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FMI/GMA Sign Collaboration Agreement

Steven C. Smith, President and CEO of K-VA-T Food Stores and Chairman of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), and Douglas R. Conant, President and CEO of Campbell Soup Company and Chairman of the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), signed a Joint Memorandum of Understanding Collaboration Agreement at the recent FMI Midwinter Executive Conference in Orlando, Florida. The agreement calls for greater collaboration and is focused on enhancing manufacturer-retailer engagement to achieve improved supply chain efficiency, better ways to serve consumers and more efficient use of association and member resources.

"FMI will leverage the strengths of our organization with those of GMA to find innovative ways to collaborate, eliminate duplication and provide all our members with more robust programs and services," said Leslie Sarasin, FMI President and Chief Executive Officer. "We will create a policy multiplier on issues of critical concern by harnessing the collective wisdom of the industry through this partnership."

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Bruno's Files Voluntary Chapter 11

Operations to Continue While Company Restructures

Bruno's Supermarkets, LLC, Birmingham, AL, owner and operator of Bruno's and FOOD WORLD, filed a voluntary petition for relief under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Alabama, to restructure the company's operations to focus on its core strengths. The company intends to work with all of its constituencies to reach mutually acceptable resolutions and to exit bankruptcy as expeditiously as possible. Bruno's operations

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1000!

Publix Celebrates Milestone Opening

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GEORGE W. JENKINS, Founder
PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS, INC.
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CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY In January, Sabra broke ground on a state-of-the-art, 110,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility in Chesterfield County, Virginia. The factory will provide 260 new jobs by 2010, and reflects a capital investment of $59.3 million dollars. The plant will produce Sabra's award-winning dips and spreads. Pictured turning the first shovels of earth are: Sabra Chairman Art Warren, CEO Ronen Zohar, and Virginia Secretary of Trade and Commerce, Patrick Gottschalk.

Annual Food Editor Survey Reveals Top Food Stories of 2008

Rising Global Food Prices Claims No.1 Spot

When asked to recall the top food-related stories of 2008, the nation's food editors focused on issues with global significance. Topping the list was the spike in food prices across the world, followed by the tainted milk scandal in China — a crisis that spanned five continents.

The sixth annual year-end survey was conducted by Hunter Public Relations, one of the nation's leading public relations agencies serving the food and beverage industry. Hunter PR reached out to more than 900 food editors and bloggers across the country and asked them to rate the top ten food-related stories of 2008.

The biggest food story of the year was decidedly the rise in food prices around the world. Countries across the globe faced food crises due to high oil prices, growing demand, lower food reserves and unexpected weather patterns. As a result, the hunger rate grew rapidly, especially in Haiti, Cairo, Niger, Malaysia, Senegal, Indonesia and many Latin American countries. Rice prices hit a record high in Asian countries, and this caused major concern since rice is a staple for the world's hungry.

Close behind in the No. 2 spot was China's tainted

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Gasoline Prices Remain Consumers' Top Concern

Gasoline prices affect overall spending behavior more than any other economic factor – including the slowdown in the economy and the meltdown in the financial markets – according to a new report examining consumer attitudes and perceptions about gas sales released recently by the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS).

The lone good economic news for consumers over the past six months has been a huge drop in gas prices, yet 59 percent of consumers say that high gas prices have a "very significant" effect on their spending behavior, substantially above the 45 percent who said the same in the 2008 consumer survey. To a much lesser extent, consumers said they were concerned about a slowdown in the national economy or a recession (41 percent), rising food costs and rising home energy costs (each 31 percent) and the credit crunch and lending crisis (21 percent).

Even with gas prices at the beginning of 2009 approximately $1.40 per gallon below last year's levels, consumers remain incredibly price sensitive, with 70 percent saying that price is the most important factor in deciding where to purchase gas, and more than half of all consumers (51 percent) reporting that they will drive 10 minutes out of their way to save as little as 5 cents per gallon.

Also in the report's findings,

Continued on PAGE 23

Wal-Mart Foundation Donates

$5.7 Million to Support the Creation of Green Jobs

The Wal-Mart Foundation will award to the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Veterans Green Jobs grants totaling $5.7 million to support the creation of green jobs in the U.S. This announcement comes on the heels of a newly released Global Insight study revealing that 10 percent of job growth in the U.S. is likely to be green by 2038, the fastest growing sector in the country.

"We understand how important building a green workforce is to the future of America, and the Wal-Mart Foundation is committed to helping create job growth that also sustains our environment," said Margaret McKenna, president of the Wal-Mart Foundation. "Realizing that one of the greatest barriers to creating green jobs is the lack of a trained workforce, the Wal-Mart Foundation's grants will help break through this barrier and enable more American workers to be trained and ready to contribute in this growing sector."

Additionally, the Wal-Mart Foundation is awarding nearly $750,000 to Veterans Green Jobs to support the development of four training sites which will help veterans develop green job training skills. The training sites - which will be built in Washington, Colorado, New Mexico and Louisiana - will assist many of the nearly two million returned or returning military personnel facing the challenging task of reintegrating into civilian life.

"This generous grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation is enabling us to continue building a green workforce in cities nationwide," said Manny Diaz, president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and mayor of Miami. "Given that 85 percent of all green jobs are expected to be located in cities and their metro areas in the coming years, this grant could not come at a better time."

"Veterans Green Jobs empowers vets to become leaders in the restoration of America's environ-

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Unified Grocers President and CEO

Pepperdine to Honor Alfred Plamann

With 2009 Best Friend Award

ALFRED A. PLAMANN

Alfred A. Plamann, president and chief executive officer of Unified Grocers, Inc., has been named recipient of the 2009 Best Friend Award by Pepperdine University Graziadio School of Business and Management, which will be presented at the Sixth Annual Sovereign Capital Management Friends of George Graziadio Golf Tournament.

Made possible by a $50,000 lead gift from Sovereign Capital Management, a San Diego-based real estate investment company with assets across the United States, the tournament and awards ceremony will be held April 6 at the Trump National Golf Club in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA.

Honoring benefactor and namesake the late George Louis Graziadio, Jr., founder and chairman of Imperial Bank, the annual invitational golf competition helps raise individual and company contributions that support student scholarships and other business school initiatives. The Best Friend Award recognizes accomplished leaders who share George Graziadio's commitment to higher education and who advance Pepperdine University's mission through example and service.

Plamann was named president and chief executive officer of Unified Grocers in September 1999 when Los Angeles-based Certified Grocers of Cal-

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Research Shows

Consumers Seek More Self-Service Options

According to a survey of U.S. consumers commissioned by NCR Corporation, unprecedented price wars and product promotions by retailers may be saving consumers money, but also costing them more in terms of personal time.

The research reveals that bargain conscious American consumers are spending more time evaluating less familiar brands, switching among stores to capitalize on deals, and also scheduling their shopping trips to coincide with the arrival of paychecks.

As a result, retailers stand the best chance of winning consumers' business if they can make things faster and easier through more in-store help from staff, faster checkout, and seamless integration of store offerings with Internet and mobile technologies.

"People assume that in an economic downturn the consumer is only motivated by price, but this research shows that retailers also need to deliver on changing service expectations that consumers say they value as well," said Mike Webster, chief strategy and communications officer for NCR Corporation. "Consumers in these uncertain times are clearly showing a preference for retailers that can meet their expectations through self-service options on the web, mobile and in store. These technologies are playing a growing role in helping retailers deliver competitive advantage."

The research findings, unveiled at this year's National Retail Federation (NRF) show, reveal that the efforts by retailers to drive sales through discount and promotions are having a major effect on shoppers' purchasing decisions and behavior.

- 53 percent are using the Internet more frequently to research products and prices.
- 46 percent want to receive price comparisons, product reviews, coupons, promotions and store sales information online or via email.
- Almost half, 49 percent, are switching between retailers, 'shop hopping', to get better value.

'Shop hopping' also takes the form of more 'just in time' trips in order take advantage of deals and manage their cash flow.

- 80 percent said that they are buying discount or sale items.
- Over a quarter, 26 percent, are

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■ PUBLIX TOPS THE BOTTOM LINE FOR HEALTHIER BABIES. The March of Dimes has announced Publix Super Markets, Inc. as the number 4 team nationwide out of 20,000 corporate teams for March for Babies 2008. One of the 10 largest-volume supermarket chains in the United States, Publix raised an impressive $3.2 million during its three-week, in-store fund-raising campaign. Pictured are some of those Publix associates that helped make this possible.

Publix Tops the Bottom Line for Healthier Babies

The March of Dimes has announced Publix Super Markets, Inc. as the number 4 team nationwide out of 20,000 corporate teams for March for Babies 2008. One of the 10 largest-volume supermarket chains in the United States, Publix raised an impressive $3.2 million during its three-week, in-store fund-raising campaign.

The company's 998 stores and some 141,000 employees received donations from customers that purchased a paper cutout and wrote their own name or the name of a baby to display inside the store. Publix associates coupled with family and friends also joined the Publix Team and supported local March of Dimes March for Babies campaigns by providing food, volunteers, and individual fund raising efforts. Publix raised $2.1 million in the Florida Chapter, and $983,219 locally in the South Florida Division.

"Publix's ability to engage its customers at the grassroots level is at the heart of the campaign's fund-raising success," said Paula Howell, March of Dimes East Region Vice President. "As a leader among our top corporate teams with associates from their five-state foot print, Publix is helping the March of Dimes raise awareness of the growing crisis of premature birth and supporting our efforts to find the answers and give hope to families in need." In their 13-year involvement as a sponsor and March for Babies team, Publix Super Markets has raised more than $29 million for the March of Dimes.

McLane Announces First Nationwide Cold Chain Solution

Launches FRESH on the GO Fresh Food Program

McLane, has announced that its FRESH on the GO™ program is now available to convenience stores across the continental United States. FRESH on the GO, which takes advantage of McLane's one-of-a-kind cold chain solution, gives retailers the ability to offer their customers the widest variety of fresh products – such as yogurts, fruits, cheeses and ready-to-eat salads – at the most competitive prices possible.

"Our customers are excited about the ability to offer the types of fresh products that better match today's consumer tastes and healthy lifestyles," said Tony Frankenberger, vice president of merchandising at McLane. "With FRESH on the GO, retailers can now easily offer a wide range of fresh products at the lowest possible cost without being tied to fixed order quantities and inflexible product selection. It's a win-win."

FRESH on the GO represents an advancement in perishable goods distribution. To make FRESH on the GO a reality, McLane has invested more than $1 billion in a nationwide supply chain infrastructure that includes its custom cold chain solution. This solution addresses critical challenges associated with product freshness, food safety and proper temperature storage and transport throughout the delivery cycle.

Specific McLane Cold Chain advantages include:

- 20 highly automated distribution centers across the U.S. to ensure close proximity to stores and delivery to every ZIP code in the U.S.
- Over 8 million square feet of warehouse space with more than 2.5 million combined square feet of refrigerated and frozen space
- A modern fleet of 2,000 multi-temperature trailers to maintain proper temperatures while in transit
- Custom cold chain systems, procedures and documentation to ensure product integrity and safety in every part of the supply chain, including loading/unloading, verification, sorting, storage, transport and presentation in the customer location
- Comprehensive, multi-step monitoring process that constantly measures, records and validates temperatures on the loading dock, in the distribution center, while in transit and upon delivery
- Third-party food safety endorsement of McLane's entire cold chain system, procedures and documentation process from Silliker, Inc., the leading global food testing and consulting lab

FRESH on the GO offers convenience store operators unprecedented ease of ordering and flexibility. All FRESH orders arrive at McLane's warehouse just before each regular delivery, ensuring optimum freshness and subsequent shelf life. Designed with the retailer in mind, FRESH on the GO's comprehensive product selection boasts small case packs and/or single sell solutions wherever practical.

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■ Doing the Most Good for 25 Years

■ WORKING TOGETHER - Tanimura & Antle and the Salinas Valley Salvation Army have been working together doing good for 25 Years. Pictured together at the T & A headquarters in Salinas, CA are: Gary Tanimura, Col. Joe Posillico, CEO Rick Antle,Captain Phil Smith, Mike Antle and Keith Tanimura.

The Salvation Army Salutes Tanimura & Antle For 25 Years Of Support

The Salvation Army made a special visit to Tanimura & Antle Produce Company on the morning of February 2 to pay tribute to their many good friends within the Tanimura & Antle Family. Leading the recognition at the T&A offices located at 1 Harris Road was The Salvation Army's Division Commander, Maj. Joe Posillico.

For 25 years Tanimura & Antle Produce Company has provided goods and services so that The Salvation Army in Salinas is able to serve hundreds of families each year during the holiday season. Every Christmas, Tanimura & Antle donate the 30,000 square foot warehouse space for The Salvation Amy's annual Christmas toy and food giveaway as well as 28,000lbs of produce given each year in direct contributions to this effort. In addition, Tanimura & Antle support staff provide much needed assistance in warehouse management and control making possible for hundreds of food boxes, turkeys and thousands of toys to be distributed to needy families every Christmas.

The relationship between the Antle family and TSA has existed since the days of the dustbowl when the company's founders found a friend in The Salvation Army.

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Change Requires Action... On Your Part

By: **JOHN ANDERSON**

When I was eleven years old, our family moved into a house that had a detached garage set back from the house. My father helped me put a backboard and basket up over the garage door, and from that day forward I spent every possible hour out back shooting a basketball. I don't really want to say how many years ago this was, although a campaign slogan of the day was "I Like Ike."

I was good at getting a basketball through the hoop. Sometimes I would shoot free throws until I sank 50 in a row, or more. When the neighborhood boys gathered for a game, I was always selected quickly; I had a good jump shot and hook shot and probably others I have long ago forgotten. My "eye-hand" coordination, to use an adult term, was very good.

As an adult I was introduced to paddleball (which evolved into racquetball), and that eye-hand coordination allowed me to become a good club player. I developed shots I could hit from anywhere on the court that would roll out of the corners, giving my opponent no opportunity to return the ball. I was in good physical shape and could move side to side and forward/backward very well. I was quite sure I had found a sport I could play the rest of my life.

And I have. Three years ago I began teaching racquetball to one of my associates, Eric Smith. Eric is twenty years younger than I am, and an excellent all-around athlete, but none of that did him any good....I could still kill the ball in the corners at will. For a year every game was really just a lesson in shots, moving, strategies. Sometime in the second year Eric began getting his arms around racquetball, and our matches became somewhat competitive, but he was still fairly easy to beat if I just concentrated on my shots. As year three evolved, Eric's game kept getting better and better, and the tide began to turn. I became aware that I no longer can move side to side quickly, and my shot making just isn't up to my own past standards. Eric started winning some of the matches, and then more and more. I jokingly looked for my "1980 game" to reappear.

I still love racquetball, and I still play, but Eric wins about 75% of the time now. There are things I could do to improve my odds – I could get serious about getting back in shape, including losing a very unneeded twenty pounds. I could practice more. I could play the game with more intensity, as I did in 1980. But do I want to do any of those things? No. I want to win, but I don't want to do the things I know I must do if I am going to improve my game.

Some of the independent grocers I know so well run their businesses the way I play racquetball. Over the last twenty or thirty years they have seen their thriving stores challenged with new competition, and these newer stores have gradually changed from minor irritants to major headaches. And how have the independent grocers responded? By doing exactly the same things they have done for years. We talk constantly about changing to meet the demands of 2009, but change means hard work, and investment, and different employees, and learning new ways. And while they tell me they will consider changes, they will resist even as all the numbers turn south. It is amazing to talk with a retailer whose sales, customer counts, and margins are all dropping who has decided to just keep on doing what he has done for years, in the hope that "things will turn around." Business for these retailers is going to turn around at about the same speed as my racquetball game.

My brother Bill is a year younger than I am. Bill loved flowers and plants, and he became in time a world-famous botanist. But he hated the basketball court, because we were always bouncing the ball into the flowers and shrubs. In the fall of 1959 I left home for college. On the day of my departure Bill took down the basket over the garage, thus ending forever basketballs bouncing into his plants. Perhaps I should recruit Bill to talk with my retailer friends and explain that if you expect change, you have to do something.

JOHN ANDERSON is a financial and operations consultant to senior management of many companies, with a particular emphasis on the grocery industry since 1991. You can reach him at , "http://www.jandersonco.com" , or by phone at 954-385-8632.

