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Telling One Cohesive Story

Nouria Energy Corp.'s new retail brand represents a strategic repositioning for the company By Danielle Romano

At a Glance

nouria

Location: 449 Sabattus St., Lewiston, Maine

Size: 6,000 square feet (2 acres of land)

Unique features: Fresh-food offers designed to provide customers with a one-stop shopping experience, nouria café, baked goods made in-store daily, a drive-thru

IN TODAY'S EVOLVING CONVENIENCE STORE landscape, operators know that adaptation and cohesion play important roles in longevity and growth. Nouria Energy Corp.'s new retail brand — nouria — is proof of this ideology, as it represents a strategic repositioning for the company.

"We knew that our brand stands for more than fuel, but that our focus had been fragmented across many different brands, with each location named either after the town it operated in or with a generic name," said Joe Hamza, chief operating officer for retail and marketing. "We wanted to create a brand cohesion that would help customers know what to expect when entering one of our nouria locations."

As consumers' wants, needs and shopping habits continue to change, nouria is a critical step in the Worcester, Mass.-based company's evolution to a vibrant and relevant retail brand, according to Hamza. However, given the geographic disparity of its current locations, Nouria Energy maintains a keen appreciation for the uniqueness of each of its markets and understands that consumer shopping needs are not homogenous.

Nouria Energy owns 137 convenience stores in five New England states, 116 of which are company-operated and 21 of

which are operated by commission and leased dealers. The company also owns and operates 47 car washes under the Golden Nozzle brand.

"By effectively implementing this strategy, we believe that the nouria brand can be viewed as uniquely differentiated and more consumer-relevant," Hamza explained.

Inspired Offers

After nearly three years of planning, nouria made its debut in Lewiston, Maine, on Sept. 11, 2018. A grand-opening celebration took place in November. This location was selected for the inaugural nouria store because of its prime positioning — it's situated at a major intersection in Lewiston and nestled between Lewistown High School and Bates College.

Occupying nearly 2 acres of developed space, including 6,000 square feet of store space, Nouria Energy designed the building starting from the outside, and then worked its way inside.

Unique architecture, differentiated in-store offerings and eye-catching, inspiring artwork reflect the retailer's quest to appeal to younger adults and female consumers.

"The in-store design, color scheme, lifestyle and community-inspired graphics,



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[and] brighter, more spacious layout are all designed to help deliver the ultimate customer experience through an inviting environment,” Hamza told *Convenience Store News*.

Additionally, nouria’s fresh-food offering is designed to provide customers with a one-stop shopping experience by providing grab-and-go items, snacks, beverages and the essentials for creating healthy, fresh, take-home meals.

Recognizing that “shopping experience” is a huge point of interest for consumers today — and as a means of inviting customers to relax and enjoy their meals — the inaugural nouria store introduces café nouria. This concept encompasses full-service hot coffee, espresso drinks and iced coffee; a wide variety of pastries; parfaits and fruit cups; other beverages; and breakfast sandwiches. All items are available in-store or via the store’s drive-thru.

Other unique offerings available at the Lewistown nouria store are:

- High-quality, all-natural meats and poultry;
- A wide assortment of fresh vegetables;
- Artisan bread, rolls and desserts that are freshly baked in-store every day;
- Amato’s, the most sought-after Italian food brand in New England, whose menu consists of sandwiches, pizza and salads;
- Indoor seating for 26, set against the front windows;
- Outdoor seating for 12;
- Free Wi-Fi; and
- 16 fueling positions offering Irving fuel, which Hamza said is Maine’s favorite fuel brand.

Nouria Energy opened its second nouria store in Westborough, Mass., on Dec. 28, 2018. The company plans to upgrade and rebrand all of its company-operated stores to this new concept over the next five to seven years, Hamza shared with *CSNews*. **CSN**



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