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MAINE-BASED GIFFORD'S ICE CREAM REPORTS SUCCESSFUL 2009: COMPANY EARNS SALES GROWTH, NATIONAL COVERAGE, AND MAJOR NEW ACCOUNTS

Skowhegan, ME – Gifford's Ice Cream (www.giffordsicecream.com), central Maine's multi-generational ice cream company, wrapped up 2009 and launched 2010 with solid business growth news. Over the course of 2009, the company – whose premium ice cream is distributed throughout New England, New York, and New Jersey – garnered several high-profile industry awards, attracted the attention of national outlets such as Food Network, expanded its customer base, and enjoyed impressive annual growth.

The regional favorite earned the title of "World's Best Chocolate Ice Cream" in the World Dairy Expo 2009 contest, having received a rare perfect score from dairy science professionals who judged flavor, body and texture, melting quality, color, and appearance. It was the second "World's Best" win for Gifford's Chocolate Ice Cream; the company also earned the coveted award at the 2007 competition.

Gifford's also took top honors at the 2009 New Jersey Ice Cream Festival. For the second year in a row, Gifford's Old Fashioned Vanilla flavor won First Prize at the seventh annual event that judges local, regional and national brands for best flavor, texture and popularity.



As the result of its impressive winnings, Gifford's attracted the attention of Food Network producers in late 2009. Producers of the show "Unwrapped" visited the Gifford's plant in December for a full-day shoot for an upcoming episode titled "21st Century Chocolate" to be aired later this year. The film crew focused on manufacturing processes as well as Gifford's unique history and products, and conducted extensive interviews with Roger and John Gifford, Gifford's president and treasurer, respectively.

"This past year was an incredibly rewarding year for the Gifford family and the Gifford's Ice Cream team," remarked Lindsay Gifford, vice president of sales and marketing. "We're all looking forward to the airing of 'Unwrapped' and sharing the spotlight with the rest of Maine – this kind of exposure is great for the whole state and the many outstanding food products produced here."

In addition, Gifford was interviewed by the hosts of the nationally syndicated CRN Talk Radio's "What's Cookin'" show and by Roseann Tully, founder and editor of *Intermezzo* magazine, for a segment on CBS Radio's "Connoisseurs' Corner." Gifford's also earned coverage from *The Boston Herald*; New England Cable News; and a variety of network affiliates.

Award-winning products and national exposure affect business interest, and Gifford's reported this week substantial growth in 2009 – a year that obviously introduced its own set of challenges for businesses

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nationwide. While sales of ice cream and other frozen desserts increased by only 1.5 percent in 2009 (according to a report by market research firm Packaged Facts), Gifford's bested that by more than four times, adding several high-profile accounts to its portfolio, including the University of Connecticut (UConn), the Meadowbrook U.S. Cellular Pavilion concert facility in Gilford, NH., Rutgers University, Colby College in Waterville, Maine, and the Walmart Distribution Center in Lewiston, Maine.

In related business news, fans of Gifford's Ice Cream also benefited when the company launched in February 2009 its larger, 64-oz (half-gallon) carton – without raising the product cost. Citing respect for families struggling to make ends meet, the Gifford family made the unusual business decision to upsize the carton from 56 ounces to 64, at no additional charge.

Gifford's Ice Cream has for decades made all of its flavors using fresh, pasteurized, growth-hormone-free milk from local Maine dairy farms, and the dairy industry in Maine continued to benefit from Gifford's commitment to buying local. The company estimates that it purchases between 15 and 20 million gallons of milk from local farms annually, creating jobs and income for area farmers. Company records indicate that Gifford's relies on milk from approximately 25 average-sized family farms to meet production demands each year.

As the last remaining family-owned and operated regional ice cream producer in Northern New England, it's a responsibility the company takes seriously.

"We are – and always have been – very focused on buying local ingredients whenever possible," Gifford says. "Our company has a rich family history, and we think of New England as our extended family. It's only natural for us to support our local friends and neighbors."

Gifford reports that the company is planning additional growth, new flavors and continued community involvement in 2010.

About Gifford's Ice Cream:

Gifford's Ice Cream sources its fresh cream and milk exclusively from independent family farms in Maine and relies on antique 1940s Cherry Burrell freezers coupled with a state-of-the-art freezing system to achieve its award-winning, creamy texture and fresh-churned consistency. The multi-generation, family-owned company uses only the finest ingredients, from nuts, berries, and fresh fruits to premium chocolate, imported vanilla extract and pure, all-natural Maine maple syrup. Gifford's has earned numerous international and national "First Place" and "World's Best" awards for its premium ice cream and sherbet and continues to expand its distribution and offerings.

Available throughout northern New England at Hannaford locations, Shaw's Supermarkets, and Roche Bros. locations, Gifford's Ice Cream also is offered in several hundred ice cream stands throughout New England, New York and New Jersey and is served at a growing number of high-profile account locations, including The Meadowbrook U.S. Cellular Pavilion in New Hampshire, Rutgers University and the University of Connecticut.

For further information, visit www.giffordsicecream.com.

To request photos, or to schedule an interview with Lindsay Gifford, Gifford's Ice Cream VP of sales, contact Ann Ewing at Ph: 207.699.5500 or Ann@FrontBurnerPR.com.

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