



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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Gov. Blagojevich announces Jel Sert Company to expand in West Chicago and create 300 new jobs

Illinois Finance Authority supports growth plans for maker of Sipahh®[®], Wyler's®[®] and Royal®[®] brand products

CHICAGO - As part of his commitment to grow Illinois business and industry, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich announced today that the Jel Sert Company is investing \$10 million to expand its business operations in West Chicago (DuPage County). Well-known for its many consumer food brands including Wyler's powdered drink mix and Royal gelatin and pudding, the Jel Sert Company recently introduced a milk flavoring straw called "Sipahh" which is rapidly becoming a favorite of children and their parents nationwide. This expansion project, supported by industrial revenue bonds issued by the Illinois Finance Authority (IFA), will help Jel Sert add 300 new jobs to their West Chicago manufacturing facility.

"This project will allow a growing innovative company to expand its operations and create more good paying manufacturing jobs in Illinois. I commend Jel Sert Company for adding hundreds of new jobs in West Chicago and DuPage County and the Illinois Finance Authority for supporting this project," said Governor Blagojevich.

"We are very thankful to the Governor and the Illinois Finance Authority for this opportunity to advantageously fund our needed expansion and to create more jobs for Illinois," said Jel Sert Company President Ken Wegner.

Known as a maker of fun foods, Jel Sert is a manufacturer of well-known brands of gelatin desserts, powdered drink mixes, freezer pops, fruit drinks, pudding mixes, milk flavoring straws, dessert kits, and healthcare products. Brand names include: Wyler's, Wyler's Light, Pop-Ice, Fla-Vor-Ice, Otter Pops, Royal, Mondo, My-T-Fine, Mr. Freeze, Flavor Aid and Sipahh. The company's unique manufacturing capabilities are also used to produce products for healthcare and nutritional food companies such as Abbott Laboratories, Clif Bar & Company, and Weight Watchers International.

In early 2007, Jel Sert introduced a new product called “Sipahh” -- a straw that contains flavor beads that is used to flavor milk. As milk flows through the straw, the beads provide flavoring for the milk. Initial flavors include chocolate, cookies and cream, strawberry, and banana.

The factory in West Chicago is Jel Sert’s primary production facility. Bond proceeds will be used to add capacity for both the flavored straws as well as powdered drink mixes.

The project financing utilizes \$10 million of Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs) issued by the IFA on behalf of Jel Sert Company. IRBs provide federally tax-exempt financing for qualifying industrial projects that spur job creation. The transaction provides Jel Sert with mid-to-long term low interest rates that helped make the project financially feasible.

“IFA has been charged by Governor Blagojevich to be proactive, using our bonding authority to foster economic development in every region, and to address the specific needs of our local industries and governments,” said IFA Executive Director Kym M. Hubbard. “Jel Sert has a history of innovation and successful new product launches. This plant expansion supports demand for both their new and existing products. We look forward to Jel Sert’s continued growth and the benefits that these 300 new jobs will provide throughout the region,” said Hubbard.

The bonds were purchased by GE Capital. The State of Illinois provided \$10 million of its 2007 state volume cap to support the project. The financial responsibility for payment of the Series 2007 Bonds lies with the Jel Sert Company.