

Sports Business

Pickleball chain to open 3-acre venue with restaurant, courts in Thornton



A rendering of the new Thornton pickleball venue.

YAEGER ARCHITECTURE/CHICKEN N PICKLE



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A large restaurant and pickleball venue spanning over 3 acres is opening its first Colorado location later this month.

Kansas City, Missouri-based Chicken N Pickle, a company that runs 13 locations blending restaurants and pickleball courts across the U.S., is opening a new location in Thornton's Grove shopping center on June 24, the company said.

The company said it plans to hire 150 people to staff the venue, which will span over 45,000 square feet at 14225 Lincoln St. Dave Johnson, the founder of Chicken N Pickle, owns every location in Chicken N Pickle's portfolio.

The new pickleball and restaurant concept will include a 16,313-square-foot restaurant, a total of eight indoor and outdoor pickleball courts, a terrace, a sports bar, two beer gardens and a game yard featuring pingpong, cornhole, Jenga and life-size Battleship.

The location will also feature three gathering spaces – two indoor and one open-air – with rooftop seating. Other reservable spaces, called The Roost and The Boardwalk, will be available on the main dining floor.

“With its active lifestyle and welcoming spirit, Thornton felt like a natural fit for the next Chicken N Pickle location,” a Chicken N Pickle spokesperson said over email. “Beyond offering great food and fun, Chicken N Pickle is focused on building a space where the community can come together to relax, connect and enjoy shared moments. The team is deeply committed to becoming part of the fabric of the community and looks forward to giving back in meaningful ways while creating what they hope will become a beloved local destination.”

Chicken N Pickle announced that it planned to shift its growth plans to focus on acquisitions and opening public courts by working with cities, the [Kansas City Business Journal reported in May](#). The company previously identified Houston, Phoenix and Denver as key markets for growth.

The pickleball chain hosts 650,000 customers per year with locations in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and Arizona, the company said. The company also frequently hosts fundraisers and supports local charities in the areas where it operates. Last year, it donated \$1.1 million to local nonprofits.

While the company has not specifically identified any other locations in Colorado to expand to, a spokesperson said it is “always looking” to bring the business to new communities in Colorado and beyond.

Chicken N Pickle in Thornton is hosting its grand opening on June 24 with free open play. It will also host other events throughout the week, including doggie day, kid-centric day, teacher appreciation day, adaptive pickleball and a vendor fair featuring local businesses.

Another pickleball venue, The Picklr Thornton, opened at 9923 Grant St. late last year.