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CALIDAD QUE INSPIRA CONFIANZA

Rally Your Employees in Tough Times: Point Toward a Better Future

By: **CHRIS WITT**

The economy isn't in the best shape. Maybe you've noticed. Your employees certainly have.

The bad news – job losses, home foreclosures, bankruptcies, and a tanking stock market – comes, in the words of Shakespeare, not single file but in battalions. And prognostications by economists (how bad will it get? how long will it last?) provide little comfort. "This has translated into less productivity at work," according to a report by CNN, "because of anxieties about salary, heavy workload, and job security."

What's a boss to do?

There is no easy answer, no quick fix, no one solution. But business leaders at every level – from CEOs to line managers – can do something to address their employees' worries and to rekindle their motivation. They can give a speech.

A speech in difficult times can be anything from a formal company-wide address to casual remarks at the start of a new shift. But the intent is always the same: to keep employees focused, motivated and working hard.

To make your speech more motivating, follow these guidelines:

- **LEAD WITH THE FACTS.** Be as open, honest and forthcoming as possible. Give a complete account of the situation as objectively as you can. If you hold anything back or if you are evasive, you will feed your employees' fear and compromise your credibility
- **ACKNOWLEDGE PEOPLE'S FEELINGS.** You don't want to turn your speech in to a therapy session, handing out Kleenex and encouraging people to have a good cry. But if you ignore your employees' feelings, they will think that you're out of touch or, worse, that you don't care. Acknowledge their feelings in a general way, using broadly applicable words like difficulties, worries, concerns, anxieties or fears. Acknowledge what people are feeling and move on. Say, if not it words, then by your empathy, "I care."
- **INTERPRET THE FACTS.** In spite of what is often said, the facts don't speak for themselves. It's your responsibility as a leader to gather the facts (all the facts), evaluate them, analyze them and come to some understanding of what they mean. And then it's your responsibility to share your understanding with your employees. Just don't tell them, for example, sales have declined 30 percent; tell them what a 30 percent drop in sales means. Help them understand what's going on.
- **CREATE A POSITIVE METAPHOR.** "Yes, these are tough times," the manager at a defense contracting company told his employees, "but we've been through tough times before. We're battle-tested veterans. We don't give up. And we leave no one behind." That metaphor – battle-tested veterans who don't give up – resonated with his employees and renewed their determination. Be sure that the image you choose is one that you personally believe in and that your employees can adopt.
- **MAKE HOPE SENSIBLE.** You can't counteract concrete negative images – homes being foreclosed, people losing jobs, businesses closing down – with abstract positive concepts like perseverance, resolve and dedication. If you want people to believe in hope, you have to make it sensible, which means according to the dictionary "perceptible by the senses or the mind." The best way to show people images of hope is by telling them stories.
- **BE ACTION ORIENTED.** It's counterproductive at best to say, "You're wrong to think like that" or "You shouldn't feel that way." You can't change how people think or feel – only they can do that – but you can change how they act. And by changing how they act, you create the possibility that they'll change their thoughts and feelings. Almost a century ago William James, the philosopher and psychologist, made an assertion that has been long since been proven: "Actions seem to follow feeling, but really action and feeling go together; and by regulating the action, which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling, which is not."
- **DON'T GO OVERBOARD.** This isn't the time – people aren't in the mood – for pep rallies and rah-rah-isn't-everything-great celebrations. Tell anxious people to cheer up and put on a happy face, and they'll be less, not more, likely to do so. Be ebullient, and you'll be unbelievable. Instead, be confident, positive and purposeful.
- **SAY WHAT YOU WANT AND EXPLAIN WHY THEY WANT IT TOO.** Tell your employees in a short, simple sentence exactly what you want them to do. Then show them how doing what you want will help them achieve what they want. If you want them to work longer or harder or in a different way, you have to figure out how they will benefit from doing so. What's in it for them?
- **"BE THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE."** The words of Gandhi are as true today in the corporate world as they were 50 years ago in India. Your employees don't simply listen to your words. They filter everything you say through their experience of you. Your actions, attitude, and interactions with them are more than an example for them to follow; they are also the lasting message people will take away from your talk.
- **TELL THE TRUTH.** Part of why the economy is in such sad shape – not the entire reason, but part of the reason – is because some prominent leaders have been mistaken, unreliable or downright dishonest. People aren't as willing as they once were to take the word of their leaders. You have to prove your trustworthiness. If you say anything that your listeners doubt, they will doubt everything you say.

As a leader, it's part of your job to rally your employees in trying times and point them toward a better future. What better way to do that than with a well-executed speech?

If the challenge of giving such a speech – positive, inspirational and truthful – seems overwhelming, consider this: Your employees want you to succeed. They don't want to slog through their days, depressed and anxious. They want you to help them keep hope alive.

As an executive speech coach with more than 25 years of professional experience, Chris Witt is author of the newly released book, "Real Leaders Don't Do PowerPoint," and founder of Witt Communications. He helps CEOs gain board approval and company-wide support for initiatives, empowers newly promoted managers, helps technical experts simplify their presentations to win multi-million dollar contracts, and enables entrepreneurs to grow their businesses through the power of effective speaking and presenting. For more information about his services, call 619-295-8411 or visit http://www.wittcom.com

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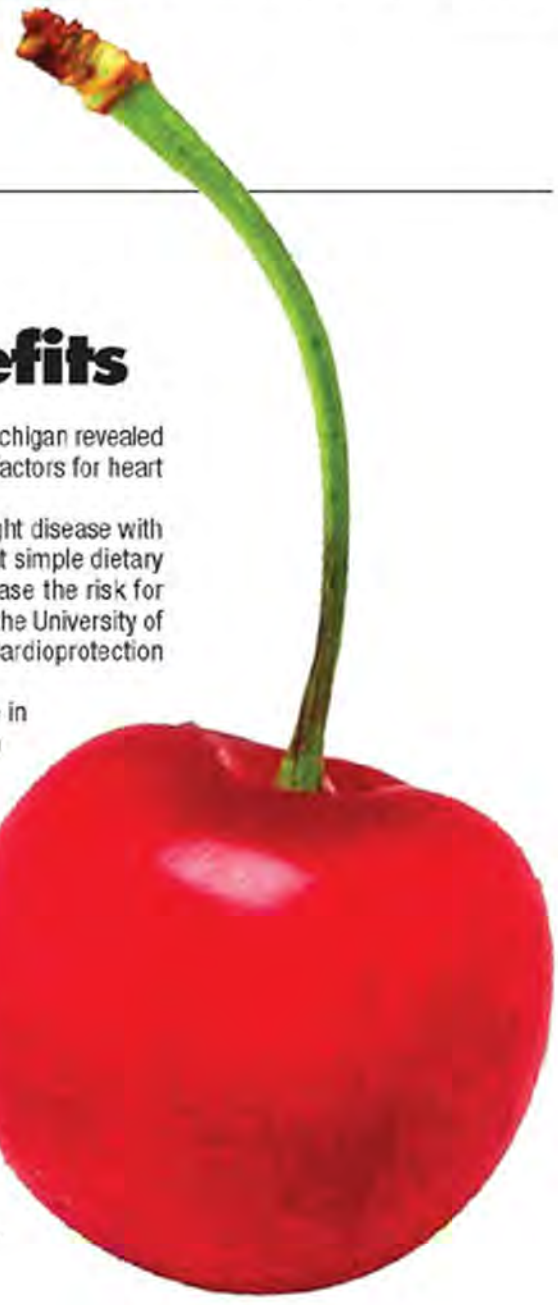

'America's Super Fruit'

Cherries Offer Homegrown Health Benefits

Cherries are not only good for you, but they're also on trend as a homegrown "Super Fruit." According to recent data, more than 9 out of 10 Americans want to know where their food comes from, nearly 80 percent say they're purchasing "locally produced" products, and the majority are defining "local" as made in America.(1,2) And cherries deliver.

About ninety-five percent of cherries consumed in the U.S. are grown here, with most coming from Michigan, Wisconsin, Utah, Washington, Oregon, Pennsylvania and New York.

Food and nutrition experts, including registered dietitian and host of the Food Network's "Healthy Appetite" Ellie Krieger, say the homegrown advantage, coupled with powerful health benefits, make cherries "America's Super Fruit."

"Cherries offer some of the most important attributes people are seeking in their foods today," said Krieger. "While exotic berries may be 'trendy,' as a chef and dietitian I choose cherries, an all-American favorite, because they deliver a powerful combination of good nutrition, local sourcing and environmental sustainability."

As February is American Heart Month, it's no wonder it's also National Cherry Month. The antioxidant compounds — called anthocyanins — that give cherries their RED color continue to demonstrate heart-health benefits. Recent studies from the University of Michigan revealed that cherry-enriched diets in animals lowered multiple risk factors for heart disease.

"As we increasingly look for ways to improve health and fight disease with foods, it's exciting to see more and more studies suggest that simple dietary changes, such as including tart cherries, could help decrease the risk for heart disease," said Dr. Steven Bolling, a cardiac surgeon at the University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center who also heads the U-M Cardioprotection Research Laboratory.

In addition to being grown in the U.S., tart cherries come in dried, frozen and juice forms so they're readily available to enjoy all year long.

Krieger says being able to make foods a habit is an important factor in sustaining a healthful diet. "Creating a routine with foods you like is one of the most successful strategies for a long-term, healthful diet plan," said Krieger. "And, with heart disease continuing to be the number one killer in America, being able to incorporate heart-healthy foods like cherries in almost any meal or snacktime makes it easy and enjoyable to protect your heart."

Dairy&Deli

Wyke Farms Launches New Design and Format

With Re-sealable Packaging

Wyke Farms, the UK's largest independent cheese producer and milk processor, has unveiled a new line of re-designed, re-sealable packaging for the company's range of award-winning farmhouse cheddar. The new packaging features a zip-lock seal for functionality as well as contemporary colored labels with a picturesque landscape of their Somerset farm.

"At Wyke Farms our number one priority is serving consumers the best cheddar possible, and re-sealable packaging is a modern approach for preserving the delicate flavor and texture of an otherwise traditional mature and vintage cheddar," said Richard Clothier, third generation family member & managing director, Wyke Farms.

Through consumer focus groups, Wyke Farms identified that shoppers actively seek out brands in re-sealable formats. As a result, the new packaging has been designed to preserve freshness and help consumers enjoy their cheddar longer. In terms of aesthetic stimulation, the range of bold colors and horizon landscape portrait were chosen to help the packaging stand out on the shelf and increase the products' overall in-store presence.

"We feel this change is a testament to Wyke Farms' unique ability to innovate without compromising on quality or the traditional values that have served our company so well over the past 100 years," added Clothier.

Smithfield Unveils New Tub Lunchmeat Varieties

Smithfield has expanded its popular Deli Thin Tub Lunchmeat with three new unique flavors: Holiday Season Ham, Maple Honey Turkey Breast and Rotisserie Flavored Chicken Breast.

"Our Tub Lunchmeat line of eight flavors, including three new additions, gives consumers a variety of delicious choices," said Eric Esch, senior director of marketing at Smithfield. "Our new Holiday Season Ham contains many of the spices found in our spiral sliced hams so consumers can enjoy that holiday ham experience year 'round. We use real honey and maple syrup to give the Maple Honey Turkey Breast a natural sweetness. And our Rotisserie Flavored Chicken Breast has a traditional slow-roasted taste. We expect these new flavors to be well-received by consumers."

The Smithfield Tub Lunchmeat line is merchandised in the refrigerated case. Suggested retail is $3.49 per 9 ounce unit.

What's In Store 2009 Reports Shopping Venue Trends

The leading factor that determines where consumers buy their food is "good value" or "low prices," according to What's In Store 2009, the trends report from the International Dairy•Deli•Bakery Association™ (IDDBA). As consumers cut down on the number of shopping trips they make to save gas money, supermarkets face stiff competition from supercenters that allow people to do multiple types of shopping – food, clothing, and household – all in one trip. Here are some of the venue trends discussed in What's In Store 2009:

SUPERMARKETS

Total sales in 2007 for supermarkets doing $2 million or more in annual sales reached $535.4 billion, according to Progressive Grocer's 75th Annual Report of the Grocery Industry. Willard Bishop's The Future of Food Retailing predicts that, by 2012, traditional supermarket sales will grow 1.8%, but their market share will drop to 35.9%. Supermarket fresh perishables departments posted a sales increase of 3.2%

SUPERCENTERS

According to Willard Bishop, grocery and consumables sales at supercenters are in second place for all food store formats. Supercenter sales in 2007 reached nearly $136 billion and own a 15.0% dollar share of retail food sales, projected to increase to 21.7% in 2012. But some observers are noting a slow shift of consumers away from supercenters. The move is attributed to the Internet and specialized efforts by other retail segments to attract customers. Focusing on products and services not available at a supercenter is the key to winning customers.

CONVENIENCE STORES

Convenience store overall sales reached $577.4 billion in 2007, but had a $1.4 billion decrease in profits, mostly due to increased credit card fees, according to the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS). There were 146,294 convenience stores in the United States in 2006. Convenience stores have gone all out to expand their foodservice operations. Some operators share space with national quick-service restaurant chains, while others are increasing their offerings of fresh grab-and-go and made-on-site items.

CLUB STORES

J.M. Degen & Co.'s Supermerchants: Membership Warehouse Clubs Industry Overview, shows 2006 sales totals for the format at $116.6 billion, an 8.5% increase over 2005. Perishables account for 37% of the food and sundry segment of warehouse club sales, compared with 42.4% for food stores overall.

DOLLAR STORES

Sales of grocery and consumables from dollar stores reached $15.5 billion in 2007, a market share of 1.7%.

ONLINE SHOPPING

According to the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau, all retail food and beverage stores brought in $752 million from e-commerce sales in 2006. This represents a 53.2% increase over e-commerce sales the previous year. However, sales still are just 0.1% of total retail food and beverage sales of $534 billion. While some online grocery shopping services have fallen by the wayside, many stores are finding success with their own online shopping and delivery services.

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OnYums Flavored Snacks Get a New Kick

Rudolph Foods has teamed up with The Original Louisiana Hot Sauce brand to add a new treat to its line-up, Louisiana Hot OnYums. This partnership with the makers of The Original Louisiana Hot Sauce further drives home the company's commitment to adding more variety to its growing roster of crunchy snacks. The new flavor meets consumer demand for spicy snack flavors.

Rudolph Foods will roll out its Louisiana Hot flavored OnYums in 3.5-ounce bags, which will be initially available in dollar stores. The snack maker will soon introduce a 2-ounce size bag of Louisiana Hot OnYums, which will be available at convenience stores, in addition to an 8-ounce bag.

"We are constantly looking for new snacks the entire family can enjoy," said Mark Singleton, VP of Marketing and Sales. "For those who like a little spice in their life, Louisiana Hot OnYums will provide just that – a crunchy snack that has just the right kick to it."

Smaller Just Got Better

New Kellogg's Frosted Mini-Wheats Little Bites

The Kellogg Company continues to help moms keep their kids full and focused for school by introducing Frosted Mini-Wheats Little Bites™ which contain whole grains and 6 grams of fiber in each serving. Available in two flavors, Chocolate and Honey Nut, Frosted Mini-Wheats Little Bites contain the same nutritional benefits as Frosted Mini-Wheats®, while the smaller biscuit size is easier for younger kids to enjoy.

Each serving of Frosted Mini-Wheats Little Bites contains 6 grams of fiber — that's more than 20 percent of the daily recommended intake in just one bowl.

"The smaller biscuits in Frosted Mini-Wheats Little Bites cereal are convenient for moms to serve to younger children at home or on the go," said Kirsten Neely, Kellogg Company spokesperson. "Moms can appreciate the whole grains and fiber inside the cereal, while the kids will enjoy the taste of the Chocolate and Honey Nut flavors."

New Frosted Mini-Wheats Little Bites cereal will have a suggested retail price of $3.89.

Kellogg's Conducting Test That Could Redefine The Cereal Aisle

Kellogg Company has begun a more consumer-friendly, space-saving box for its cereal brands beginning today in Detroit that could potentially redefine the cereal aisle. Kellogg Company is testing these new boxes with participating retailers in Detroit to gain valuable consumer and retailer insights that could inform a potential U.S. rollout.

