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Finished with that water bottle? Compost it

JOSH BOATWRIGHT • OCTOBER 4, 2009 12:15 AM

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Business: Blue Moon Water, Asheville-based bottled water company.

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Who: Christopher Mathis, president; N'ann Harp, vice president; about 10 employees.

Headquarters: Asheville.

Offerings: Water bottled from mountain springs in Western North Carolina. The company recently announced it would begin selling water in fully biodegradable bottles.

Prices: Biodegradable 20-ounce bottles available in retail stores for \$1. Blue Moon also offers bottles by the case and delivery service for 5-gallon bottles.

Inspiration: Harp and Mathis purchased Blue Moon Water in 2006 with the desire to transform it from a boutique business into a larger community enterprise. "We had always dreamed of starting a spring water business because of the beautiful springs on mountain-top land we own," Harp said. All water comes from springs within 20 miles of Asheville.

Business tip for tough economy: The company is growing in the midst of the recession, which Harp attributes to customers' increased desire to buy local. "More and more people are re-examining and making consumer decisions based on the importance of core health/life values," she said.

Higher calling: The switch to biodegradable bottles was driven by the company's motto, "Think Global, Drink Local." The new bottles are 100 percent biodegradable in both composting and landfill environments," the company said in a news

release. Depending on conditions, they break down "in as little as 12 months." They're also recyclable.

Doing good: Blue Moon offers rebates and fundraising support to nonprofits, schools and other organizations that pick up water at the company's main facility on Riverside Drive, reducing emissions from home delivery. The company also supports a variety of green organizations and initiatives in WNC.

Local partner: "When they approached us we were interested in carrying a local product because we have



Nann Harp of Blue Moon Water says consumers' commitment to values has allowed the company to thrive during the recession. (Erin Brethauer/ebrethau@citizen-times.com)

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been a supporter of buying local products ever since the inception of the store," said Ron Ainspan, who stocks Blue Moon at the Grove Corner Market in West Asheville. "I think people are pretty health and quality-conscious around here too, so when you can combine those attributes with local sourcing it's just a winning situation for everybody."

Where to buy: Most local groceries stock individual bottles. Delivery is available for larger orders.

Up next: Harp and Mathis are working to acquire springs rights in strategic places across the region so they can expand their territory while maintaining a short shipping distance from water sources.

Contact: 253-6060 or www.BlueMoonWater.com.

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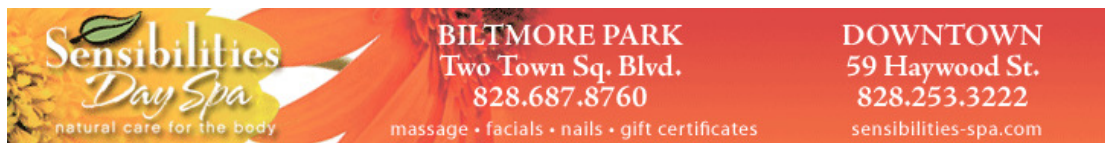
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