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Community Calendar						
September 2005						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

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## Local Distributor To Offer New Option for Soft Drink Consumers

Cheerwine soft drink, which has quenched the thirst of consumers throughout the Southeast for nearly 90 years with a unique cherry taste, rich burgundy color and bubbly effervescence, is now available in six counties in northeastern Missouri and three counties in southeastern Iowa through Pepsi-Cola Memphis Bottling Co. of Memphis.

The expansion to the nation's heartland gives Cheerwine a presence in an area from northeast Missouri near the Iowa and Illinois borders to the south near Interstate 70.

"We regularly hear from consumers from across the country who grew up with Cheerwine but now live where we don't have a presence," said Mark Ritchie, president of Carolina Beverage Corp., maker of Cheerwine and a fourth-generation, family owned soft drink company headquartered in Salisbury, N.C.

"With this new presence in the Midwest, we can serve a core group of consumers, while also introducing Cheerwine to even more thirsty fans," Ritchie said.

According to Mike Johnson, president of Pepsi-Cola Memphis Bottling, "soft drink consumers are craving distinctive tastes."

"Today's consumers are searching for unique, flavorful drinks, and Cheerwine really fits that bill," Johnson said. "Cheerwine is a full-flavored brand that fits in nicely with our portfolio."

Cheerwine and Diet Cheerwine are available in the Missouri markets in 20-ounce bottles and 12-pack cartons.

Cheerwine is distributed in North and South Carolina, as well as portions of Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Virginia, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Indiana, Arkansas, West Virginia, Florida, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois and Indiana.

Carolina Beverage Corp. was founded in Salisbury, N.C., in 1917 and originated the Cheerwine and Diet Cheerwine soft drink brands. Carolina Beverage also markets its own Blue Mist purified water.

Cheerwine was first formulated in the basement of L. D. Peeler's wholesale grocery store. It all started in 1913 when Peeler and other investors bought stock in a regional branch of a Kentucky company that made a then popular soft drink called MintCola.

In 1917, they would buy out the local company and change the name to Carolina Beverage Corporation.

Meanwhile, a "flavor salesman from St. Louis" sold Peeler on a unique cherry flavor to blend with other flavorings that would later become the taste of Cheerwine.

Back then, soft drinks were often named for their appearance, hence the names root beer and ginger ale. Therefore, it made sense to name a burgundy-red, bubbly, cherry