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New produce director among Bashas' leadership changes

Three new appointments within Bashas' Family of Stores are bolstering talent among the leadership teams at two of their brands, AJ's Fine Foods and Food City.

After nearly three decades of service, Jayson Mead has been named vice president of AJ's Fine Foods, while Gabe Flores brings 36 years of in-house knowledge to his new role as director of produce for AJ's. At Food City, Jorge Alvarez will oversee the store's made-from-scratch tortilla operations as director of Tortilleria.

"Jayson, Gabe and Jorge have each demonstrated decades of tenacity, growth and commitment to their respective roles within Bashas'," said Edward (Trey) Basha, president of Bashas'. "Recognizing these talented leaders for their exceptional work ethic and loyalty reinforces the value we place on nurturing growth opportunities for ambitious team members."

Mead has been with the grocer for 28 years, starting as a courtesy clerk in 1993. Since then, he has held more than 10 different positions within the store and management team, from cashier to produce clerk, produce manager, store director, assistant director of operations and director of operations at AJ's Fine Foods. Most recently, Mead oversaw deli, bakery, produce and meat for all formats.

As vice president of AJ's Fine Foods, Mead will be responsible for leading long-range strategy, brand positioning and performance for the brand. He will guide the AJ's team to deliver a superior shopping experience and culinary adventure for guests as the AJ's format prepares for future expansion.

When Flores first joined the Bashas' team in 1986, he gained well-rounded exposure to the business as a clerk in numerous departments, ultimately settling into a role as produce clerk. By 1990, he had earned his first promotion into management and served as produce manager for Bashas' before becoming produce and floral manager at AJ's Fine Foods. Since then, he has held numerous roles in management and earned awards for his dedication to AJ's, including Produce Manager of the Year in 1994 and 1999 and store director of the Year in 2004 and 2007.

Alvarez brings a blend of culinary, grocery and operational experience to his new role with Food City's Tortilleria. His initial stint as deli clerk in 2011 quickly led to a training role, then a promotion to deli manager. He later was promoted to deli department specialist and merchandiser before earning his most recent position as director of deli and foodservice for Bashas'.