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Pollo Tropical Opens on St. Croix With 40 New Employees, Will Operate Daily From 10 a.m. to 12 Midnight

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Manager fist-bumps cashier during grand opening of Pollo Tropical on St. Croix on Thurs. July 22, 2021. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — The double drive-thru of Pollo Tropical was constantly backed up on Thursday, and inside the restaurant kept pace following an opening ceremony of the new business located in Sunny Isle across from the Wendy's Restaurant.

Local leaders, Sunny Isle officials and some residents joined the brief ceremony at the entrance of the new restaurant, where Director of Franchise Mauro Lever provided brief remarks before officially opening the facility to patrons.

On the inside, workers were already preparing meals in the restaurant's kitchen which is visible to customers. The restaurant's interior offers spacious dining, and there are also seats outside for those who prefer the outdoors.

According to Mr. Lever, Pollo Tropical has hired 40 employees as part of its new operation, a boost to St. Croix's hurting economy which was recently [rocked by the events at Limetree Bay](#). He said the owners expended a lot of resources as part of their desire to provide an operation that contributes positively to the local economy. It will open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. to midnight.



Inside Pollo Tropical on St. Croix (Credit: Ernice Gilbert for VI Consortium)

Pollo Tropical is a Miami, Florida-based restaurant chain and franchise specializing in the cuisine of the Caribbean. On the menu you'll find items such as rice, beans, chicken, shrimp, bbq ribs and more. There's also sandwiches, wraps and soups. You'll see family offerings and favorite sides such as fried, sweet plantains, tostones, and macaroni. See the menu [here](#).

Lawmakers present, among them Sens. Kurt Violet, Novelle Francis, Kenneth Gittens and Franklin Johnson, all spoke about the importance of small businesses becoming successful. "As we try to develop and expand the economy of St. Croix, any new business is welcomed," Mr. Violet said. He mentioned the forty new employees and the additional taxes to the government's coffers, adding that "it's definitely going to impact the economy of St. Croix."



Mr. Francis described Thursday's grand opening as "remarkable," and spoke of initiatives he has either spearheaded or supported with the aim of stimulating economic growth on St. Croix — chief among them [the South Shore Enterprise Zone initiative](#).

Office Manager and Head of Leasing at Sunny Isle, Debra Webster, spoke of the arduous process that preceded Thursday's grand opening, and praised government departments and agencies that worked with both Sunny Isle and Pollo Tropical to achieve the feat. Among changes that had to be approved was the re-designation of roads (parking lots turned into drive-thru, and part of a road once leading out of Sunny Isle to the east has been changed to facilitate the drive-thru's exit). That's on top of repurposing what was once a clothing store for restaurant use, Ms. Webster said.

As a side note, Ms. Webster teased a new restaurant in the former IHOP location coming to Sunny Isle soon, though she did not divulge much else.

This reporter had 1/4 chicken with white rice, black beans, macaroni and fried, sweet plantains — and the meal tasted really good.

The opening appears to have been widely successful. A [Consortium video](#) of the ribbon-cutting and tour of the facility had reached over 60,000 people and was watched over 37,000 times as of early Friday. During the afternoon on Thursday, the double drive-thru was backed up and the trend continued into the night, indicating a frantic day for the establishment as St. Croix gets acquainted to its new food spot.

Correction #2: July 23, 2021: Pollo Tropical said information they provided to VIC relative to the hours of operation was incorrect. The hours of operation are 10:00 a.m. to 12 midnight, and not 6:00 a.m. to 12 midnight. We've updated the story to reflect the correct information.

Correction: July 23, 2021

A previous version of this story stated that a new IHOP would soon come to Sunny Isle. That was incorrect. The new restaurant will be coming to the former IHOP location, according to Office Manager and Head of Leasing at Sunny Isle, Debra Webster. We've updated the story to reflect the correct information.