

EMPIRE DISTRIBUTORS BUILDS HUGE NEW TRIANGLE FACILITY

MORRISVILLE, N.C. (March 1, 2007) - Empire Distributors is doubling the size of its operations with a new routing delivery center in the Research Triangle Park. The \$13.3 million venture improves Empire's ability to deliver a wider range of options to the dinner table.

"Empire Distributors is dedicated to ensuring that you have more choices," said Paul Powell, general manager of North Carolina's Empire division, adding the move is a boon for economic development in the Triangle. "Empire is a locally-owned business employing a large number of people."

Empire's new center is a 230,000 square-foot facility just off of T.W. Alexander Drive, near I-40 and Brier Creek. Powell said the expansion was necessary due to the sheer increase in orders from around the state. Empire has been a wholesale alcoholic beverage distributor in the southeastern part of the United States since 1940.

Empire brings to market North Carolina wines from Duplin, Shelton, Raylin, Hannover Park, Chatham Hill and Grove, as well as a dizzying array of wines from around the world. He said Empire's local understanding of the market and what wines are available is critical to helping get little-known great wines on grocery store shelves.

"Distributors like Empire are locally owned and operated businesses that promote responsibility, ensure quality and offer you variety," said Dean Plunkett, Executive Director of the North Carolina Beer & Wine Wholesalers Association.

Local tastes are driving the wine and beer market ahead in North Carolina. In the past 18 months, two other local distributors have greatly expanded their facilities. Long Beverage recently built a 135,000 square-foot facility in Durham now employing 140 people. Harris Wholesale recently completed an expansion project in east Raleigh for approximately \$11.3 million and employs 285 workers.

Powell said Empire is committed to giving back to the communities in which they live and work. And that means ensuring North Carolina has a solid control mechanism to support local business and protect families. He added that as good members of the community, Empire makes preventing underage drinking a top priority.

For more information about Empire Distributors, visit www.empiredist.org.

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