To better meet the needs of consumers and retail partners, the company is testing a new, space-saving box that offers the same amount of the foods people love with less packaging. By optimizing the box configuration, Kellogg Company is able to reduce the package size without decreasing the amount of food. This test marks the most significant innovation in cereal boxes since the 1950s.

"Kellogg Company is proud of our 100-plus year commitment to innovative thinking and consumer relevancy," said Kim Miller, vice president, Morning Foods Marketing, Kellogg Company. "The test of this new space-saving packaging is part of our ongoing commitment to identify solutions that help us meet the needs of our retail partners and consumers."

The test will occur over a six-month period with participating retailers in Detroit.

"Metrics for evaluating success of the test include consumer acceptance, retailer feedback and expected internal efficiencies," added Miller.

The new packaging is designed to better meet consumers' desire for more space in their pantries. In addition to helping consumers save space at home, the new boxes being tested also could aid retailers in providing more varieties of products for consumers.

"The new test boxes will contain the same amount of the food people love and will fit more easily into consumers' pantries," Miller said. "The new compact packaging also allows for more efficient use of retailer space and enables retailers to offer a wider variety of products."

Not only is the new packaging expected to help consumers save space in their pantries and help retailers make efficient use of shelf space, but it could also help protect and preserve natural resources by using an average of eight percent less packaging material per cereal box.

Sorbee Adds Two New Flavors

Cherry Pomegranate "Immunity" and Wild Strawberry "Energy" to its Crystal Light Sugar-Free Line

Fans of Crystal Light® sugar-free hard candies, which are produced and marketed by Sorbee International, LLC via a licensing partnership with Kraft Foods, will be happy to learn that the sugar-free candy leader has added two delicious, new flavors to its popular product line. And those who didn't know there was such a thing as Crystal Light sugar-free hard candies are in for a sweet surprise.

Like its original two SKUs, the new flavors Cherry Pomegranate "Immunity" and Wild Strawberry "Energy" mirror popular flavors found in Kraft's Crystal Light® beverage line, and both provide enhanced benefits along with delicious, sugar-free enjoyment.

"People of all ages are looking for candy that delivers outstanding flavor and other benefits," said Barry Sokol, executive vice president for Philadelphia-based Sorbee International who, like a modern day Johnny Appleseed, carries the Crystal Light sugar-free hard candy story (and lots of samples) with him everywhere he goes. "When people hear the Crystal Light name, they know right away that these hard candies are sugar-free and that they're going to taste great."

Champagne Caper Vinaigrette

Great New Taste From Briannas

The Briannas family has introduced a delicious new vinaigrette to its line of premium dressings. Our all natural Champagne Caper Vinaigrette will please the most discriminating palates with its delectable blend of champagne vinegar, honey, Dijon mustard, and crushed capers. It will not only dress your salads in good taste, but it will also enhance the flavors of grilled or roasted meats and vegetables. This all natural flavor contains no high fructose corn syrup, trans-fats or gluten and as with all of Briannas dressings, it is made with pure, heart healthy canola oil.

The Del Sol Food Company introduced the new flavor at the Fancy Food Show in San Francisco in January.

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New Cherry 7UP Antioxidant

7UP Gives Consumers a New Reason to Fall in Love

During Valentine's Month the 7UP brand is romancing consumers with its latest creation - Cherry 7UP Antioxidant. The pink-hued, crisp and refreshing beverage combines the delicious flavor of 7UP with a hint of cherry flavor and the bonus of antioxidant Vitamin E.

"Cherry 7UP Antioxidant gives consumers a refreshing way to enjoy more of the antioxidants they are looking for," said Ian Norton, brand manager of marketing for 7UP. "People want to fall in love with beverages that taste great and provide a fun way to get benefits. And that's exactly what Cherry 7UP Antioxidant delivers."

The new Cherry 7UP Antioxidant includes 10 percent of the recommended daily intake of Vitamin E per eight ounce serving. Cherry 7UP Antioxidant is available now in both regular and diet versions and, like all 7UP products, is 100 percent naturally flavored and caffeine free.

The nationwide launch of Cherry 7UP Antioxidant will be supported by an integrated marketing campaign featuring TV and print advertisements. Consumers can also visit "http://www.7UP.com" and download a coupon for $1 off a 12-pack of Cherry 7UP Antioxidant.

Cherry 7UP Antioxidant is available in 12-pack, 2-liter and 20-ounce sizes, as well in 8-ounce trial cans.

Amazing Grass

Organic Berry Green Superfood Drink Powder

By offering the antioxidant equivalent of 7 servings of fruits and vegetables, the new Berry Green SuperFood drink powder from Amazing Grass provides health-conscious consumers with a delicious and convenient means to achieve the recommended 5 to 9 daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Berry Green SuperFood unites a full spectrum of alkalizing green SuperFoods, antioxidant-rich fruits including acai and goji berries, support herbs, and Maca to provide a powerful dose of whole food nutrition. This powdered SuperFood drink mix has a robust berry flavor and is gluten-free, soy-free, vegan, low in calories and fat, and has no added sugar.

Berry Green SuperFood is a complete raw food powder that has a high concentration of naturally-occurring enzymes, carotenoids, phytonutrients and antioxidants that work synergistically to fight free radicals, remove toxins and repair damaged cells. Ultimately, this Amazing Grass product contains every amino acid, vitamin, and mineral necessary to sustain human life. Since the human body is designed to obtain nutrition from whole foods, the body is able to efficiently and rapidly absorb the nutrients in Berry Green SuperFood and quickly convert them into fuel.

Berry Green SuperFood features powerful antioxidants including those derived from organic acai, a purple berry sustainably sourced in the Amazon Rainforest.

Berry Green SuperFood is sold in an 8.5 ounce canister that includes 30 eight-gram servings (scoop provided) and a 15-count box of individual serving packets.

New Super Blend

Sun Shower Mocha Cappuccino

It's a big thumbs-up from consumers for Sun Shower's™ new Super Blend Mocha Cappuccino. Among consumers who tasted-tested the new nutritious and tasty beverage, over 90% said they liked it "extremely well" or "very much."

"While coffee and tea drinks have become more and more popular, many consumers are concerned about their high calorie content and lack of nutritional value," said Chris Newounder, chairman and CEO of NBI Juiceworks producers and distributors of Drenchers™ and Sun Shower™ brands products. "Those who taste-tested Sun Shower's™ new Super Blend Mocha Cappuccino not only raved about its great taste, but they are amazed that has only 90 calories per bottle and is packed with antioxidant vitamins. With consumer comments such as 'It's like I'm cheating on my diet, but I'm not,' we know we have a winning product."

Sun Shower™ Super Blend Mocha Cappuccino contains Lifeguard™ Protection, a fortification package with powerful antioxidant vitamins A, E and Zinc. Each 9.5 ounce bottle has only 90 calories, roughly 50 percent lower than the leading brands.

PepsiCo's SoBe Lifewater Introduces-

First-Ever, Zero-Calorie, Naturally Sweetened, Enhanced Water

SoBe Lifewater fans across the country will soon be able to get the great taste and personality of SoBe Lifewater in three, zero-calorie, naturally-sweetened flavors. Hitting stores shortly, new zero-calorie SoBe Lifewater is the first enhanced water beverage in the U.S. market to feature the groundbreaking, all natural zero calorie sweetener, PureVia™, made from a highly pure extract of the Stevia plant leaf.

PureVia is the result of innovative technology that isolates 97 percent pure Reb A, which is derived from the sweetest and best tasting part of the stevia leaf.

"Consumers have long anticipated a natural sweetener, and are seeking healthier beverage choices. Zero-calorie SoBe Lifewater pairs the zero calorie all natural sweetener PureVia with delicious flavors to deliver the great taste SoBe fans expect," said Rick Gomez, VP-Hydration, Pepsi-Cola North America Beverages. "We're elated to be the first beverage in the country to feature PureVia, and SoBe Lifewater fans will appreciate that they don't have to compromise on taste to cut back on calories."

The three new zero-calorie flavors - Fuji Apple Pear, Black and Blue Berry, and Yumberry Pomegranate – redefine the water beverage category. In addition to a full day's supply of Vitamin C, each bottle of zero-calorie SoBe Lifewater also provides 20% of the recommended daily value of Vitamin E as well as 10% of the recommended daily value of Vitamins B6, B12, Niacin (B3) and Pantothenic Acid (B5.) Each also will be infused with a unique blend of herbal ingredients. The all-new sleek packaging design exudes the hipness of the overall brand.

Nestea Expands Portfolio with Red Tea Pomegranate Passion Fruit

Nestea® has announced the addition of Red Tea Pomegranate Passion Fruit to its line of ready-to-drink ("RTD") iced teas. Recently selected by retailers as one of the "Top 12 Cool New Products," at the 2008 National Association of Convenience Stores Show, Nestea Red Tea Pomegranate Passion Fruit will be available nationwide beginning in February.

Nestea Red Tea is derived from the South African Rooibos ("royboss") plant with the sweet and refreshing taste of Pomegranate and Passion Fruit. Long valued as a source of antioxidants, red tea is naturally caffeine-free. With only 50 calories per eight fl. oz. serving, Nestea Red Tea Pomegranate Passion Fruit contains no artificial colors and all-natural fruit flavors for immediate revitalizing refreshment.

"This exotic new flavor is a significant addition to our existing tea portfolio, and blends the natural goodness of red tea with pomegranate and passion fruit flavors," said Penny McIntyre, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Coffee and Tea for Coca-Cola North America.

Nestea Red Tea Pomegranate Passion Fruit will be packaged in straight-wall 20-ounce PET bottles and 12-packs of 16.9-ounce PET bottles.

Odwalla Launches Reduced-Calorie Quenchers

Odwalla, Inc. is adding two new reduced-calorie juice drinks to its product portfolio.

Odwalla® Mojito Mambo™ natural juice drink with vitamins C & E and Odwalla Pomegranate Strawberry natural juice drink from concentrate with vitamins C & E are refreshing nutritional beverages with one-half the calories and sugar of other leading premium juice drinks. They are fortified to provide 50 percent of the Daily Value of antioxidant vitamins C and E.

Sweetened with the right combination of Truvia™ natural sweetener, organic evaporated cane juice and fruit juices, Odwalla Mojito Mambo and Odwalla Pomegranate Strawberry each has 50 calories per 8-oz. serving for consumers who are seeking a natural reduced calorie and reduced sugar beverage.

"In the Odwalla tradition, flavor comes first, and Odwalla Mojito Mambo and Odwalla Pomegranate Strawberry are delicious, refreshing juice drinks," said Chris Brandt, Odwalla Vice President of Marketing. "In addition, they offer 50 calories per 8 oz serving and excellent antioxidant power."

The new Odwalla quenchers are made with natural ingredients and fortified with 50% of the Daily Value of antioxidant vitamins C and E in each serving. Like all Odwalla products, Mojito Mambo and Pomegranate Strawberry do not contain any artificial flavors, colors, sweeteners, or preservatives.

Odwalla Mojito Mambo and Odwalla Pomegranate Strawberry are available in 450 mL (15.2 fl. oz) grab-n-go recyclable plastic bottles at a suggested retail price of $3.29.

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Market Street Rolls Out Red Carpet for Coppell-Lewisville Store's Grand Opening

When value-priced foods, gourmet ingredients and healthy snacks are what you fancy, North Texas shoppers will find nothing better than the newest Market Street Coppell-Lewisville store. United Supermarkets' world-class food concept store, located at 700 N. Denton Tap Road in Coppell, TX, opened its doors on January 14. The 70,000 sq. ft. store features an in-store health care clinic, drive-thru pharmacy, sushi bar and "A Taste of Market Street" – a mini-version of Market Street found within the confines of the parking lot and designed for quick access and convenience, complete with fuel station, bakery, gourmet meals to go, fresh produce and many other items found inside the main store.

Additionally, the Market Street Coppell-Lewisville grand opening served as an introduction to the supermarket chain's new Tag Labeling Program, making it easier for Market Street guests to live a healthier lifestyle in 2009. Designed by Market Street's own dietitians, the labeling system will help guide guests in making food decisions to improve health as well as manage or prevent disease. Market Street DFW Nutritionist Alicia Brown was on hand to illustrate the new program and provide complimentary shopping assistance to guests wanting to develop healthier eating habits without expanding their food budgets.

"The Market Street Coppell-Lewisville store is the perfect place for North Texans to start living better this new year," said United Supermarkets CEO Dan Sanders. "We pride ourselves in having a wide selection of the finest produce, gourmet meats and cheeses and healthy foods that meet every shopper's needs at affordable prices. For guests with health and wellness concerns, our dietitians have combed the aisles and simplified the selection process with color-coded nutritional labeling that easily assists guests toward heart-healthy, gluten-free, low-fat, sugar-free or organic products. It's a shopping experience you won't find with any other supermarket chain, and we're excited to be the new neighborhood grocer of the Coppell-Lewisville area."

WORLD-CLASS FOOD CONCEPT STORE – The new 70,000 sq. ft. Market Street Coppell-Lewisville location opened its doors on January 14. It is the third store for the company in the Metroplex area.

A large contingent from the Lewisville Area Chamber of Commerce was on hand for the opening-day ceremonies.

Market Street is a unique market that combines the everyday groceries store guests need with the specialty items, whole-health/gourmet products and pre-prepared foods they want. The first store opened in Wichita Falls in 1998, and other stores followed in Amarillo and Lubbock. Market Street now has five DFW stores located in Frisco, Allen, McKinney, Colleyville and Coppell-Lewisville is the third Market Street location to open in the Metroplex within the past year, bringing more than 1,200 job opportunities to the North Texas area. Market Street Plano, currently under construction at W. Park Blvd. and Preston Road, is tentatively scheduled to open in April.

On the following Saturday, Market Street's Family Fun Day highlighted the Coppell-Lewisville store's grand opening. In addition to the Radio Disney promotions and live music in Peet's Coffee Shop, Disney star and former North Texas teen actress Debby Ryan (The Suite Life on Deck) made a guest appearance. Throughout the two-week grand opening celebration, Market Street guests could enter to win a 42-inch TV, Market Street gift cards, portable media players, Disney World family vacation and many other prizes.

Everyone lends a hand to make sure the Grand Opening Ribbon gets cut.

"With the Coppell and Lewisville communities whole-heartedly welcoming Market Street to the area, we're doing our part to say, 'howdy,'" said Curtis Comer, store director at Coppell-Lewisville's Market Street. "Our grand opening celebration is the perfect time for North Texans to experience what other Market Street guests in other communities have come to expect from their neighborhood grocery store."

Among Market Street's many features are:

- A full-service meat-seafood counter
- An extensive array of fresh produce (including a large organic complement)
- A whole-health center stocked with natural, organic and bulk foods, as well as the leading supplement brands
- Full-service floral department
- An extensive selection of wine and beer from around the world
- Dish Kitchen Store
- Fresh sushi bar
- Peet's Coffee and Tea shop
- Keva frozen drink/smoothie bar
- A large bakery emphasizing made-from-scratch pastries, desserts and artisan breads
- An in-store health care clinic offering treatment for most common minor illnesses, including allergy-related symptoms, colds and flu, strep throat, vomiting and diarrhea, minor burns and skin rashes/infections. Additional services include glucose testing, pregnancy testing, school/camp physicals, diabetes screening, blood pressure checks and common vaccinations.
- Drive-thru pharmacy
- A wide variety of great foods from several in-store restaurants available for dine-in or take-out, with seating to accommodate

SIT-DOWN DINING AREA.

■ TEAM MEMBERS – This good-looking group of store associates is ready . . . and eager to serve North Texas shoppers visiting their new world-class store.

more than 125 people for in-store dining

- Competitive pricing

Now in its 93rd year of operation, United Supermarkets, LLC, is a Texas-based, family-owned grocery chain with stores in 289 markets across north and west Texas. A self-distributing company with its headquarters and distribution center in Lubbock, United currently operates 49 stores under three distinct formats: United Supermarkets, Market Street and Amigos United.

■ A TASTE OF MARKET STREET – A mini-version of Market Street is designed for quick access and convenience, complete with fuel station. Customers can find fresh produce, gourmet 'meals to go', bakery, and many other items found inside the main store.

■ OPENING-DAY SHOPPERS didn't take long to discover the many delicious items in the Hot Foods and Deli departments.

