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## The Top New Products of 2011

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By Susan Durtschi, president, Past Times Marketing

JERSEY CITY, N.J. -- Twenty-two products in 21 product categories (there was one tie) were named winners in the 15th annual *Convenience Store News* Best New Products Awards competition. Judged again this year by Past Times Marketing, the submitted entries were rated on the criteria of taste, value, convenience, healthfulness, quality ingredients, preparation requirements, appearance and packaging.

New York-based Past Times Marketing reviews and rates the products based on focus group interviews and targeted online surveys with consumers. Here are this year's top new products:



**Carbonated Soft Drink: (tie) Xyience Xtreme Fruit Punch.** A sugar- and calorie-free drink that's fortified with vitamins. All-natural flavors give it no aftertaste. "A refreshing standout," said one panelist. Perfect substitute to diet colas. Xyience rated very high for taste. The value size was also a plus.



**Carbonated Soft Drink: (tie) Kill Cliff Endurance and Recovery Drink.** Not only for the sports minded, this is a tasty carbonated soft drink that has a truly beneficial formula for sports recovery on a daily basis. It contains the right blend of nutrients and anti-inflammatory ingredients to tackle the real culprit for reduced performance -- inflammation. Our team was impressed with the fine taste and the diabetic- and hangover-friendly attributes. Plus, this drink was created by a former U.S. Navy Seal and this company gives back to the U.S. military.



**Other Tobacco Products: Zig-Zag Straight Up Cigarillos two-packs.** The famous Zoave dude is back in another iteration: Zig-Zag Cigarillos. Made from premium Zig-Zag tobaccos, they're available in straight-up natural flavor and come in resealable flavor-saving packs. Two cigarillos per pack.



**Non-Chocolate Candy: Mike & Ike's RedRageous!** This candy product features a variety of flavors, all in the color red -- Cherry, Strawberry, Watermelon, Raspberry and Fruit Punch. A great new blend that gives a satisfying taste, and a sweet and sour punch.



**Chocolate Candy: Snickers Peanut Butter Squared.** Our group of tasters went nuts for this addition to the Snickers family. The two squares, together in one package, contain a layer of peanut butter between the

nougat and the caramel. Great for portion control or sharing.



**Gum/Mints:** Trident Vitality. Clever on-trend update. Gum-chewing consumers who are into sugar-free with a touch of well-being should like the new Vitality flavor series from Trident. We tasted three types, each with clever packaging -- Vigorate (citrus with vitamin C), Rejuve (with mint and white tea), and Awaken (peppermint with a dash of ginseng).



**Foodservice/Breakfast:** Jimmy Dean D-Lights. Everyone wants breakfast on the go with no fuss, and this product offers one thing better -- great taste with one-third fewer calories and less than half the fat. Our panel was pleasantly surprised with the flavors of this one. Pull this out of the fridge and nuke it, and you are all set. A heart-healthy sandwich with turkey sausage, egg whites and cheese. The muffin has 5 grams of whole grains, too.

**Foodservice/Lunch/Dinner:** Kickin' Jalapeno Charbroil expect to hear the raves for a sandwich. Everyone wanted to purchase this frozen burger. its homework. First of all, it as well as thick meat, a large



**AdvancePierre's Big AZ with Cheese.** We did not packaged hearty know where they could AdvancePierre has done has very good packaging, portion and it was very

flavorful. Spicy, but not too spicy, this had great overall appeal. Also, the bun did not deteriorate. It's car friendly, too.



**Hispanic/Latino Food Innovation: Don Miguel's Chipolte Chicken Krispy Chimichanga.** A lightly

fried, crispy item with generous filling and hand-rolled. Our panel warmed to the crispness and the seasonings. A very satisfying and fresh-tasting version of a burrito with appeal to both the Latino and Anglo customer.



**Foodservice/Condiments: Chester's Dipping Sauces and Dispenser.**

A well-designed counter display spinner shows off all the sauces that are great with chicken tenders and potato wedges. Chester's has figured out the right size of sauce container for the dip. Truly innovative. There are six sauces to choose from. The signature sauce is the Remoulade, a tangy variety with Cajun spices. Other flavors include RedHot Buffalo, Ranch, BBQ, Honey Mustard and Sweet & Sour. All tasted very authentic, come in nice-sized 2-ounce portions, and the taste testers liked trying the different varieties. Flavorful and fresh tasting.



