

# Denver Area Launches Innovation Center to Lead Food Industry Trends

PR Newswire

DENVER (PRNewswire) — A new Innovation Center opening in Centennial provides an exceptional launch pad for new offerings for food and drink professionals. The founders of the test kitchen from Food and Drink Resources (FDR) built it to serve a range of food purveyors from fast food, fast casual and fine-dining restaurants to pre-made meals and drinks sold in retail establishments.

The Denver area is an ideal location for food professionals to test their offerings, because it boasts a large population of frequent diners who favor innovative food trends. These same demographics have made Denver a hub for so-called "fast casual" restaurant chains like Chipotle and Noodles.

FDR Co-Founder Richard Keys says he and his business partners developed the Innovation Center based on the best tools and components that they found after utilizing dozens of similar facilities around the country.

"Test kitchens are extremely important to food innovation, but the facilities we've used almost always come up short. If the kitchen is good, the focus group facilities are lacking, or vice-a-versa. This new facility allows us to cook up the menu offerings like they would be cooked in a restaurant kitchen and to serve them up hot to our testers," Keys said. "With one-way glass and top-notch video capabilities, we can observe and record the diner's reaction to the food. If the feedback is the recipe or food preparation needs to be changed, we can quickly do that and retest it with our focus group."

With built-in photography facilities, restaurateurs can capture the image of their food creation for use on their menus. The facility also has a complete bar where the FDR team can mix and create innovative alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.

The restaurant sector is a very competitive one that requires constant improvement, so Keys said he expects the facility will stay busy and attract food executives from around the nation. "Good restaurants lead and set the course for food and drink trends. We help them do that with our expertise, passion and now this state of the art kitchen and bar. This facility will enable us to take our innovations to the next level."

In addition to Keys, the FDR team includes fellow chefs and innovators Scott Randolph and Zach Calkins. The three partners have launched scores of restaurant concepts, and have contributed to many more. Their clients include most of Denver's fast casual restaurant chains, as well as restaurant companies from around the nation. FDR helps the chains launch new concepts and assists the firms with the menu options they offer at their existing restaurants.

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Published on Food Manufacturing (<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com>)

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"Most diners would be surprised to learn how much thinking goes into developing new menu options," Keys said. "While the food being offered has to make business sense, it first has to taste good and be embraced by consumers. There are many variables to consider, so we work hard to ensure the menu offerings will work on all levels."

### About FDR

*Food and Drink Resources is a Centennial, Colorado-based consultancy. The firm provides consultation to national restaurant chains, retail food and beverage product companies and food and beverage wholesalers. To learn more about FDR and its new Innovation Center, go to [foodanddrinkresources.com](http://foodanddrinkresources.com) [1]*

### Source URL (retrieved on 04/27/2015 - 8:30am):

<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/06/denver-area-launches-innovation-center-lead-food-industry-trends>

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