■ DELICIOUS FRESH PIZZAS MADE TO ORDER.

■ THE VINEYARD FEATURES a wide selection of imported and domestic wines.

■ WORLD CLASS selection of chilled beers and ales.

■ The chain's new Tag Labeling Program makes it easier for Market Street shoppers to live a healthier lifestyle.

■ LIVING WELL – The new store features a whole-health center stocked with natural, organic and bulk foods, as well as supplements.

■ ExpressCare In-Store Clinic offers treatments for common minor illnesses and a number of additional services.

Winn-Dixie Pilots New SaveRite Concept

Store Designed to Meet Customers' Needs in Tight Economy

In an effort to continue better serving its customers, Winn-Dixie Stores, Inc. on January 7 opened a prototype store in its existing SaveRite location on Jacksonville's Westside. The completely redesigned store, located at 1012 Edgewood Avenue, features everyday low pricing on thousands of items, plus monthly locked-in specials and special price-drop items in a warehouse format.

"In designing this concept, we spent a great deal of time reviewing our customers' shopping preferences. We wanted to make sure that the new store would be a true fit for the neighborhoods it serves," said Dan Portnoy, Winn-Dixie's chief merchandising and marketing officer. "We focused only on those items and services that were most important to our customers, and, as a result, we were able to aggressively cut costs and lower prices throughout the store."

In addition to enhanced produce and meat departments, the 48,000 sq. ft. store also has an in-store pharmacy where customers will find 30-day supplies of more than 400 generic drugs for only $3.98 every day. Other features include newly designed warehouse-style shopping carts and popular staple items available for purchase by the case.

SaveRite closed the store on Tuesday afternoon, allowing time for associates to work through the afternoon and evening to lower thousands of prices. The company welcomed area leaders and residents to a preview on Tuesday evening where SaveRite donated $5,000 to Paxon Improvement Association. To celebrate the store's new format, SaveRite also held a Family Fun Event on Saturday, January 10.

■ **SAVE THE SAVE RITE WAY – Jacksonville (Florida) City Councilman, Warren Jones (center) gets a little help as he cuts the ribbon marking the official opening of the new SaveRite store.**

■ **FALLING PRICES – Store Associates lower prices in preparation for the SaveRite opening.**

■ **MAE McKIVER, a longtime Jacksonville resident, was the first customer to enter the newly-remodeled SaveRite on January 7. She arrived at the store at 4:50 a.m. and waited outside the doors until the store opened at 8 a.m. Once inside, she received a free toaster and a gift card from Winn-Dixie chairman of the board, CEO and President Peter Lynch.**

■ **SaveRite Store Director Kevin Morbach (left) and Winn-Dixie Chairman of the Board, CEO and President Peter Lynch (right) present a $5,000 check to Paxon Improvement Association member Moses Thompson on January 6 to mark the grand opening of the SaveRite on Edgewood Ave. North at Commonwealth Ave.**

■ **WINN-DIXIE Chairman of the Board, CEO and President Peter Lynch (right) playfully challenges SaveRite store director Kevin Morbach during the grand opening of the SaveRite on Edgewood Ave. North and Commonwealth Ave. The store has completed a complete remodeling and now features everyday low pricing on thousands of items, plus monthly locked-in specials and special price-drop items in a warehouse format.**

■ **JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCILMAN Warren Jones addresses a crowd of business and neighborhood leaders at the grand opening of the SaveRite on Edgewood Ave. North at Commonwealth Ave. Behind Jones is Winn-Dixie regional vice president Cheryl Forehand. SaveRite is a division of Jacksonville-based Winn-Dixie Stores, Inc.**

■ **VERNON FRANKLIN, a regular customer at the SaveRite on Edgewood Ave. North, smiles as Katrinna McCrary rings up his purchase. Franklin made the first purchase moments after the store officially reopened at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, January 7. Franklin waited in line for almost an hour-and-a half to be among one of the first customers in the remodeled store.**

Bruno's Files Voluntary Chapter 11

Continued from PAGE 1

are expected to continue uninterrupted throughout the bankruptcy process and while the company executes on its reorganization plans.

The company also appointed Jim Grady, Senior Director with Alvarez & Marsal, as Chief Restructuring Officer, effective immediately. Grady replaces Kent Moore, the company's Chief Executive Officer since October 2, 2007, who has resigned to pursue other opportunities. Grady is an experienced executive in developing and implementing strategic financial and operational turnaround plans.

"While Bruno's remains a business with strong potential, a committed group of Teammates, a well-recognized brand and a proud heritage, we are also a company that is challenged by the tightening credit market and the difficult market environment for retailers, especially grocery stores," said Grady. "After careful consideration of all available alternatives, the company determined that filing for Chapter 11 was a necessary and prudent step that allows us to operate our business without interruption while continuing to implement our restructuring. The action we are taking provides the company with the most effective means to restructure our balance sheet and position Bruno's to compete more effectively. We are committed to serving our customers and maintaining regular operations as we undertake this process."

The company believes that its cash from operations will be sufficient to meet its normal business obligations. To augment its current cash position, Bruno's is working to negotiate a commitment for a debtor-in-possession financing package.

Bruno's will seek the Court's approval to continue to honor its customer policies and programs, including gift cards, returns/exchanges, promotions, and loyalty programs to minimize any impact of the restructuring on the company's customers.

"Our management team is committed to making this restructuring successful and we are also committed to satisfying our customers' expectations by continuing to offer them the services, products and inspired ideas to enhance their busy lifestyles," said Grady. "We are grateful to all of our Teammates for their hard work, loyalty and dedication to Bruno's."

Bruno's has retained Alvarez & Marsal, a restructuring and corporate advisory firm, to assist the company throughout the restructuring process.

FMI/GMA Sign Collaboration Agreement

Continued from PAGE 1

"Collaboration is the key to success when it comes to confronting the challenges and opportunities facing our industry, and GMA has no more important ally than FMI," said Pamela Bailey, GMA President and CEO. "We look forward to working with our good friends at FMI to build on that legacy of friendship and success, and to help our member companies achieve and maintain sustainable business growth in 2009 and beyond."

Under the terms of the agreement, the association's industry affairs agenda will be strengthened through the creation of a joint industry affairs-industry relations leadership group known as The Trading Partner Alliance (TPA). The TPA will develop a common agenda on supply chain efficiency issues, the application of information technology, the adoption of environmentally-friendly business practices and other issues. That unified agenda will be executed jointly by the FMI and GMA staffs, and overseen by the boards of directors of both organizations.

The agreement also calls for increased collaboration on public policy, scientific and regulatory affairs activity. In addition, both organizations agreed to hold at least one joint board of directors meeting annually and seek greater synergies with regard to meetings and conferences that benefit the food, beverage and consumer packaged goods industry.

The term of the agreement is from January 2009 to December 2010.

Retailers Go 'All in for Savings' at –

Southeast Wholesale Foods Buying Event and Annual Casino Night Extravaganza

■ GRAND PRIZE WINNER – The evening's top prize of a trip for two to Paradise Island in the Bahamas was won by Rafael Castro, Tropical Supermarkets #3 & #5 and City Market. Rafael is pictured accepting his prize from Southeast Wholesale Foods' V.P. Kevin Darcy, General Manager Tony Palacios, and Store Improvement Mgr. Rafael Padierne.

■ Jesus Prieto, Fernando Gonzalez, Victor Gonzalez, El Gallego Market, with Javier Valentin, Rico Rice, and SWF Buying Show master of ceremonies, Rafael Padierne.

■ PAN AMERICAN GRAIN (RICO RICE) Senior Director of Sales Javier Valentin [center], pictured with SWF retail counselors: Osvaldo Moure, Gaston Diaz, Gilberto Diaz, Osmil Alonso and Carlos Guerra.

■ LUCKY TWO-TIME WINNER, Fernando Gonzalez, from El Gallego Market, came up big the second time around when he won this LCD TV.

■ Chuck Thyng, Unified Wholesale Grocers [center] pictured with SWF retail counselors: Bob Feeley and Osmil Alonso.

■ FERNANDEZ GONZALEZ, El Gallego Market, was the lucky winner of an MP4.

■ FAUSTO BORGES, Advantage Sales & Marketing, was the lucky winner of a PND K3 GPS Navigation System.

■ MARGO RAPP, Viking Maritime, with the winner of a Wii Bundle.

■ CECILIA ACOSTA, El Palacio Supermarket, was the lucky winner of a 3-CD changer audio system.

8th GROUP BUYING EVENT AND CASINO NIGHT • FEBRUARY 6 • HILTON MIAMI AIRPORT HOTEL

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The Odds Always Favor the Southeast Wholesale Foods Retailer

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SOUTHEAST WHOLESALE FOODS

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SOUTHEAST WHOLESALE FOODS

8th Group Buying Event and Annual Casino Night Extravaganza • Hilton Miami Airport • Miami, Florida • February 6, 2009

Victor Gonzalez and Fernando Gonzalez, El Gallego Market; Jose Damian, Dixie Foods with SWF V.P.-Domestic Sales Pepe Rohaidy.

SOUTHEAST WHOLESALE FOODS' General Manager Tony Palacios surrounded by some of his company's loveliest Donna Alufohai, Patty Gomez, Carla Winnegar, and Nikki Schick.

SOUTHEAST FOOD DISTRIBUTION President/CEO Rich Bauer, Kevin Darcy, and Marc Goodman, CFO.

Tony Palacios [left] and Carlos Rodriguez [right] pictured with Teo Lama and Cesar Toribio, Plaza Lama Supercenters, Dominican Republic, with Angel Valerio, Federated Group.

Gina Hausen, SWF buyer and Javier Valentin, Pan American Grain pictured with Angel, Rey, Vladimir, Arturo and Richard from Bravo Supermarkets, and Edwin Rodriguez, Universal Supermarket.

Carlos Rodriguez, SWF welcomes Laudicia Staines and Maxie Staines, Staines (Belize).

SOUTHEAST WHOLESALE FOODS' Tony Palacios, Dave Leja, Gaston Diaz, and Kevin Darcy.

SOUTHEAST FOOD DISTRIBUTION President/CEO Rich Bauer, Pepe Rohaidy and Rafael Padierne pictured with Leo Menendez and Carlos Linares, Government Discount.

SWF's Rafael Padierne pictured with the Diaz Supermarket Group.

Carlos Rodriguez, SWF [second, left] greets Christian Mora, Juan Mora and Victor Mora, World Access Trading.

Rafael Padierne and Kevin Darcy with Osvaldo Ortega, Arie's Supermarket [center].

Gina Hausen, Southeast Wholesale Foods [center] and Javier Valentin Pan American Grain [second, right] pictured with the Presidente Supermarket's group.

Tony Palacios [left] and Carlos Rodriguez [right] pictured with Teo Lama and Cesar Toribio, Plaza Lama Supermarket, Dominican Republic.

He always seems to have his hands full – this event was no different. Here, SWF's Gaston Diaz is pictured with the lovely Roberta Fort.

Buying (and Selling) Action!

8th GROUP BUYING EVENT AND CASINO NIGHT • FEBRUARY 6 • HILTON MIAMI AIRPORT HOTEL

Annual Food Editor Survey Reveals Top Food Stories of 2008

Continued from PAGE 2

milk scandal, which began in August 2008 after tests indicated that China's leading dairy companies produced milk containing the industrial chemical melamine. Tainted baby formula was responsible for killing six infants and causing harm to tens of thousands of individuals. Recalls of milk-based products made in China spread to dozens of countries across the globe, including Britain, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia and the United States.

The salmonella outbreak in raw tomatoes took the No. 3 spot. FDA officials warned consumers about the salmonella, which was said to have infected 145 people and caused at least 23 hospitalizations in 16 states. McDonald's pulled sliced tomatoes from its restaurants, and Winn-Dixie Stores and other supermarket chains pulled tomatoes off their shelves as a precaution.

These top three stories won by a landslide vote among those surveyed. Several of the additional top food stories reflect our nation's growing concern with the nutritional standards of the foods we consume. The remaining top ten food stories of 2008 are:

No. 4: Supermarket Chains Offer More Locally Grown Food: Supermarkets are now offering a wider variety of locally grown produce and meat. Wal-Mart plans to spend $400 million on locally grown foods in 2009, making it the largest player in the locally grown market.

No. 5: New Labeling Laws: The USDA implemented new labeling laws requiring retailers to include country-of-origin labeling for produce, meat and chicken products.

No. 6: Big Food Companies Adopt Nutrient Standards: As part of the "Smart Choices Program," many of the country's largest food and beverage companies have agreed to use the same logo on their packaging to denote products meeting certain nutritional guidelines. Currently, the participants are Kraft Foods, Coca-Cola, Wal-Mart, General Mills, ConAgra Foods, Kellogg, PepsiCo and Unilever.

No. 7: Jalapeno Peppers Test Positive for Salmonella: More than 1,200 people across 44 states contracted salmonella poisoning from jalapeno peppers, prompting the FDA to issue a nationwide warning.

No. 8: Paul Newman Dies: Legendary actor and philanthropist Paul Newman passed away. He was one of the founders of Newman's Own, a company that produces a wide variety of foods.

No. 9: NYC Restaurant Regulations: New York City issued a trans fat ban across all restaurants. Additionally, a judge ruled that all NYC restaurants with at least 15 outlets nationwide must post calorie count information.

No. 10: New Levels of Alarm Associated With High Salt Intake: The FDA is considering the removal of salt from its list of Generally Recognized as Safe foods.

Survey participants were also asked what they thought food companies should make their No. 1 priority for the coming year. In line with the economic crisis of 2008, editors overwhelmingly believed that food companies' top priority should be offering budget-friendly meal options.

Gasoline Prices Remain Consumers' Top Concern

Continued from PAGE 2

consumers sent mixed messages with respect to how much they understand the retail sale of gas. Consumers said that retailers make 40 cents per gallon profit – about 10 times what retailers actually make – yet when asked what they thought was a "fair" profit, they said 80 cents per gallon.

Consumers also grossly overestimated the percentage of fueling stations owned and operated by the major oil companies. With BP, ConocoPhillips and ExxonMobil all currently divesting their retail stations, less than 2 percent of all fueling stations remain operated by major oil companies, yet consumers thought that 63 percent of stations were owned by the major oil companies. The consumer confusion is likely because approximately 55 percent of retail gasoline facilities sell one of the top 20 brands of fuel.

Even though consumers believe that petroleum retailers make much more than they actually do, they don't blame retailers for high gas prices. When asked to identify from nine options which were the most significant factors in causing high gas prices, 61 percent cited "manipulation of prices by OPEC," 58 percent said "lack of government oversight" and 50 percent blamed "oil speculators." At the bottom of the list was "gas stations increasing profits," with only 26 percent citing this as a reason. Further, when asked what they thought was the number one reason for rising prices, only 4 percent of consumers blamed gas stations.

There is good news in the results for retailers who seek to grow in-store sales by driving gas customers inside the store. Nearly one in four consumers (24 percent) who purchased gas at a convenience store also bought coffee at the store in the past month, while 14 percent said that they bought a sandwich when they purchased fuel in the past month.

Consumers Seek More Self-Service Options

Continued from PAGE 2

making more frequent shopping trips to take advantage of promotions.

- 21 percent are shopping at stores with more flexible hours and 17 percent are increasing trips in line with pay day.

The economic downturn is affecting decisions made in store as consumers switch to more unfamiliar products. While people are spending more time in store making decisions, they also want to get out of the store faster.

- 63 percent are trading down to 'own or store brand' or generic products rather than 'branded goods'.
- 44 percent are preparing meals for special occasions, rather than eating out.
- 43 percent are buying ingredients from scratch, rather than ready meals.
- 33 percent believe the tendency of other people to spend more time shopping is making stores busier.
- 44 percent report and increased desires to pay for shopping more quickly.

With in-store shopping patterns changing, a large majority of shoppers expect staff to help them in store.

- 73 percent believe that it is important that store employees are available to help locate products.
- 55 percent believe it is important that employees ensure discounted items are not out of stock.
- 48 percent believe staff advice on discount and promotions is important.

Critically, the research reveals that shoppers believe that a range of multi-channel and in-store self-service technologies play a vital role in meeting service needs and they will differentiate between retailers that offer these technologies and ones that do not.

