



SBA Success Story, exclusively from KeyBank
Señor Taco

Customer

Lucia Náñez moved from sunny Mexico to Alaska in January 1986. When she arrived in her new home in Anchorage, it was 20 below zero.

“I cried for two weeks,” she said. “I wanted to go home.”

But she soon dried her tears and she and her husband, Jose (“Chepo”) got to work. They had a vision to open a restaurant serving food from their native state of Zacatecas in central Mexico, where Lucia had learned to cook from her family. Chepo’s Fiesta Mexican Restaurant and Cantina opened its doors in Eagle River in May of 1986. Two years later, they opened a second Chepo’s in Wasilla.

With their business booming and their ambition growing, they added Señor Taco Mexican Grill in 2007, a counter service-style restaurant that serves traditional street tacos.

Challenge

The three restaurants the couple opened were in spaces that previously housed other eateries, but the Náñez’ ultimate goal was to build and design their own restaurant. In this way they could create a legacy for their children, who both joined their parents in the day-to-day operations of the business. However, new construction required a bank loan. Despite their years of success and solid track record, they were unable to find a lender who embraced their vision.

Success summary

Company:

Señor Taco

Industry:

Hospitality

Business challenge:

Building a restaurant

Loan purpose:

To buy land and construct building

Loan solution:

SBA 504 loan



If you want someone to help your dreams come true, KeyBank is the place to go. I highly recommend them and look forward to doing business with them in the future.

– Lucia Nájuez, owner, Señor Taco

Solution

After several conversations, the couple turned to KeyBank. KeyBank representatives in Eagle River were impressed by the Nájuez' decades of hard work and their drive to succeed and the Nájuezes were moved by KeyBank's compassion and understanding of their wants and needs.

"They listened to us. They really wanted to see our ideas," Lucia said. "They made us feel very comfortable."

KeyBank helped the family secure a Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 loan to buy the land and build a new restaurant to house their new Señor Taco location.

With KeyBank, their version of the American Dream became possible.

Results

The Nájuezes were so happy with the relationship that was created that they immediately moved their personal and professional banking services to KeyBank and began recommending the bank to family, friends and other merchants.

The couple is eager to keep the relationship going, and there are discussions in the works to erect a new building for the Wasilla Chepo's location.

When they're not planning another expansion, Lucia and Jose are enjoying their new kitchen at Señor Taco, one with all the features they dreamed about: "We wanted something nicer, something that we really enjoyed working in," she said.

Though the couple is in their 60s, they have no intention of slowing down. Although, they have added help in the form of their two children, as well as other family members.

"I love what I do," Lucia said, and she's grateful for KeyBank for helping make it happen.

"That's what we needed – someone to believe in us, somebody to give us the opportunity to grow and show the American people what an authentic Mexican restaurant can be."

To learn more, contact a local KeyBank Relationship Manager or visit key.com/sbalocations.

To learn more about Señor Taco, visit senortacoak.com.

