



EMPIRE
COMPANY LIMITED

Empire Company and its family of brands – Sobeys, IGA, Safeway, Farm Boy, Foodland, FreshCo, Thrifty Foods and Rachelle Béry – partner with District Ventures to springboard success for local food entrepreneurs

The new partnership will provide Canadian early stage food and beverage companies with support and coaching from the national grocery chain

Toronto, ON (February 4, 2020) – District Ventures, Canada's leading ecosystem focused on bringing capital, marketing, programming and commercialization to companies in the food, beverage and health CPG industries, is thrilled to announce an innovative new partnership with Empire Company and its family of brands. The national grocer has become title sponsor of District Ventures' Accelerator program and District Ventures Kitchen.

Through this one-of-a-kind partnership, Canadian food entrepreneurs in the District Ventures Accelerator program will receive valuable support from Empire, including coaching from Local Development Managers and opportunities to bring their products to the grocer's store shelves within a region or across Canada. The new partnership with District Ventures is a natural extension of Empire's long-standing commitment to being the national grocer that Canadian families can count on for local food and well-being products that they have come to know and love.

"This exciting new partnership is enormous for entrepreneurs and companies in the food, beverage and health industries," said Arlene Dickinson, CEO of District Ventures. "Since 2015, we have been committed to supporting early stage companies in these spaces. Empire's sponsorship highlights the importance of this work and reinforces the fact that we need to support companies that both feed and nourish our communities and assist them in achieving their fullest potential."

The partnership comes on the heels of District Ventures' acquisition of commercial kitchen, Food Starter, from the City of Toronto in late 2019. Now operating under the name District Ventures Kitchen, the 20,000 sq. ft. commercial kitchen provides local food and beverage entrepreneurs with access to a broad array of equipment and programming to help build and grow their businesses, including production spaces, packaging facilities, and business advisory services. Both the District Ventures Kitchen and District Ventures Accelerator facilities will proudly don the Sobeys logo.

"Empire has a rich history of meaningfully investing in local growers and suppliers across Canada," said Jana Sobey, Vice President of Merchandising, Thrifty Foods, Community and Field for Sobeys Inc. "Supporting local is at the heart of everything we do, and we are incredibly

proud to stand side-by-side with District Ventures as we continue to nurture the countless innovative food entrepreneurs in communities large and small right across our country.”

Fast Facts on Empire’s Commitment to Local Food and Beverage Entrepreneurs:

- Empire ensures great local products always have a place in its assortments. In-store signage proudly highlights local products.
- Empire is proud to work with local food and beverage suppliers of all sizes, some of whom may only have production capacity to supply a few local stores.
- Empire retail banners carry an assortment of more than 5,000 local products in stores across Canada.
- Sobeys actively sources local products through a dedicated team of Local Development Managers who are specifically focused on seeking out and building partnerships with local suppliers.
- Since the establishment of the Local Development Team in 2018, Sobeys has proudly partnered with more than 800 local suppliers.
- From February 4 to May 1, 2020, Sobeys will be hosting its third annual Local Supplier Road Show. Visiting 10 towns and cities across Canada, the Local Supplier Road Shows feature a series of informative discussions detailing how local suppliers can build a successful partnership with Sobeys.

Fast Facts on District Ventures:

- Founded in 2015.
- Led by renowned entrepreneur and investor, Arlene Dickinson.
- Canada’s first comprehensive ecosystem of resources dedicated to supporting early-stage companies in the food, beverage and health CPG industries.
- Comprised of a venture capital fund, business accelerator, commercial kitchen and marketing support.
- Headquartered in Calgary, Alberta with an office and commercial kitchen located in Toronto, Ontario.
- Have supported over 260 companies and helped create close to 1,000 jobs.

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About District Ventures

District Ventures is Canada's leading ecosystem that focuses on bringing capital, marketing, programming and commercialization to companies in the food, beverage and health CPG industries. District Ventures is led by renowned Canadian entrepreneur Arlene Dickinson and comprised of a venture capital fund, accelerator, commercial kitchen, and marketing experts, which operate alongside each other to assist companies in increasing their sales, distribution and ultimately their company's valuation.

Companies interested in joining the accelerator program are encouraged to visit <https://districtventures.ca>.

Companies interested in learning more about District Ventures Kitchen are encouraged to visit <https://districtventureskitchen.com>.

About Empire

Empire Company Limited (TSX: EMP.A) is a Canadian company headquartered in Stellarton, Nova Scotia. Empire's key businesses are food retailing, through wholly-owned subsidiary Sobeys Inc., and related real estate. With approximately \$25.6 billion in annualized sales and \$13.8 billion in assets, Empire and its subsidiaries, franchisees and affiliates employ approximately 123,000 people. Additional financial information relating to Empire, including the Company's Annual Information Form, can be found on the Company's website at www.empireco.ca or on SEDAR at www.sedar.com.