- 72 percent said they are more likely to shop with a retailer that gives consumers the flexibility to interact easily via online, mobile and kiosk self-service channels versus a retailer that does not.
- Around half, 49 percent, believe that kiosks that show them where to find products in stores would be convenient.
- 43 percent believe receiving discount offerings and product information on large screens in store would be convenient, while 39 percent want self-return solutions for processing returns quickly.

According to NCR, retailers using self-checkout systems experience decreased customer queue time of 40 percent and increased checkout speed of 20 percent. Adopting a broader range self-service technology frees up more staff to improve service and revenue in stores, while delivering greater cost savings.

$5.7 Million to Support the Creation of Green Jobs

Continued from PAGE 2

ment, economy and communities. We provide them with the finest education and training opportunities in fast-growing green jobs sectors," said Brett KenCairn, executive director of Veterans Green Jobs. "Veterans tell us repeatedly that being able to serve their country through meaningful, restorative work is the most healing thing they could experience post-combat. We appreciate the Wal-Mart Foundation for this generous donation, and are looking forward to seeing the positive impact that it will have on our nation's service members."

Pepperdine to Honor Alfred Plamann

Continued from PAGE 2

ifornia, Ltd. merged with United Grocers, Inc. of Portland, Oregon. Prior to the merger, he served as president & CEO of Certified Grocers of California for six years and also spent four years as senior vice president of finance and chief financial officer.

Prior to joining Certified in 1989, Plamann had a distinguished 13-year career with Atlantic-Richfield Company (ARCO) in Los Angeles.

Currently he serves on the Board of the Food Marketing Institute as well as the National Cooperative Grocers Association. He serves on the Washington, D.C.-based National Cooperative Bank Board of Directors. In February of 2004, he was inducted into the CGA Hall of Achievement.

He holds a B.S. in accounting and real estate from the University of Colorado and an M.B.A. from the Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Nancy, live in the Los Angeles area

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#Opening

Publix Opens New Store in Fort Myers

Publix Super Markets, Inc. opened a new store in Fort Myers, FL on Thursday, February 5. The new 52,700 sq. ft. Publix at San Carlos is located at 16950 San Carlos Blvd.

The store features a number of full-service departments, including: Bakery, Deli and Fresh Seafood. In addition, the store includes a 3,500 sq. ft. Publix Liquors. Store Manager, Jeff Kennedy, heads a staff of approximately 100 Publix associates.

Days and hours of operation are Monday-Saturday: 7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m., Sunday 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Publix Liquors is open Monday-Saturday from 10:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., and on Sunday from 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

THE TEAM THAT MAKES IT HAPPEN at new Publix #1331 in Fort Myers. Store Manager Jeff Kennedy pictured with his key department heads.

KEY PRESENTATION – Publix #1331 Store Manager Jeff Kennedy [second, left] receives the key to his beautiful new store from Publix CFO David Phillips with assistance from [left to right] District Manager-David Barth, Regional Director-Joe Taylor, and Lakeland Vice President-Tom McLaughlin.

Store Opening

Publix

George W. Jenkins
(1907 – 1996)

The Man Who Began it All

George W. Jenkins, founder of Publix Super Markets, came to Ybor City, FL, in 1925 with only $9 in his pocket. At age 17, he began his career as a broom pusher and store clerk at a Piggly Wiggly market. Jenkins quickly earned a promotion but was distraught when an absent owner purchased the store and refused to meet with him. A true self-starter, Jenkins bought a vacant space next door and opened the first Publix Food Store in 1930.

As Jenkins expanded his grocery chain, he maintained the belief that Publix stores should be places where "customers find it a pleasure to shop and employees find it a pleasure to work." Today, Publix is the largest employee-owned supermarket chain in the United States, with 1,000 stores – a testament to Jenkins' strong work ethic and desire to achieve.

It All Adds Up!

Publix

STORE LOCATIONS
1000 supermarkets in:

- Florida – 717
- Georgia – 177
- South Carolina – 42
- Alabama – 38
- Tennessee – 26

- Largest employee-owned supermarket chain in the United States
- One of the 10 largest-volume supermarket chains in the United States
- Current associate count of more than 142,000

MAR. 26 - 29 — BankAtlantic CENTER

Thu. MAR. 26 ★ 7:30 PM	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
OPENING NIGHT TICKETS $15!*	MAR. 27 7:30 PM	MAR. 28 11:30 AM, 3:30 PM, 7:30 PM	MAR. 29 1:00 PM, 5:00 PM

*(Excludes Dream and VIP seats. No double discounts. Ticket price does not include facility fee.)

APR. 1 - 5 — American Airlines Arena

Wed. APR. 1 ★ 7:30 PM	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
OPENING NIGHT TICKETS $15!*	APR. 2 7:30 PM+	APR. 3 7:30 PM	APR. 4 11:30 AM, 3:30 PM, 7:30 PM	APR. 5 1:00 PM, 5:00 PM

*(Excludes Dream and VIP seats. No double discounts. Ticket price does not include facility fee.)
+Performance will only be in Spanish!

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■ MILESTONE OPENING – Publix Super Markets marked a significant achievement in its long and glorious history, February 5, with the opening of its 1,000th store in St. Augustine, Florida. The 54,000 sq. ft. showplace is located at 84 Tuscan Way in the Shoppes at Murabella.

Store Opening

Publix Celebrates Milestone Grand Opening

1,000th Store Debuts in St. Augustine

Publix Super Markets, Inc. – continuing the journey which began 79 years ago with one small store in Winter Haven, Florida – has reached a milestone in its long and glorious history, with the opening of its 1,000th store in St. Augustine.

The new store, which advances the company's unmatched track record, opened on Thursday, February 5, at 8 a.m., in the Shoppes at Murabella, in St. John's County. The 54,000 sq. ft. showplace includes a Publix pharmacy, bakery, deli, floral and fresh seafood departments among others. The store employs approximately 115 associates.

"We are proud of our 79-year history, rich in providing superior customer service and delivering a high quality selection of foods, products and services," said Publix President, Todd Jones. "Our core philosophy remains the same: we strive to be your grocer of choice, there for every memorable moment — becoming your Publix. Being a part of the lives of our customers and associates is as important in our 1000th store as it was in our first."

Opening day festivities began at 7:30 a.m. with a performance by the St. John's Academy of the Arts choral group. To commemorate the milestone, Publix presented eight local area schools with $1,000 each to use toward the purchase of school supplies: Allen D. Nease High School, Liberty Pines Academy, Mill Creek Elementary School, Pacetti Bay Middle School, St. Augustine High School, The Webster School, Timberlin Creek Elementary, and Wards Creek Elementary School.

Invited guests included St. John's County Chamber President, Trustees and Ambassadors, School Board members, Superintendent of Schools and school principals, along with other community leaders. In addition, the Florida Historical Society was on hand to recognize and document this milestone.

■ STORE MANAGER Steve Walker speaks to shoppers prior to their first look at his new very special store.

When company founder, George Jenkins, opened his first 'modern' Publix supermarket in Winter Haven in 1940, he was quoted at the time, "I want to make this the finest store in the world."

During this period, he also would say, "We were sure the housewife wanted a pleasant atmosphere in which to shop, and we constantly sketched plans for the type of market we thought all the 'Mrs. Jones's' would like . . . We knew the day of the dark and dusty grocery store was over."

The chain that would come to epitomize the phrase, "Where Shopping is a Pleasure" has earned a worldwide reputation for the many innovations it has brought to food retailing, its business practices and principles, and the way in which it treats its customers.

This new 1,000th store stands as testament to George Jenkins, his company, and everyone who is – or, ever has been, a member of The Publix Family.

■ PUBLIX President Todd Jones addresses the crowd awaiting the store's opening.

■ NUMBER ONE THOUSAND – A very unique display celebrates the opening of this most special Publix.

■ A bird's eye view of the expansive front aisle.

Western Beef Enters Florida Market

First Store Opens in Boca Raton

Western Beef, Inc., a prominent retailer serving the metropolitan New York and northern New Jersey areas, has entered the Florida market following the February 11 opening of its first entry in the Sunshine State. A 50,000 sq. ft. superstore, featuring approximately 35,000 sq. ft. of sales area, is now open at 23072 Sandalfoot Plaza Drive in Boca Raton, just off U.S. Hwy. 441 (State Rd 7), in southern Palm Beach County.

Western Beef operates high volume, full-service supermarkets, and food-outlet type stores throughout New York's five boroughs. It has stores in Brooklyn, The Bronx, Staten Island, Manhattan, Mount Vernon, NY and East Orange, NJ, among others. With the Florida opening, the company now operates 27 stores – 22 supermarkets and five discount outlets.

Not only does Western Beef feature its famed beef, pork, poultry and provision products, it carries a full range of value-priced perishables and grocery products. The store sells both national brands and its own Western Beef® store brand items. The new Boca Raton location Western Beef store #301 is a full-service supermarket featuring seafood, farm fresh produce, expansive dairy and frozen foods departments, a service deli department, and fresh bread baked daily in the store's own New York style brick oven.

The Boca Raton store is open daily from 7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.

CHARLIE'S MEAT MARKET is one of the real focal points at Western Beef. Within the large refrigerated room, the company sells both bulk meat, custom cut by store butchers, and a full variety of pre-packaged meat. Dairy and deli products are sold in separate refrigerated areas.

WESTERN BEEF Produce Manager Pierre Dieunel and Produce Supervisor Steve Calderone with Cal Miller [left] and Amaury Portela, Associated Grocers of Florida, Inc. [right].

OPENING DAY SMILES – Amaury Portela, Associated Grocers of Florida, V.P. of Business Development; Timothy Kellar, District Manager, John Fraschilla, Director of Construction and Richard Fraschilla, COO, Western Beef; Cal Miller, President/CEO and Gary Bausch, V.P. of Procurement, Associated Grocers of Florida, Inc.

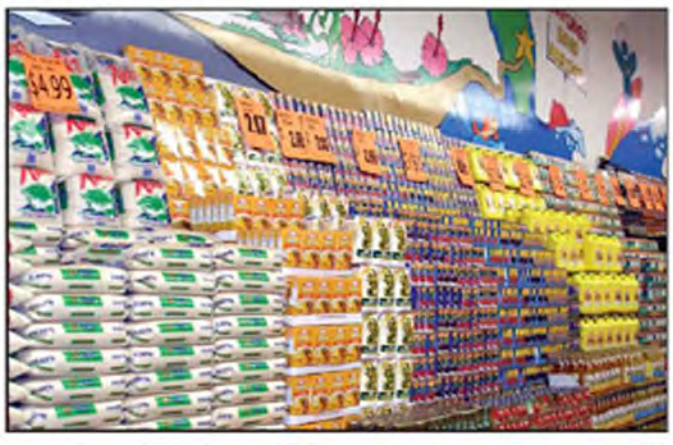
WESTERN BEEF Meat Director Gerald DeMattia and Meat Manager Roberto Lopez with Associated Grocers' Amaury Portela.

Associated Grocers of Florida V.P. of Sales – Miami, Gregg Young; Cathy Avery, Director of Dairy/Frozen, Jeffery Collado-Dairy Manager, Jonathan Martinez-Frozen Food Manager, and Joe Ruiz, Western Beef.

Baker John Calabrese and deli/bakery supervisor Jose Diaz place a tray of bread to bake in the store's brick oven.

Jorge Pinargote, baker.

Ricardo Pinargote, bakery manager.



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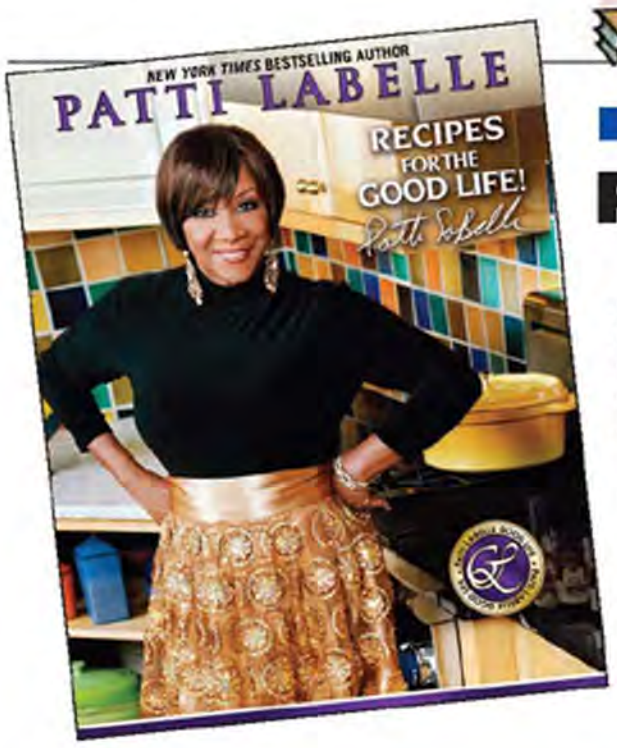

■ Marmalade's Not Her Only Specialty

Patti LaBelle Debuts New Cookbook

Patti's Good Life, Inc. announced that international superstar and celebrity chef Patti LaBelle has just released her third cookbook and first instructional cooking DVD. In addition, the fourth quarter will usher in the introduction of blended seasonings and spices to her existing line of all natural food products.

The cookbook, titled Recipes For The Good Life, is LaBelle's third in a line of popular and critically acclaimed cookbooks. The book consists of over 200 full-color pages, features dozens of photos and over 100 of LaBelle's favorite comfort food and healthy recipes, and ties in personal anecdotes and stories from LaBelle's childhood through her present-day culinary experiences. The book, distributed through Simon & Schuster, arrived in bookstores across the country earlier this month. The instructional cooking DVD, titled In The Kitchen With Miss Patti, features over 90 minutes of footage of LaBelle in the kitchen and in her own dining room.

LaBelle walks viewers step-by-step through the preparation of several of her signature dishes while candidly sharing her thoughts on food, family and life. The DVD also features a segment of LaBelle in her home in Philadelphia where she shows viewers how to set a proper table for different occasions and how to create a special atmosphere through the use of candles, music and table decor. In addition, the DVD has bonus footage of LaBelle discussing her food product line as well as some hilarious outtakes from the kitchen.

Adding to her custom line of hot sauces and relishes, LaBelle introduces a line of five blended seasonings and spices: Garlic Pepper Seasoning, Seasoned Sea Salt, Miss Patti's No Salt Seasoning, Chili & Dill Sea Salt, and Seasoned Pepper. The entire line is all natural and is incorporated into many of LaBelle's recipes.

Video&Music

A Viking Saga: Son of Thor

Epic Tale Based on a True Story

Based on a true story and a battle for survival that changed history forever, A Viking Saga: Son of Thor thunders onto DVD now from SKD USA (Distributed by KOCH Entertainment).

A Viking Saga: Son of Thor tells the tale of Helgi, a 10-year-old boy who witnessed the brutal slaughter of his family, as well as his entire village. Narrowly escaping himself, he traveled east where his uncle Rurik (Erik Holmey, *Conan the Barbarian*) raised him like his own son.

Many years later after embarking on a sailing adventure, Helgi (Ken Vedsegaard, *Chronic*) encounters the new reigning king whom he soon discovers is the man responsible for the long-ago carnage. Helgi enters a fierce battle for survival, one that will change history forever.

Filmed in Frederikssund, Denmark, A Viking Saga: Son of Thor was co-written (with Dennis Goldberg) and directed by Michael Mouyal and co-stars Peter Gantzler, Kim Sønderholm, Julie Ølgaard (Academy Award-nominated *At Night*) and Neel Rønholt (*At Night*). Executive producer is Sven-Ole Thorsen (*Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle, The Sum of All Fears, The Hunt for Red October, Gladiator*).

In 2008, **A Viking Saga: Son of Thor** has won five awards at film festivals, including Best Foreign Picture at the Washougal International Film Festival; Best Independent Filmmaker and Best Music Score at the First Take International Film Festival; second place for Best Family Film at the Bare Bones International Film Festival; and an honorable mention at the Accolade Editing Competition. It was also a finalist for Best Picture at the Florida Media Market.

Running Time: 82 Minutes
Suggested Retail Price: $24.98

The Stax Records 2-Disc Set

Featuring Lost Performances by Isaac Hayes and Other Top Soul Artists of the Tumultuous '60s Era

The two-disc, double-feature documentary/concert DVD Stax, featuring lost performances by Isaac Hayes and other top soul artists of the tumultuous '60s era, comes to DVD from Infinity Entertainment Group.

