



REAL ESTATE & RETAIL; Stater Bros. To Expand Its Line Of Organic Products

By JOSEPH ASCENZI, THE BUSINESS PRESS

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Stater Bros. is going 'Full Circle.'

That's the name of its new line of 110 all-natural and organic products, which includes cereals, pastas, pasta sauces, peanut butter, fruit preserves, canned vegetables, rice, soy milk, coffee and teas, according to a company statement.

By the end of 2007, the Colton-based grocery store chain will have added another 80 or so items to its Full Circle roster, including organic milk, eggs, dried fruit, frozen vegetables, yogurt and orange juice.

For the past two years, Stater Bros. has carried about 115 organic products under various labels in its frozen foods, dairy and produce sections, said Jack Brown, Stater Bros. chairman and chief executive officer.

But Brown decided that more people want to eat healthy, so it was time for Stater Bros. to introduce even more organic products.

"This isn't a fluke," he said. "If we want to stay ahead of the race, we always need to be figuring out what products people want. That's my job as a merchant. People are eating healthier, and they're teaching their kids to eat healthier. I felt like the market was heading this way two years ago."

Even people who don't buy organic products will appreciate that Stater Bros. is offering something new.

"People like their market to do something first," Brown said. "They like the fact that other people will be able to get something they're looking for."

No extra costs are associated with adding more organic products, and finding shelf space won't be an issue.

"Our stores average about 44,000 square feet and each one carries about 40,000 items," Brown said. "Re-arranging the shelves for a couple of hundred new products won't be a problem."

Stater Bros. operates 162 supermarkets and employs more than 17,000 people.

It is the largest private employer in Riverside and San Bernardino counties and is the largest privately owned supermarket chain in California.

New store for outlets

Lane Bryant, which specializes in clothing for large women, has opened a store at Lake Elsinore Outlets.

The plus-size clothing store covers 5,000 square feet at the north end of the outlet mall across, from the Gap Outlet store, according to a release.

The store held its soft opening July 7 and its grand opening July 28. Lane Bryant operates more than 700 stores and specializes in high-end fashion for women sizes 14 through 28, according to the release.

OC developer buys land

An Irvine developer has bought two parcels in Riverside and says it will develop light-industrial projects on both sites.

Birtcher Development & Investments announced July 24 that it has bought approximately 90.5 acres of raw land at Mt. Vernon and Palmyra avenues for \$9.6 million, according to a release.

The site is part of Hunter Business Park. The seller was Riverside Commercial Investors, according to the release.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for the first quarter of next year. Birtcher Development plans to build Birtcher Business Centre at Mt. Vernon, a four-building, 426,000-square-foot industrial project, on the site, according to the release.

Also on July 24, Birtcher Development announced that it had purchased 22.8 acres of vacant land in unincorporated Riverside County for \$4 million. The site, at General Drive and Clay Street, is the future site of a three-building industrial park that will be named Birtcher Business Centre at General Drive.

All three buildings will cover 286,000 square feet.

The sellers were Don and Barbara Cox and the De Anza Partners, according to a release.

Birtcher Development is developing - or planning to develop - about 123 acres in Riverside and San Bernardino counties, mostly mid-sized industrial projects. Collectively those projects are worth about \$252 million.

Birtcher Development recently completed Corona Crossroads, an eight-building industrial park.

Founded in 1939, Birtcher Development has developed more than 60 million square feet of office, industrial and retail projects throughout the western United States, according to the company's release.