



NEWS RELEASE

## Del Taco Earns Top Honors for Recent Merger

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Mexican-American Favorite Named "Deal of the Year" by Franchise Times

LAKE FOREST, CA -- (Marketwired) -- 03/22/16 -- **Del Taco Restaurants, Inc.** (NASDAQ: TACO), the second largest Mexican-American QSR chain by units in the United States, announced that the brand was presented with the *Franchise Times* "Deal of the Year" award at the **2016 Franchise Times Finance & Growth Conference** in Las Vegas. Del Taco was selected for this top honor from **12 other Dealmaker finalists**, for its strategic and successful **merger with Levy Acquisition Corp. (LAC) in June 2015**. The transaction, which was valued at \$500 million, resulted in the brand's transition into a public company.

"Del Taco is honored to receive the Deal of the Year award as an acknowledgement of the tremendous hard work and group effort that went into achieving this significant milestone," said Paul J.B. Murphy, III, President and CEO of Del Taco. "This advantageous deal affords our 51-year-old brand new resources to continue menu innovation, improve operations and expand our nationwide footprint."

Strong financials and an experienced leadership team was a winning combination for Chicago restaurateur Larry Levy, Chairman of the Del Taco board, who recognized Del Taco's huge growth potential as a public company. "Del Taco had carved out its own space in the fast-growing category and was driving the QSR-plus experience by serving quality food on par with fast casual, but with the convenience and price of a traditional QSR," said Levy. "This continued commitment to freshness and value is resonating with guests and propelling the brand's national growth."

With a record number of submissions this year, the fourth annual Dealmakers awards recognized the boldest players in franchising involved in notable mergers and acquisitions. The judging panel consisted of franchise industry professionals and merger and acquisition experts.

"Del Taco's deal stands out for the creativity it took to close a very complex transaction," said Beth Ewen, editor-in-chief for *Franchise Times*. "But more important is the impact of the deal on company performance. Del Taco can now use capital for growing and building on a solid capital foundation."

Steven Brake, executive vice president and CFO for Del Taco, who played a pivotal role in the LAC deal, spoke at the Finance and Growth conference to share insights as a representative of a fast-growing, national franchise brand. Mr. Brake also participated on the award finalists' panel and accepted the award on behalf of Del Taco at the gala luncheon, the highlight of the conference. The panelists spoke to a room of approximately 300 attendees, made up of lenders, bankers, franchise executives, multi-unit franchisees, private equity firms and other players in the mergers and acquisitions space, about the influence and impact their respective deals have had on their companies.

#### **About Del Taco Restaurants, Inc.**

At Del Taco (NASDAQ: TACO) all menu items taste better because they are made to order with fresh ingredients including cheddar cheese grated from 40-pound blocks, handmade pico de gallo salsa, lard-free beans slow-cooked from scratch, fresh sliced avocado and marinated chicken and carne asada grilled in the restaurant. The menu, which includes a full line of breakfast, includes classic Mexican dishes such as tacos, burritos, quesadillas and nachos as well as American favorites including hamburgers, crinkle-cut fries and shakes. Del Taco's UnFreshing Believable campaign communicates the lengths the company goes to in order to deliver quality, made-to-order menu items created with freshly-prepared ingredients at unbelievable prices. With nearly 550 restaurants in 16 states, Del Taco serves more than three million guests each week. Stay up to date by following Del Taco on **Twitter**, **Facebook** and **Instagram** or visit **[www.deltaco.com](http://www.deltaco.com)** for more information.

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