Respect Yourself: The Stax Records Story

Documents the history of soul music's most influential record label alongside the tumultuous events of the U.S. civil rights movement. Features comprehensive interviews with all the players: Stax founder Jim Stewart, Isaac Hayes, Mavis Staples, Booker T. Jones, Steve Cropper, Eddie Floyd, William Bell, Rufus Thomas, Carla Thomas, David Porter, Duck Dunn, Wayne Jackson, Sam Moore, Al Bell and Jesse Jackson. Also such contemporary artists as: Elvis Costello, Bono, Chuck D and Jermaine Dupree. Lost performances from: Otis Redding, Booker T. & the MGs, Isaac Hayes and The Staple Singers, as well as footage from the legendary 1967 European Stax/Volt Revue and the landmark 1972 Wattstax concert. Narrated by: Samuel L. Jackson.

Stax Volt Revue: Live in Norway 1967

Marks the first official release of this historic concert, considered by soul music fans to be one of the greatest line-ups of artists ever to grace the stage. This DVD captures the 75-minute concert on April 7, 1967 in Oslo, Norway, near the end of the three-week tour, when all the artists were at their peaks.

Also included in this special collector's edition is a full-color, 28-page insert that further details the history behind these two documentaries and features dozens of classic photos.

Running Time: Approx. 3 Hours, 8 Minutes (Plus Special Features)
Suggested Retail Price: $24.98

■ New Study Looks At

Impact of Sustainable Practices on Supermarket Sales

Can going green hurt food sales at your grocery store?

University of Missouri professors Brian Fricke and Bryan Becker are trying to find out by conducting a new research study for the "http://www.ashrae.org/publications/detail/16396" (ASHRAE).

The study, which will be conducted under the direction of ASHRAE's Technical Committee TC 10.7, Commercial Food and Beverage Cooling Display and Storage, will involve studying the energy use of two different types of supermarket display cases – glass door vertical display cases an open vertical display cases. The research is aimed at promoting sustainable, energy-efficient practices in grocery stores, which typically spend up to 50% of total energy costs on refrigeration.

"Walmart has taken real sustainable initiative with having doors on refrigerators, solar panels on the roof, and other forward-thinking programs," said Fricke. "Because of that, other chains are interested in following along in that direction."

Two Michigan-based grocery stores, which are part of the same national chain, will be participating in the study. According to the researchers, many supermarkets are reluctant to use glass door cases since a common perception is that doors reduce shopper impulse buying. As a result, these cases have only had limited success in penetrating the market dominated by open vertical cases.

"It's important that store owners realize that being sustainable doesn't necessarily have to hurt profitability," said Becker. "Thus, the goal of our study will be to prove whether or not door cases in fact have a negative impact on product sales vs. open cases."

Both stores will be installing brand new refrigerated cases – one of each kind — for the study which will run for approximately two months. The energy use of each display case will be monitored with HOBO® Energy Logger Pro systems from Onset, a Massachusetts-based supplier of energy monitoring equipment.

"We'll be using the Onset monitoring gear to measure air temperatures, discharge temperatures, air return temperatures, as well as electrical consumption of the lights, fans, and anti-sweat heaters on the cases," explains Fricke. "Measurements will be taken every minute or so, and we'll offload the data from both systems on a weekly basis to analyze the energy consumption of both cases."

Product sales for each display case, as well as total store product sales, will also be tracked with the aid of Stock Keeping Units (SKUs) during the course of the study. For each day, a variety of data will be obtained from the electronic point-of-sales system at each store including the Universal Product Code (UPC) of the product, a description of the product, and the quantity and prices of products sold.

The research project is being co-funded by the Air- Conditioning & Refrigeration Technology Institute (ARTI). The results will allow supermarket designers to make informed decisions as to which type of display cases to use. Electric utilities, in turn, can leverage this information as a basis for developing new incentive programs to accelerate adoption of more sustainable supermarket designs.

New Rinse Formulas Expand Consumer Options for Natural Oral Care

The Natural Dentist proudly announces the addition of two new mouth rinses to their line of natural, scientifically proven rinses and toothpastes: The Natural Dentist All Natural Antigingivitis Rinse and The Natural Dentist Pre-Brush Whitening Rinse. Available nationwide this Spring, The Natural Dentist unveils an all-natural mouth rinse to help reduce and prevent plaque and gingivitis, as well as an all-natural whitening pre-brush rinse without peroxide that helps to remove stains when you brush.

The Natural Dentist All-Natural Antigingivitis Rinse helps prevent plaque build-up that leads to bleeding gums. It contains a naturally strong combination of ingredients, which includes Peppermint and Sage Oils, Xylitol, Grapefruit Seed Extract and Menthol. It is designed to soothe and protect teeth and gums.

The Natural Dentist Pre-Brush Whitening Rinse enlists natural silica from bamboo to gently lift stains without harsh peroxide. Peppermint and Sage Oils, Aloe Vera Gel, Xylitol and Menthol are other natural ingredients in the new formula.

All of The Natural Dentist's rinses are specially formulated to be natural and effective without the use of alcohol, dyes, harsh chemicals and detergents or artificial ingredients.

Pert Plus Launches New Men's Product Line

Pert Plus is changing the way men get clean. The brand, which introduced the first 2-in-1 shampoo plus conditioner to the masses nearly 30 years ago, is launching Pert Plus for Men, a new line of products made exclusively for men. The company is also introducing its first-ever 3-in-1 shampoo plus conditioner plus body wash for men.

Pert Plus for Men will include four specially formulated products designed exclusively to address men's hair needs.

- Pert Plus for Men 3-in-1 Shampoo plus Conditioner plus Body Wash
- Pert Plus for Men Deep Cleansing
- Pert Plus for Men Thickening
- Pert Plus for Men Daily Dandruff

"Our goal has always been to help consumers save time and simplify their lives with one product that serves all of their hair cleansing and conditioning needs," said Roanne Wallace, director of marketing for Pert Plus. "As the only brand dedicated to the 2-in-1 category, launching a 3-in-1 product was a natural progression for Pert Plus."

Pert Plus for Men 3-in-1 is specially formulated to clean and condition hair and skin. The rich, foamy lather has the right balance of cleansers and conditioners to clean and moisturize most hair and skin types.

"When developing our new men's line, we listened to consumers to understand what they wanted and needed out of these products," added Wallace. "We found that men were concerned with hair breakage and thinning and wanted products with a masculine scent that was not overpowering."

Formulated with naturally-derived vegetable protein and other strengthening and fortifying ingredients, Pert Plus for Men reduces hair breakage by nearly one-third. Carrying scents of light citrus, fresh bergamot and cedar and vetiver leaves, the line also offers a fresh, clean, masculine aroma.

Pert Plus has been a leader in offering innovative multi-use products. Pert Plus for Men joins a highly effective line of 2-in-1 products designed for the entire family, including a botanical line, which caters to a female audience. The new men's line rounds out the brand's 12 Pert Plus products.

New Product Designed to Enhance the Body's Immune Defense

Cold season has settled in for the winter months and since the common cold is a leading cause for doctor appointments and missed days of school and work, now is the time to take steps to help boost your immune system. And Immunity Enhanced Beverage is designed to do just that.

Recently introduced by Innovative Beverage Products, Immunity Enhanced Beverage is a ready-to-drink liquid supplement intended to strengthen the body's immune defense, while also reducing the symptoms of the common cold and/or flu.

The convenient 4-ounce shot is infused with MaxImmune™, a proprietary blend of ingredients, including many antioxidants, which has been clinically proven to have measurable health benefits.

"In our research we found consumers were looking for a convenient, great tasting, beneficial supplement that they could use for themselves or their families," said Donna Hartsough, Senior Director of Brand Strategy. "The Immunity Enhanced Beverage now enables consumers to help strengthen their immune system with this simple, ready-to-drink shot."

The berry-flavored shot is convenient and easy-to-use for anyone, from kids to adults, looking to strengthen their immune system and help ward off and/or reduce the pesky symptoms of the cold or flu.

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Palm Beer Now in Bottles in the U.S.

Latis Imports has added Palm beer bottles to its import line-up. The beer will be available in select store locations in San Diego, Connecticut, New York City and Brooklyn, Orange County (CA) and Northern New Jersey.

"Belgian beer is an industry staple," says David van Wees, CEO and co-founder of Latis Imports. "With Belgian beer sales up 32 percent in the U.S. in 2008, the import craft beer segment growth is showing that quality brews are an affordable luxury. During these economic times, we all need an affordable luxury."

First brewed in the early 1900s as an alternative to pilsners and lagers, Palm has become the number one selling amber beer in Belgium and Holland and it's steadfastly earning its way into the U.S. market.

Palm is now available in select U.S. markets in an authentic, European 33cl bottle and it's packaged in a fully enclosed carrier with the full brewery story on the bottom. The Palm story relays the history of the 261 year-old brewery and its penchant for adhering to traditional Belgian brewing methods. Palm Breweries is the only beer company in the world to brew using the four traditional Belgian brewing traditions - top, bottom, mixed and spontaneous fermentation.

Palm comes to the U.S. from Latis Imports, a Ridgefield Connecticut-based company founded by former InBev executives David van Wees and Anthony Giardina.

In September 2007 Latis signed an agreement to be the American importer for a selection of Palm Breweries' brands. Palm Breweries, the largest independent brewer in Belgium, made its U.S. debut in Manhattan in November 2007 and subsequently San Diego, Northern New Jersey, Philadelphia and Connecticut.

Natural Merchants

Organic Wines Now Available in Select Florida Winn-Dixie Stores

Natural Merchants, LLC, with headquarters in Grants Pass, OR and Cartagena, Spain, has announced that its USDA certified organic wines are now available in select Winn-Dixie stores throughout the state of Florida. All wines in the program will be priced under $20 a bottle.

"We are thrilled to be working with Winn-Dixie as they continue to grow their Organic selection," said Edward Field of Natural Merchants. "As more consumers integrate wine into their everyday organic lifestyles, they'll be searching for a variety of quality, affordable wines made with organically grown grapes."

The organic wines are featured in a wooden floor display in select Winn-Dixie locations throughout Florida. Winn-Dixie will be offering its customers educational information on organic wines and include Tasting Notes, Pairings and Ratings for each of the featured selections.

Wines selected from Natural Merchants Selections' portfolio include those from:

- Bodegas Iranzo - Spain's Oldest Estate Bottled Winery
- Agrinatura - Italy's number-one organic producer
- Chateau Raymond - Bordeaux's largest producer of organic wines
- La Cantina Pizzolato - Italy's number-one selling organic wines

"This is another opportunity for us to offer our shoppers the products they have previously only found in specialty stores," said Robin Miller, Winn-Dixie's director of communications. "It's all about offering our customers a fresh and local shopping experience every time they visit our stores."

Organic wines will continue to be on trend for 2009.

Quality Spanish Wines for Under $5

Toro Loco Wines Debut From Espana Foods

Put your wine snobbery aside. Toro Loco® wines are to be enjoyed by your palate and your wallet. Espana Foods, Inc. has announced the launch of Toro Loco (Crazy Bull) wines, a line of robust and unpretentious wines from Cordoba, Spain. The Toro Loco wines are being released nationally with a starting suggested retail price of $4.99.

"Toro Loco wines are old world wines with new world appeal," says Ignacio J. Martinez, President of Espana Foods, Inc. "The wines capture the robust flavor of Spain, and proudly represent the country's inner character: courageous and passionate, as exemplified by the Bull, the national symbol of Spain."

Grapes for Toro Loco wines are sourced from vineyards in the "Tierra de Cordoba," in the heart of the famed Andalucia province. The key to the region's lush superior wine is its Mediterranean climate, irregular rainfall, mild winters and very hot and dry summers. The region is a true paradise for wine.

Over the past decade, wine connoisseurs have come to recognize Spain for making wine in a unique and striking style with powerful flavors and reflecting a passion for the land. "Toro Loco wines exemplify the revolution in Spanish wines," states Keith Janosik, Midwest regional beer & wine category manager, Whole Foods Market. "It is a modern and stylish brand that delivers a high quality wine with the down-to-earth approachability that our customers have come to expect."

Toro Loco's five varietals — Tinto Joven (Young Red); Blanco Joven (Young White); Rosado (Rose); Tinto Roble (Oak Red) Reserve; Pedro Ximenez (sweet dessert wine) — are available in select Whole Foods Market stores in Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana.

Pernod Ricard Announces Strategic Distributor Alignments

Capitalizing on its 2008 acquisition of Absolut Vodka, an iconic brand and the leading U.S. imported spirit, Pernod Ricard USA has announced strategic alignments with two of the nation's leading distributors: Southern Wine & Spirits of America, Inc. (SWS) and Republic National Distributing Company (RNDC).

The appointments — which expand existing relationships — represent the latest steps in the development of Pernod Ricard's competitive footprint in the U.S. "Pernod Ricard USA is building on the acquisition of the top premium vodka in the U.S. to establish a world class route to market," said Paul Duffy, the company's Chairman and CEO. "By aligning Absolut and our other leading brands with these best-in-class distributors and brokers, we are creating significant opportunities for mutual growth."

SWS will be Pernod Ricard USA's leading distributor/broker for its full portfolio of premium spirits and wines in over 20 markets, including California, Florida, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Kentucky. RNDC will be the leading Pernod Ricard USA spirits and wine distributor/broker in markets including Texas, Louisiana, Maryland, Washington, D.C., Alabama and Mississippi.

Duffy said the new agreements with Southern and Republic will capitalize on Pernod Ricard USA's expanded portfolio of leading brands, leveraging dedicated resources and improved ways of working. "We have had great success with Southern and Republic National, and are very confident that we can further develop our strategic brands through fully aligned route to market processes," Duffy said.

Following the acquisition of Vin & Sprit (Absolut's previous owner), Pernod Ricard USA is now the second largest spirits and wine company in the U.S. by retail sales value. Concluded Duffy: "These moves are game-changers that will build value with advantage for Pernod Ricard USA, Southern, RNDC and our customers."

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Hospitality

Dramatic Subterranean Nightclub

New Ultra Lounge in San Francisco's Union Square Opens to Rave Reviews

CHEF BRIAN BEACH

Infusion Lounge, the highly-anticipated luxury ultra lounge in San Francisco's Union Square, celebrated its Grand Opening January 9 and 10 to capacity crowds and rave reviews.

Conceived by hospitality innovator C-Two Group, the lavish 6,500 sq. ft. nightclub includes 2 bars, a Cal-Asian restaurant, an exclusive VIP room, a fully equipped dance floor, and state-of-the-art DJ booths, lighting and sound systems.

Opening weekend entertainment included seductive acrobats, Las Vegas DJ sensation DJ Five, and WorldTown hosted by local favorite Trevor Simpson. Guests enjoyed tantalizing Asian-inspired tapas created by Executive Chef Brian Beach, and expert mixologists poured signature cocktails, including the just-introduced "Fountain of Youth". "It's better than Botox," claimed one enthusiastic guest.

World renowned Hong Kong based designer Kinney Chan created the dramatic interior which he says "reflects the sophistication of San Francisco with an Asian influence." This is evident in Chan's use of traditional Asian design elements in new innovative ways. Behind the sleek glass and steel bar, a modern "Shanghai Princess" keeps a watchful eye over guests in one of the largest fully-animated holograms ever created and a spectacular six-foot three-dimensional dragon reigns over the 2,000 sq. ft. Wenge hardwood dance floor illuminated by glowing LED columns. A striking palate of red, black, copper and gold is used throughout the expansive club in richly textured surfaces, undulating mosaic tile walls and opulent lounging areas.

Guests of the Infusion Lounge will be privy to an experience in dining that boldly blurs the lines between socially-driven nightlife & modern Innovative dining. Executive chef Brian Beach and the kitchen staff of Infusion Lounge whole-heartedly embrace cooking as a craft of passion, creatively interfacing molecular technology with the same genuine culinary integrity that has long defined what "food" means in San Francisco. This is not a departure from San Francisco's clear culinary vision. It is a natural evolution; this is "the next step" into a vibrant new direction.

