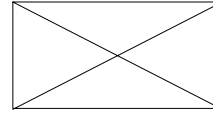


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Friday, November 9, 2007

## Battling the Bell: Taco Bueno developer takes on Taco Bell in its own backyard

Business First of Louisville - by [Terry Boyd](#) Business First Staff Writer

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Taco Bell is about to get a challenge in its own corporate backyard -- from a former Taco Bell operations executive.

**Bueno Development Group LLC** has the Louisville market development rights for Taco Bueno, a 40-year-old Mexican-style casual-food concept, said Kelly Kuhlmann, Bueno Development CEO.

Bueno Development has the rights to build nine Taco Bueno stores in the Louisville/Southern Indiana market during the next five years.

The first is scheduled to open early next year on 10th Street in Jeffersonville, near a Meijer store and the new Orchard Hills retail/apartment complex.

Kuhlmann said he also considered developments at Interstate 65 and Veterans Parkway in Clarksville but couldn't find adequate space.

The Jeffersonville location proved to be fortuitous in that it's close to a business cluster that includes Heartland Payment Systems, which will handle Taco Bueno's payroll, he said.

Kuhlmann said he and Bueno Development partner Clint Haggard, a Dallas-based real estate developer, are looking at several Class-A shopping centers for two sites in Louisville at high-traffic areas such as Hurstbourne Parkway.

The majority of the nine planned stores will be in Kentucky, he said.

The most recent Taco Bueno prototype restaurant costs about \$1.5 million to build, Kuhlmann said.

Bueno Development will use a variety of development strategies, including leasebacks and ground leases, he said.

### Partners could add Lexington territory

Bueno Development's territory includes Jefferson and 29 surrounding counties.

Kuhlmann said that if the Louisville effort is successful, the partners might consider entering the Lexington market.

Kuhlmann's latest venture brings his career full circle.

He started his career working for Taco Bueno, then was recruited by a Taco Bell franchisee.

Until 30 days ago, he worked as vice president, head of operations for GenXmex Foods Inc., a franchisee for Taco Bell in St. Louis.

Kuhlmann and Haggard formed Bueno Development in July, according to the Kentucky Secretary of State's Web site.

"The day I heard (Taco Bueno) was going to start franchising (in 2005), I knew what I was going to do," Kuhlmann said, even though he was working for Taco Bell.

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### Looming showdown with Taco Bell

St. Louis was the first market Bueno Development considered.

Although Louisville wasn't considered until later, "we decided it was best," Kuhlmann said, concluding that if it's a good Taco Bell market, it will be a better Taco Bueno market.

And it is Taco Bell -- a unit of Louisville-based **Yum Brands Inc.** -- that Taco Bueno has in its sights.

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