**Foodservice/Baked Goods: Prairie City's Premium Apple Fritters.**

These baked goods are a generous 4.8 ounces in size, fresh-frozen and come in a variety of doughnut types. Our testers went wild for the Apple Fritters, although they were also impressed with the Jumbo Old Fashioned and Long Johns. Prairie City says being fresh-frozen locks in the freshness and suspends staling process. It works. Once thawed at store level, shelf life is about three days if stored in the master pack.

**Packaged Ice Cream: Blue Bunny Caramel Pecan Chocolate Bars.** Single-serve, extra tasty vanilla ice cream bars with a layer of caramel and pecans covered in chocolate coating. This perfectly sized ice cream bar gives others a run for their money. Again, our panel wanted to know what stores had this. Simply indulgent.



**Frozen Novelty: Blue Bunny Single Serve Personals Birthday Party Ice Cream.** Creamy and generous portion was the first thing out of our panelists' mouths. Colorful, too. Innovative packaging with oval container and spoon under lid. Perfect for the freezer selection at your store next to your ice cream bars. Easy to eat on the go.



**Salty Snacks: General Mills Chex Mix Muddy Buddies.** This product was inspired by a popular homemade recipe, sometimes called Puppy Chow. Chex Mix Muddy Buddies is a rich combination of chocolate and peanut butter Corn Chex cereal pieces tossed in a sweet powdery coating. The salty and sweet contrast keeps you dipping in for more. "Totally addictive," said our panel. When they saw that it said, "Limited Edition" on the 10-ounce package, they hoped it would not be a short run.



**Packaged Sweet Snacks: Nabisco Oreo Fudge Cremes by Kraft.** Satisfying fresh-tasting Oreo top and cream covered in chocolate. Four in a pack. Great innovation. They also have peanut butter crème, but our tasters loved the fudge crèmes. Great for a pick-me-up at the checkout counter.



**Alternative Snacks: Welch's Fruit Snacks.** Think health and wellness snack. Packaging is colorful with a gluten- and fat-free label. Tasty mouthwatering varieties, no preservatives and also has vitamins. Our panel was hooked. What's not to like? Great for children and adults.



**Chilled Snacks: Disney Foodles Crunch Pak.** When you see the Mickey Mouse packaging with a different food in each ear and face, you have to giggle. Fresh apple slices combined with grapes and cheese cubes, or fresh apple slices with raisins and caramel sauce or mini pretzels, all plastic-sealed for freshness. Great to add to mom and dad's arsenal of healthy foods for their kids. These would be perfect for a school field trip lunch, summer vacation road trip or even to take to Disneyworld. Crisp apple slices, flavorful grapes, all together very satisfying and fresh.



**Health & Beauty Care : Zazen Sleep Formula Relaxation Shots.** Perfect for travelers who cannot take pharmaceutical products. This formula is designed to help you to relax faster, rest deeper, stay asleep longer and awake refreshed. It has none of the aftereffects associated with some competitor sleep aids. It does have 2,325 milligrams of active sleep-inducing herbs and cell-protecting antioxidants. Several self-admitted insomniacs on the panel scored it very high. They also liked the unique triangular bottle shape.



**Automotive/Travel: Mizco Travel Chargers.** Three-in-one chargers for car, home or office. This product has very well-designed and informative packaging and consists of two SKU solutions that cover 95 percent of all mobile phones in the marketplace. Charge by car or wall socket. Free connector tips for life and comes with a lifetime warranty. Affordable, too.



**General Merchandise: BIC Pro Series Mexican Soccer Designs.** Eight lighters are in this new series targeted to Mexican-American males, age 25 and up. Highly recognizable brands such as Chivas and Club America. This lighter is intended to offer twice the lights of the next leading full-size brand.



**Energy Products: Sheets Energy Strips by Convenient Valet.** When they say, "A new way to do energy," they aren't kidding. Delivers three coffee cups worth of caffeine in one strip. Put the strip under your tongue and it is fast-dissolving and loaded with B-vitamins. Individually wrapped, no calories or sugar. Comes in Cinnamon Rush and Berry Blast. "Wowee" -- a real kick.



**Packaging Innovation: M&M'S Brand Star Wars Light Up Saber by Candyrific.** These light sabers glow when you push the button and instantly become ready for battle. The force opens up for the M&M'S candies in Fun Size

at the base. Has real kid appeal.

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