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A PACKAGING COMPANY FLEXES ITS WAY TO THE WESTERN CROSSROADS

TOOELE (Utah) _ After spending 15 years in the packaging industry in the UK, Mark Dorey's instinct told him that the environmentally friendly resealable pouches that were popular in Europe would one day wrap the American market.

His hunch was right and he is now one of the partners of Flexpack USA, Inc., a national packaging company based in Orlando, Florida, that is slated to begin distributing to the west from the Utah Industrial Depot in August.

Flexpack supplies stand up resealable pouches that serve as an alternative to traditional rigid containers. Flexpack pouches are made of laminated plastic, offering significant reduction in raw materials used to package products.

"The concept has been popular for a long time in Europe," Dorey said. "Eight years ago, we brought the idea to the U.S., now, we're a national supplier."

Although several other companies have followed his lead, Flexpack is the only full service company of its kind in America. In addition to supplying the pouches, Flexpack offers graphic design for the labels and also contracts packaging services to fill the pouches and distribute them across the country.

"Since more and more of our clients are national companies, we decided to open a regional warehouse to cater to our clients in the west," Dorey said. Flexpack's clients include Imperial Sugar Co., Mid Florida Mining, manufacturer of cat litter company, Cumberland Swan, supplier of pharmaceuticals to Wal-Mart and Hain Foods, a subsidiary of Heinz.

"We picked this location for our warehouse because Utah is a crossroads to the west," Dorey said. "And we picked the Utah Industrial Depot because it's affordable and it offers onsite rail service, which is crucial to efficient distribution."

Five-year leases are the industry standard, but Flexpack has signed a one-year lease for 22,000 square feet of warehouse space with room to grow in a 45,000 square-foot facility.

"We were flexible because they're testing out the western market, and we respect that," said UID associate Marty Farnsworth. "In the last two years, the depot has leased 900,000 square feet of space. What we've learned is that once businesses get started here, they take off. If business goes according to plan for Flexpack, expansion will be as easy as moving their product into the next bay."

Flexpack will start its Tooele operation with half a dozen employees, with the potential of employing up to 60.

"With easy access to western markets and the availability of labor here, the opportunity for growth is tremendous," Dorey said.

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