Executive chef Brian Beach describes his menu as a perpetually-changing & seasonally-conscience menu with a strong emphasis on ingredients that are grown, raised and/or sourced locally. The menu will focus on what Beach describes as "Post-Modern New California Fusion small plates with a very strong gastro-molecular presence."

"The response to Infusion Lounge by our guests has been fantastic," said Christopher Rosas, CEO and President of C-Two Group. "We set out to create a nightlife experience in San Francisco unlike this city has ever seen and I believe we delivered on our promise."

INFUSION LOUNGE is located in San Francisco's Union Square at 124 Ellis Street, and is open Tuesday–Sunday, 5 PM–3 AM.

When Dining Out

Consumers Seek Healthy Food, Greener Restaurants

ENZO FEBBRARO

Americans love to dine out. In fact, the National Restaurant Association (NRA) reports that the average person buys a meal or snack from a restaurant nearly six times per week, and that combined sales this year are expected to reach $566 billion. They also report that the 2009 trends in dining out will be people seeking healthier foods and greener restaurants.

"People love to dine out and they should, it's a great experience, but they also want to stick to their goals of healthy eating," explains Enzo Febbraro, the co-owner and executive chef of D'Acqua Ristorante, located in Washington, D.C. "Restaurants are meeting those demands by providing healthier options so diners can make decisions that make them feel comfortable."

In addition, the NRA also reports that roughly 75 percent of adults are trying to eat more healthily than they were two years ago when dining out. Parents are also making it a priority to find restaurants that offer healthy children's menu options, so much so that NRA has said that healthy kids' meals are among the hottest restaurant trends in 2009.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), people can eat out and still be healthy. However, it's important that they give some thought to what they are ordering, to try to avoid foods loaded with cholesterol, saturated fat, and trans fat. When dining out, consumers who are seeking healthy meals should consider the following tips:

- Eat smaller portions by asking for a to-go container right away and putting a portion of the food in it, or by sharing a meal with others at the table.
- Skip the cheese or ask for it to be on the side, to have more control over how much goes on.
- Choose a lot of vegetables and dishes that have lighter sauces, rather than cream-based ones.
- When eating fish, opt for boiled, baked or grilled, rather than fried.
- With salads, order dressing on the side, to control how much goes on. Many salad dressings are loaded with fat.
- Opt for broth-based soups over creamed ones, which usually have more fat and calories.
- Don't be afraid to ask the waiter questions and to put in requests for things to be prepared in a healthier way.

"We offer a lot of seafood, which is already much healthier than many other dining options. We are also very accommodating to special requests regarding prepared," adds Febbraro. "We want people to enjoy their experience, and we help them make healthy dining a high priority."

McDonald's Delivers Another Year of Strong Results in 2008

McDonald's Corporation announced strong operating results for the fourth quarter and the year, driven by global comparable sales growth.

"2008 was a strong year for McDonald's," said Chief Executive Officer Jim Skinner. "Through our strategic focus on menu choice, food quality and value, the average number of customers served per day increased to more than 58 million in 2008. Comparable sales and guest counts were positive across all segments for every quarter, and the company delivered double-digit growth in operating income for the fourth quarter and the year. These accomplishments validate the strength and resilience of McDonald's Plan to Win."

McDonald's U.S. delivered very strong results for the quarter and year by seizing opportunities in the key growth areas of chicken, breakfast, beverages and convenience. Throughout 2008, the U.S. built brand loyalty by reinforcing the company's dedication to value, convenience and menu variety with the addition of the Southern Style Chicken biscuit and sandwich, drive-thru enhancements to improve service and ongoing expansion of McCafe specialty coffees.

Jim Skinner added, "Our disciplined approach to financial management continues to be an important component of McDonald's success. We remain committed to enhancing shareholder value by investing capital prudently, optimizing our restaurant ownership mix and returning cash to shareholders. To date, we have returned $11.5 billion to shareholders through dividends and share repurchases toward our target of $15 billion to $17 billion for 2007 through 2009. For 2009, we plan to invest $2.1 billion of capital to open about 1,000 new McDonald's restaurants and reinvest in our existing locations."

Jim Skinner concluded, "I am pleased with McDonald's 2008 results, which were achieved through the dedication of our Owner/Operators, suppliers and employees who provide an exceptional restaurant experience for our customers each and every day. McDonald's begins 2009 with six years of momentum, a business model that has delivered even in challenging economic conditions and January sales that remain strong. I am confident that our alignment behind the Plan to Win and our focus on what matters most to customers will continue to generate positive results for our System and shareholders."

DR. HAROLD COHEN (Photo courtesy Food Network)

T.G.I. Friday's Restaurants Unleash the 'Ultimate' Burger

Retired Florida Surgeon is Food Network's 'Ultimate Recipe Showdown' Winner

After a nationwide recipe search to determine the ultimate burger recipe, a burger inspired by Harold Cohen, a 74-year-old retired plastic surgeon from Hollywood, Florida, will be featured at over 600 U.S. T.G.I. Friday's®.

Cohen's recipe was judged to be best in class by a panel of food experts on Food Network's "Ultimate Recipe Showdown" - a six-week series featuring everyday folks with the best recipes in America pitting their best dishes against one another for a $25,000 prize, national acclaim and the chance to have his or her recipe featured nationwide at T.G.I. Friday's. This is the second consecutive year in which winning recipes from the show have inspired entrees on the Friday's menu.

The ultimate result: The Triple Stacked Burger, a juicy beef patty with a zesty red pepper pimento blend of sharp Cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses, topped with ham, crispy bacon, pickles and more cheese, all stacked on a toasted bun and served with fresh home-style potato chips.

"This burger is loaded with all the great flavors from the winning recipe," said Scott Randolph, senior director of culinary, R&D for T.G.I. Friday's USA. "We thought it was very 'Friday's' to serve this burger stacked, so instead of chopping the ham in with the patty as Harold did, we stacked it right on top of the burger with the bacon. It is very true to the original recipe and also very true to Friday's."

Food Network's "Ultimate Recipe Showdown," in its second season, features original recipes, whittled down from thousands of submissions, in six categories — Comfort Food, Burgers, Cakes, Hot & Spicy, Desserts and Hometown Favorites.

A Signal of Economic Woes to Come?

Growth in Beverage Alcohol Consumption in Restaurant and Bars Ebbed in 2007

A slowdown in spirits, wine and beer consumption in restaurants and bars during 2007 may have been a harbinger of economic woes to come, according to data in the Cheers On-Premise Handbook 008 published by The Beverage Information Group.

The rate of growth in retail dollar sales of spirits, wine and beer consumed in restaurants and bars was the lowest since 2001 — the last time the U.S. was in a recession.

Consumers began changing not only their dining out habits, but their on-premise drinking patterns in the third quarter of 2007. While consumption and retail dollars for all three adult beverage categories climbed in 2007, the rate of growth abated compared with prior years. Plus, evidence of a shift to less costly options — namely beer — also appeared.

Bartenders interviewed in 2008 cited the following trends: the Margarita reigns as the most popular mixed drink overall, but is losing share to the Martini; Chardonnay continues as the best-selling wine varietal, but Pinot Grigio is quickly gaining ground; Absolut is the best-selling spirit call brand; Corona the best-selling imported beer, and Blue Moon the leading emerging beer brand in restaurants and bars.

Vodka continued to rule among consumers in restaurants and bars, but a shift away from flavors is emerging. Lesser known wine varietals, such as Malbec, Riesling and Prosecco, increased in popularity. Among beers, craft and regional options are appearing more often on tap handles. Infused water, signature iced teas and restaurant-made sodas are also among emerging trends.

White Castle Contributes to Wounded Warrior Project

White Castle has announced a $5,000 contribution to Wounded Warrior Project. The mission of the charity organization is to honor and empower wounded veterans.

White Castle is making the donation as a way to reassure men and women in uniform how much their service is valued and honored by the White Castle organization. Recently, 11 cars towed from an Indianapolis area White Castle location turned out to be the vehicles of returning soldiers who were being honored at nearby Lucas Oil Stadium.

"White Castle is a proud supporter of our men and women in uniform, wherever they may be in the world. We regret the inconvenience any of our brave soldiers might have encountered at our restaurant and in addition to making this right with each of them individually by reimbursing them for towing costs, and providing them with free food from White Castle, we want to offer a more tangible expression of gratitude for all they do," shared Jamie Richardson, White Castle Vice President.

With a long history of giving back to community and supporting the armed forces, White Castle recently partnered with Coca-Cola and the USO in the "Honor the Uniform" effort. The initiative was aimed at collecting over 1 million post cards of "thanks" to be sent to U.S. troops all over the world and occurred in late 2008.

"We know how important it is for all of us to remain aware of the many sacrifices our brave men and women all over the world are making — Wounded Warrior Project is making a difference and we're proud to be able to make this contribution to such a worthy organization," Richardson shared.

Forces Shaping The Future of Food Retailing

JOHN SACCOMANNO

By: **JOHN SACCOMANNO**
Industry Marketing Director
NCR Corporation

Tough economic times are causing retailers – like households – to look for ways to cut costs. But unlike households, retailers must consider the adverse consequences these cost reductions will have on customer service. Years of building customer trust and loyalty can easily be thrown down the tube with errors made on where, and how much, to cut. And retailers know, once a customer is gone, it can be very difficult to get them to return to their stores.

This economic downturn is hitting some retail segments harder than others. High-end retailers, restaurants and specialty retailers seem to be facing more challenges than discount formats and food retailers. With a few exceptions, food retailers have been immune to the massive job cuts and store closings we're seeing in other segments. But these are scary times for all, and prudence demands all retailers be more cautious in their expenditures and consider areas for budget cuts.

Information technology is certainly fair game when considering where to cut expenses. But before taking an axe to the IT budget, retailers should weigh the short-term savings against the long-term customer service impact that can result from those reductions. Perhaps more than any other expense area, cuts to the IT budget must be selective. Taking a chainsaw to the IT budget could result in serious long-term consequences.

In addition, retailers should consider the opportunity to "leapfrog" competitors by making smart IT investments during tough economic times. Eventually, the economy will improve; and how your company is positioned against competitors when that improvement starts may be dictated by the IT budget decisions you make now. Marianne Kolbasuk McGee wrote in Information Week that, "There are plenty of business technology executives going forward with big projects, even adding to their IT workloads and budgets, with new projects, backed by management that see a chance to invest in technology-driven efforts to leap ahead of weakened competitors."

When considering which IT projects can be reduced, retailers should be especially careful with customer-facing technologies. Ms. McGee adds, ". . . customer-facing projects were only half as likely to be cut as those that didn't touch customers . . . ." Self-service technology, which allows retailers to more effectively allocate labor while satisfying, perhaps improving, customer service levels is an effective weapon when combating tough economic times.

Today, IT expenditures need to demonstrate a quantifiable return on investment in accelerated timeframes. Retailers no longer have the luxury of engaging in IT projects unless they show a positive return within 12 months. Self-service technology allows retailers to move high-volume, low-value transactions to a more effective and convenient channel. In automating these processes, retailers can re-allocate valued employees, improve customer service, and increase capacity. As such, self-service delivers a superior return on investment.

These tough economic times are especially challenging to your customers. Consumer confidence levels are at the lowest levels since the 1920s. Your shoppers are doing whatever they can to stretch their food budget. In a recent BuzzBack study, sponsored by NCR, 49 percent of shoppers surveyed said they're switching between retailers in order to get better value for their dollars. And, over 26 percent of the respondents are making more frequent shopping trips to take advantage of the various promotions that are being made available to them. This "shop hopping" takes time. And as you might imagine, given an already "time starved" environment, these shoppers are being drawn to the retailers that offer superior convenience.

Self-service technology enables retailers to address the convenience needs of their customers. Regardless of whether this interaction is at home or in the store, self-service is a valuable tool in helping retailers connect to the economy-challenged, and increasingly time-pressured, shopper.

JOHN SACCOMANNO is director of Food, Drug and Petroleum Industry Marketing for the NCR Corporation. He has global responsibility for developing and deploying NCR marketing programs for food stores, drug stores and the retail petroleum industry, including convenience stores. As industry marketing director, his role includes identifying significant trends, initiatives and best practices to drive retail automation requirements.

Wal-Mart Undertakes Re-Branding, Private Label Initiative

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. has selected the Agentrics product lifecycle management (PLM) platform to support the collaborative development of its private brand products, beginning with the Wal-Mart Great Value line. Agentrics PLM features a Web-based, collaborative, end-to-end work process, database and production environment to drive speed, innovation and consistency across the product lifecycle. Agentrics has rebranded the Wal-Mart system, which is now referred to as "Wal-Mart ASPECT" across the retailer's network.

In October, Wal-Mart and more than 500 suppliers began using Agentrics PLM to support the rebranding of the Wal-Mart Great Value line. Great Value is the highest selling consumer brand in North America. The re-branded products will appear in stores beginning this month. Throughout 2009, Wal-Mart will continue to add more suppliers to the system.

"Wal-Mart private brands have enjoyed tremendous success, and we are excited and proud to be chosen as its PLM partner, starting with the massive re-branding of the Great Value line," said Agentrics CEO Thomas Corbett. "Customers have great respect for Wal-Mart store brands, and now the retailer is equipped to better serve its shoppers with even greater selection. Wal-Mart is well on its way to creating the world's most efficient PLM environment."

Agentrics PLM helps retailers and manufacturers gain more control, speed and accuracy throughout the product development lifecycle. With Agentrics PLM, users can:

- Increase data and process accuracy to eliminate costly rework and iterations as well as validate origin, ingredient and nutrition information
- Significantly increase the number of products and projects, through simplified processes and automated workflows, without increasing associated costs
- Improve time-to-market by more closely tracking progress and completion cycles.

Agentrics PLM also includes features for rapidly identifying ingredient and supplier information and tracking audit details to support critical food safety needs. The system will integrate content from the forthcoming food safety management system that Agentrics is co-developing for the Food Marketing Institute Safe Quality Foods program.

"Private label is one of the few bright spots in today's challenging economic environment as consumers increasingly choose store brands over national brands," said Kieran Forsey, Agentrics senior vice president of products and marketing. "Agentrics PLM helps retailers stay ahead of demand by producing more products with greater innovation and quality and bringing them to market faster than ever. In 2008, we added many new capabilities to our platform, including advanced food safety features, which allow our customers to more actively monitor supplier and product quality and more quickly respond to potential issues. We have enjoyed significant growth in our PLM business as more retailers look to build internally a production environment with all the tools and processes to work collaboratively with partners — from ingredient suppliers to package designers — so they can quickly serve customers with a greater selection of products to meet changing lifestyles and perceptions of value."

H-E-B Mexico Rolls out DemandTec Everyday Price Optimization

DemandTec, Inc., a provider of on-demand optimization solutions for retailers and consumer products manufacturers, announced that Supermercados Internacionales H-E-B, S.A. de C.V., a wholly owned subsidiary of H-E-B Grocery Company, LP, a current DemandTec customer, is deploying DemandTec's Everyday Price Optimization software service.

The move to deploy the DemandTec solution at H-E-B Mexico was a natural progression to leverage the price optimization and consumer demand modeling capabilities that have provided significant insights into the buying behavior of H-E-B's customers in the US.

"We expect our investment in DemandTec to allow us to automate the manual aspects of our pricing process, create pricing strategies that will give H-E-B Mexico a competitive advantage in the marketplace, and offer our customers the best prices possible," said Rafael Lopez, CIO of H-E-B Mexico.

Everyday Price Optimization is a component service of DemandTec Lifecycle Price Optimization™, a comprehensive solution for managing and optimizing pricing across the entire store. The solution, which also includes Promotion Planning & Optimization and Markdown Optimization, enables retailers to understand, predict and influence consumer demand in order to achieve financial and price image objectives.

"When a multi-national customer like H-E-B Grocery expands DemandTec's software solutions to a new division or geography, it further demonstrates our ability to deliver positive results for our customers," said Dan Fishback, president and chief executive officer of DemandTec. "We're honored to have jointly proven the value of our solutions with the teams at H-E-B and are delighted to extend our relationship with such a prestigious, well-respected company."

H-E-B Mexico, which employs more than 5,000 people, operates 30 supermarkets in five Mexican states — Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Coahulia, Guanajuato and San Luis Potosi.

