasdaq: LOCO), the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken chain, is pleased to announce a new development agreement with its largest franchise partner, WKS Restaurant Corporation, to further grow the brand's presence in Utah. WKS Restaurant Corporation is expanding its commitment to El Pollo Loco with plans to open six new restaurants in Salt Lake City, Utah. They expect to open two locations towards the end of 2016 and an additional four restaurants by the end of 2018.

"There is a healthy appetite for El Pollo Loco in Utah and we are thrilled to work with our largest franchisee, WKS Restaurant Corporation, to grow our presence in this exciting market," said Steve Sather, President and CEO of El Pollo Loco. "WKS is a dedicated franchisee that we trust and respect and we could not ask for a better partner. It gives us great confidence to announce our new agreement and plans to bring six additional restaurants to Utah."

WKS Restaurant Corporation is recognized as a fast growing, entrepreneurial leader in the Franchise Restaurant segment, where it excels in opportunistic deal making. Headquartered in Lakewood, California, WKS Restaurant Corporation has been a franchisee with El Pollo Loco for over 25 years and has been an integral part of the brand's growth. They are also a franchisee of other restaurant brands including Denny's, Krispy Kreme Donuts, and Corner Bakery Café. They opened El Pollo Loco's first Utah restaurant in Lehi in 2008 and currently operate 60 restaurants across Arizona, California and Utah, making it El Pollo Loco's largest franchisee.

"I began with El Pollo Loco, opening our first restaurant in 1988 and now we operate 62 restaurants and look forward to continue expanding and building the brand's presence in Utah," said Roland Sponberg, President and CEO of WKS Restaurant Corporation. "Our number one focus is providing great customer service and coupled with El Pollo Loco's signature citrus-

marinated and fire-grilled chicken, we've come up with a formula for success, which we are excited to implement in six new restaurants."

There are currently two El Pollo Loco restaurants in Utah, one located in Lehi and a second located in Washington. The new development agreement, which covers the southern half of the Salt Lake City market, comes on the heels of a development deal with Poco Locos, LLC signed in March 2015, and is expected to bring the total Utah restaurant count to 13 by 2018.

El Pollo Loco is currently seeking highly qualified, multi-unit operators in Northern California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada and Texas. 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 and fire-grilled chicken and handcrafted entrees using fresh ingredients inspired by authentic Mexican recipes. With more than 415 company-owned and franchised restaurants in Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas and Utah, El Pollo Loco is expanding its presence in key markets through a combination of company and existing and new franchisee development. Some say the lengths we go to create fresh, delicious food are crazy. We say it's Crazy You Can Taste. Visit us on our website at [ElPolloLoco.com](http://ElPolloLoco.com).

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