



El Pollo Loco® Marks Development Milestone as it Enters 10th State

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Development pipeline accelerates and restaurant margins continue to climb

COSTA MESA, Calif., June 30, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [El Pollo Loco, Inc.](#), the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant chain, has officially crossed into its 10th state with the opening of the brand's first-ever Idaho restaurant, located at 3471 W Chinden Blvd in Meridian. The milestone is the latest proof point in the brand's transformation strategy now defined by consecutive quarters of positive same-store sales growth, expanding restaurant-level margins, and the most ambitious development pipeline the brand has seen in years.

"We are thrilled to be open in Idaho, which reinforces our continued commitment to drive sustainable traffic growth and thoughtfully accelerate restaurant development in new markets," said Liz Williams, Chief Executive Officer of El Pollo Loco. "We have the brand power and economics that reinforce our path to national expansion."

The Idaho opening is the latest chapter in El Pollo Loco's national expansion story. The brand plans to open 18 to 20 new restaurants systemwide in 2026, nearly double its 2025 pace, with the vast majority located outside of California. Less than two years ago, El Pollo Loco operated in just seven states. Since then, the brand has added Washington, New Mexico, and now Idaho — three new states in under 24 months. Recent growth also includes increasing its presence in existing markets - such as doubling its Denver footprint earlier this year, growing the Texas market to 34 restaurants and opening its 500th restaurant in October 2025.

The Meridian restaurant is operated by a franchise group with more than 25 years of El Pollo Loco experience in California, attracted to the brand's growth trajectory and the strength of its unit economics. A second Idaho location is already scheduled to open in fall 2026, with three to four additional restaurants planned as the market develops. For the Meridian community, El Pollo Loco represents a new option for high-quality, convenient dining; and for investors and prospective franchisees, it is another data point in a brand that is rapidly demonstrating its ability to succeed well beyond its California roots.

Built on more than 50 years of fire-grilled goodness, El Pollo Loco's [menu](#) ranges from salads and tostadas to burritos and quesadillas, alongside individual and family chicken meals.

If you're interested in becoming an El Pollo Loco partner, visit our [Franchising website](#) to learn more.

About El Pollo Loco

El Pollo Loco (Nasdaq: LOCO) is the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant known for its craveable, flavorful, and better-for-you offerings. Named by USA Today 10 Best Reader's Choice Awards as a "Best Restaurant for Quick, Healthy Food" two years in a row, our menu features innovative meals with Mexican-inspired flavors made daily in our restaurants using quality ingredients. At [El Pollo Loco](#), inclusivity is at the heart of our culture. Our community of over 4,000 employees reflects our commitment to creating a workplace where everyone has a seat at our table. Since 1980, El Pollo Loco has successfully expanded its presence, operating more than 500 company-owned and franchised restaurants across 10 U.S. states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and Washington. The company has also extended its footprint internationally, with licensed restaurant locations in the Philippines. For more information or to place an [order](#), visit the Loco Rewards [app](#) or [ElPolloLoco.com](#). Follow us on [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [Facebook](#), or [X](#).

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Media Contact:

Brittney Shaffer

media@elpolloloco.com

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