Easy Workbook Assists Small Operators Meeting PCI Compliance Mandates

NACS has partnered with TurboPCI™ to bring a simplified PCI compliance solution to NACS members. The announcement was made Jan. 27at the PCATS (Petroleum Convenience Alliance for Technology Standards) Annual Conference in Orlando, FL.

The TurboPCI Easy workbook is designed to simplify the awkward and complicated certification process by applying a straightforward step-by-step method that walks smaller operators through PCI compliance.

"TurboPCI offers products that are developed by educators who are trained in the PCI DSS requirements by the card brands and their standards council," said Michael Davis, NACS vice president of member services. "They are easy to use, easy to understand and easy to implement for PCI DSS compliance. What attracted us to the TurboPCI Easy Workbook was the fact that it was developed by a team of technology professionals and educators; that it was one of the most comprehensive and lowest cost products on the market today was an added benefit."

"These are challenging times for retailers. PCI is requiring them to comply with a set of requirements that are written for computer professionals and not easy to understand. TurboPCI can help retailers meet this challenge by providing them with the step-by-step educational resources that will empower retailers to take charge," said Dr. Suzanne Miller, senior partner of The Compliance and Audit Group, creator of the TurboPCI Easy Workbook.

TurboPCI Easy Workbooks are available for all validation types (1-5) and cost NACS members $99. Included in the workbook cost is 12 hours of free online consultation with PCI specialists and Qualified Security Assessors provided through TurboPCI. TurboPCI Easy Workbooks will be available for order by February 23 by going to "http://www.nacsonline.com" and clicking on the "Shop" button.

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In a Challenging Economy –

Pictured (left to right): Miriam Peralta, volunteer for Mission for all Nations; Jerry Betz, senior director of advertising for No Frills; Tom Ryks, Smart Chicken; Mary Anaya, executive director for Mission for all Nations; Michelle Moyes Dill, executive director for Together, Inc.; Lonnie Eggers, vice president of marketing for No Frills; Tiffany Bridgeford, volunteer for Mission for all Nations; Isai Peralta, volunteer for Mission for all Nations.

No Frills Supermarkets and MBA Poultry Make Charitable Donations Count

Two Omaha pantries stocked their shelves after a joint partnership provided desperately needed supplies. No Frills Supermarket based in Nebraska and MBA Poultry's Smart Giving program teamed up to donate 4,700 pounds of Smart Chicken®. The donation was shared with two local charities that supply local food pantries, Together, Inc. and Mission for All Nations. The Smart Chicken® semi truck pulled in front of No Frills Supermarket, 1230 N. Washington St. in Papillion, with the rough equivalent of 18,000 servings of chicken. Charity volunteers then loaded the chicken for direct distribution to their pantries.

"Supporting these local charities, at a very tough time of year is a wonderful way for No Frills and MBA Poultry to have a direct impact on our local community," says No Frills Vice President of Marketing Lonnie Eggers. "This donation will help these charities feed struggling families for up to two months."

Through the Smart Giving program, MBA Poultry and No Frills Supermarkets donated one pound of chicken for every ten pounds sold for a two month period. Together, Inc., which serves Douglas, Sarpy and Pottawattamie counties, is part of the Metro Food Network. Mission for all Nations, the largest food pantry in Nebraska, serves nearly 25,000 people each year.

"This year, many people are struggling to feed their families. Hard times have certainly hit home," says Michelle Dill, executive director of Together, Inc. "We are very blessed to have the help and support of both No Frills Supermarkets and MBA poultry."

No Frills Supermarket operates 16 supermarkets in Nebraska and Iowa.

Georgia Governor Honors United Egg Producers

On behalf of the State of Georgia, Governor Sonny Perdue (center) recent presented the United Egg Producers with an official Georgia Commendati honoring the members of UEP for the safe, ethical and humane treatment the animals in their care; their concern for the hungry and the development the UEP Certified program. Accepting the commendation during a priva audience at the State Capitol was (left to right) David Lathem of L&R Farm Pendergrass, GA; Chad Gregory, United Egg Producers, senior vice presider James Brock of Crystal Farms, Chestnut Mountain, GA and Brent Booker Country Charm Egg Distributors, Gainesville, GA.

5th Annual Top 100 Chinese Restaurants in the USA Awards Show

Chinese Restaurateurs Gather In Las Vegas

Over 500 Chinese restaurateurs from all over the nation gathered in Las Vegas on January 5 at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino to attend the 5th Annual Top 100 Chinese Restaurants in the USA Awards Show & Conference.

Organized by Chinese Restaurant News, the Top 100 award show was hosted by Master Chef Martin Yan and Co-Emceed by Theresa Lin and Derek Uehara. The event was supported by National Restaurant Association and the Healthydiningfinder.com. Key sponsors included Lee Kum Kee, U.S. Bankcard Services, Inc., and the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino. Notable Asian chefs such as Larry Chu, Chef Chu's and Khai Duong, Executive Chef, Ana Mandara came out to celebrate the winners. Event highlights include an appearance by Mayor Oscar Goodman who welcomed the winners to Vegas and performed a culinary demo with Chef Martin Yan, Chinese zodiac food carving display by Award winning Food sculptor, Jimmy Zhang, the Community Award of Excellence presented to the Asian Chefs Association, and the Lifetime Achievement of Excellence Award to Martin Yan presented by Bob Ansara, Director Emeritus, National Restaurants Association.

AWARD WINNER Master Chef Martin Yan received the Lifetime Achievement Award of Excellence from Chinese Restaurant News at the 5th Annual Top 100 Chinese Restaurants in the USA Awards Show. Bob Ansara, Director Emeritus of National Restaurant Assn. presented Chef Yan with the award. Pictured (left to right): Betty Xie, Editor-in-Chief, Chinese Restaurant News, Master Chef Martin Yan, Bob Ansara, Director Emeritus, National Restaurant Association, and Theresa Lin. (Photo: Lia Chang)

The Top 100 Chinese Restaurants in USA Award is a national event that strives to recognize, cultivate and preserve the best in Chinese cuisine standards and excellence. This special event awarded the Top 100 restaurants in ten categories. Recognition was awarded for excellence in the categories of Regional Cuisine, Local Favorites, Take-Out, Buffets, Asian Fusion, Best Dicor, Signature Dish, Rising Stars, Healthy Menus, and the most prestigious category, Overall Excellence. This year's top ranked 100 Overall Excellence winners including No.1, Koi Palace (Daly City, CA) can be viewed at "http://www.top100chineserestaurants.com

The Top 100 competition is open to all Chinese restaurants in the U.S., included more than 45,000 from all 50 states. Participating restaurants included newly established restaurants, seasoned restaurants, chain restaurants and past award-winners.

Pictured (left to right): Manny Toyos, PAFB; Sally Justice, Cargill Meat Solutions Deli Division; Manny Garcia, PAFB.

Cargill Meat Solutions Receives Broker Honors

Pan American Food Brokers, Inc. (PAFB), Miami, FL, announced its "2008 Manufacturer of the Year" is Cargill Meat Solutions. Cargill Fresh & Deli Solutions, based out of Wichita, KS, is the largest privately held company in the United States ranked 15 overall by Fortune 500 magazine. They are the leading processor and distributor of fresh beef, pork and turkey, which also includes cooked and marinated proteins.

Pictured (left to right): David Gabel, Cargill Meat Solutions Fresh Division; Manny Garcia, PAFB.

Manny Garcia, President and CEO of Pan American Food Brokers, told TODAY'S GROCER, "We're proud to represent Cargill Meat Solutions and it is an honor to name the Fresh Turkey and Deli divisions the 2008 Manufacturer of the Year. The criteria used to determine the winner is based on three specific areas: net contribution, customer service and market support. Despite a downturn in the economy, Cargill Meat Solutions supported our efforts to grow the business in the southeast United States which was up by 72.5% in 2008. Cargill has a tremendous group of people working for them from our regional manager, to our customer service rep to the drivers who deliver our orders. It's a pleasure to work with a professional organization such as Cargill Meat Solutions."

The award for the Deli Division was presented to Sally Justice, and for the Fresh Division was David Gabel.

A&P Raises More Than $125,000 For The American Cancer Society

The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Inc. (A&P) raised more than $125,000 for the American Cancer Society's (ACS) "Making Strides for Breast Cancer" campaign in 2008. Eric Claus, President & CEO of the company, presented the check to American Cancer Society Eastern CEO Donald Distasio on January 22 at the company headquarters.

The monies were raised through register fundraisers held at all Pathmark stores during the month of October. In addition, a portion of the sales from selected America's Choice Products featuring pink packaging and the ACS "Making Strides for Breast Cancer" logo were donated, as well as proceeds from special "Breast Cancer Bouquets" sold at the stores. Since 2002, Pathmark has raised $1.6 million for the American Cancer Association.

"Our Pathmark banner has been raising funds for ACS's 'Making Strides for Breast Cancer' campaign for years," said Eric Claus. "We are proud of the commitment and generosity by our customers and our associates to this truly worthy cause and look forward to continuing our support for ACS in their mission to help fight breast cancer and provide hope to people facing the disease."

Eric Claus, CEO, The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Presents Check to the American Cancer Society Eastern CEO Donald Distasio.

K-VA-T Food Stores'

Pamela Murray Receives WGA Woman of the Year Honors

Pamela D. Murray, of K-VA-T Food Stores Inc., was presented the Woman Grocers of America (WGA) 'Woman of the Year' Award on Thursday, February 5. Pamela Murray received the award at the Chairman's Dinner and Gala at the 2009 National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) Annual Convention and Supermarket Synergy Showcase in Las Vegas.

The WGA Woman of the Year award recognizes an industry woman whose leadership has contributed to the success of her company. This woman must be a member of the National Grocers Association and other industry organizations whose participation and involvement contributes/contributed to the overall well-being of the grocery industry; and must be a community-focused citizen committed to serving the needs of her neighbors, associates and customers through involvement in community and civic affairs.

Throughout her 28 years of employment with K-VA-T Food Stores Inc. (Food City's parent company), Pamela has earned the admiration and respect of her fellow associates and countless individuals who have come to know her personally and professionally. Her outstanding business ethics, high moral values and selflessness have provided a shining example for those working with and around her, creating a true sense of "family" throughout the entire staff.

PAMELA MURRAY
WGA Award Recipient

Nominated by Steven C. Smith, President and CEO and Barbara Thomas, Director of Training, in their nomination they said "while it's somewhat unusual to nominate a candidate who is not the owner, president or senior vice president of a company, many times the key to a company's character and soul is determined by individuals like Pam, who is an inspiration not only to her fellow coworker, but also to anyone that comes in contact with her."

Pamela Murray has been involved in numerous company related organizations and events such as United Way, Big Brother/Big Sister, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Associates, East Tennessee Children's Hospital and numerous others. Additionally, Murray volunteers her personal time and talents to assist coordinating the hospitality tent and suites for Food City's four annual NASCAR races, assisting with the annual Miss Food City's Pageant, helping organize the Virginia's Best Bagger contest, overseeing coordination of Food City's annual associate fundraising projects to assist needy families during the Christmas holidays, as well as being a member of the Women's Grocers of America.

Unilever Moves to Premium Hair Care

Unilever has signed an agreement to acquire the global TIGI professional hair product business and its supporting advanced education academies for a cash consideration of $411.5 million.

Vindi Banga, Unilever President, Foods, Home & Personal Care, said, "This is an exciting acquisition for Unilever. It illustrates our determination to actively manage our portfolio in line with our stated strategic priorities, including a focus on personal care and higher growth areas.

"We already have a strong position in daily hair care and adding the salon brands will further build our position in the hair category. We can bring our world-class R&D expertise to it and offer greater opportunity for geographical expansion. TIGI's strength in styling, and its fashion and beauty expertise will also help us raise the bar on innovation for our existing hair brands."

Upon completion of the transaction, TIGI will operate as a stand-alone Global Business Unit within Unilever, reporting to Michael B. Polk, President, Unilever Americas.

Bruno Mascolo of TIGI, said, "We are excited to join the Unilever family. We have always been passionate about people, so to be able to advance the industry through our products and education by using Unilever's impressive resources, while continuing to involve those who have made us successful – customers and employees – is very gratifying. We look forward to our future together."

TIGI's major brands include Bed Head®, Catwalk® and S-Factor®. TIGI has operations in the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and Australia, employs about 550 people and in 2008, had worldwide sales of approximately $250 million, with almost half coming from the United States.

COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

19-20
ASSOCIATED GROCERS OF FLORIDA FOOD SHOW "The Latin Festival," Doubletree Miami Mart Hotel & Convention Center, Miami, FL. For additional information, contact: Julia Loveira at Tel. 954-876-3151.

MARCH

1-3
THE 16TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL RESTAURANT & FOODSERVICE SHOW OF NEW YORK at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. For information, contact Colleen Griffin at: 203-840-5905.

18-20
THE AMERICAN WHOLESALE MARKETERS ASSOCIATION (AWMA) – Real Deal Expo, Las Vegas Hilton, Las Vegas, NV. To learn more, call: 1-800-482-2962

APRIL

21-24
UNITED FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION 2009, at Sands Megacenter, Las Vegas, NV. Email: unitedfresh@unitedfresh.org

MAY

4-6
FOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE (FMI) 2009 Future Connect, Dallas, TX. For information, contact F.M.I. at: 202-452-8444.

31-JUNE 2
THE 2009 GACS ANNUAL MEETING AND CONVENTION at Marriott Hilton Head Resort & Spa. Register Online "http://www.gacs.com"

JUNE

28-30
NATIONAL ASSN. FOR THE SPECIALTY FOOD TRADE (NASFT) 55th Summer Fancy Food Show at Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York, NY. For additional information, call: 212-482-6440.

To have your function included in this column, send complete information at least 90 days in advance. Please send to Dennis Kane, Editor, TODAYS GROCER, P.O. Box 430760, S. Miami, FL 33243 or email to: dennismkane@todaysgrocer.com

Weis Markets CEO

David Hepfinger Appointed to Company Board

DAVID HEPFINGER

Weis Markets announced company President and Chief Executive Officer David J. Hepfinger has been appointed to the company's Board of Directors. Mr. Hepfinger replaces recently retired company CEO Norman S. Rich.

Hepfinger was appointed to the Board during a regularly scheduled board meeting held in Sunbury earlier this week. He joined the company as President and Chief Operating Officer last March and replaced Rich as CEO on January 1.

Weis Markets Inc. is a Mid-Atlantic food retailer operating 154 stores in states: Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and West Virginia.

Grupo Bimbo Completes Weston Foods Deal

Grupo Bimbo, S.A.B. de C.V. announced the completion of its acquisition of the U.S. fresh bakery business of Weston Foods, Inc. (WFI) from Dunedin Holdings S.a r.l., a subsidiary of Toronto-based George Weston Limited and the separate acquisition of related financial assets. The acquisition has received necessary regulatory approvals.

The two transactions were valued at $2,380 million and $125 million, respectively. The combined $2,505 million payment was made through $2,300 million in financing and the Company's existing cash holdings.

"This transaction is the most important in Grupo Bimbo's history and one of the largest in the bread industry. Size alone, however, is not our main objective. Rather, our vision is to become the best baking company and we furthered that goal today by demonstrating a commitment and dedication to serving our consumers and customers in the most effective way possible," said Daniel Servitje, Chief Executive Officer of Grupo Bimbo.

The company's U.S. operations, Bimbo Bakeries USA (BBU), will be the largest baked-goods company in the U.S. BBU will be the leading U.S. producer and marketer of a wide variety of baked goods including bread, buns, sweet baked goods and cakes with bakeries nationwide. BBU's portfolio of brands will include ARNOLD®, BIMBO®, BOBOLI®, BROWNBERRY®, ENTENMANN'S®, FRANCISCO®, FREIHOFER'S®, MARINELA®, MRS BAIRD'S®, OROWEAT®, STROEHMANN®, THOMAS'® and TIA ROSA®.

BBU will employ over 15,000 associates, operate 35 plants and distribute its products through more than 7,000 routes.

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Mahatma Long Grain White Rice, Whole Grain Brown Rice, Valencia, Mahatma Gold®, authentic aged Basmati Rice, Thai Jasmine Rice, great tasting, simple-to-prepare flavorful Rice Mixes and popular Water Maid® Medium Grain Rice provide the perfect product selections for all your rice customers.

Riviana®

GROWN IN THE USA RICE

Riviana Foods Inc., Houston, Texas

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