



**Media Contacts:**

**Eddie Owens**, Director of Communications/PR  
O: 806.788.4863 C: 806.928.0462  
[eowens@unitedtexas.com](mailto:eowens@unitedtexas.com)

**Kerri Fulks**, Public Relations Support  
O: 972.499.6617 C: 214.549.9837  
[kerri.fulks@hck2.com](mailto:kerri.fulks@hck2.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 4, 2013**

## **United Supermarkets Expands Manufacturing Operations, Introduces Two New Tortilla Products**

**(LUBBOCK, Texas)** – On a brisk day not too long ago, a small convoy of trucks pulled into the parking lot of Praters Foods in south Lubbock and began unloading the newest piece of machinery in the food manufacturing operation of United Supermarkets, LLC.

In no time, the 90-foot-long machine was cranking out 800 dozen – that's 9,600 – flour tortillas every hour.

United is officially in the tortilla-making business – and in a big way.

“The real driving factor behind this is making a quality product,” said Mike Springer, national sales manager of Praters Foods, the company’s manufacturing arm. “We were challenged to deliver a product with better quality.”



The challenge came from Scott Nettles, senior director of perishables for United Supermarkets, LLC, who saw an opportunity to reclaim lost sales following a tortilla brand manufacturer’s decision to change its formula. “There was a brand of tortilla we carried where the feeling was the quality had dropped off,” said Jay Parker, who oversees research and development at Praters.

“They changed their formula, and that resulted in lost sales because people left the brand. Scott had the vision that if we recaptured the quality, we would recapture those lost sales,” Parker added.

Requiring five Praters staff members to operate, the tortilla machine now produces two distinctly different products. “The ‘Mi Pueblo’ recipe is your basic table tortilla but with superior quality,” Nettles explained. The second, “Tejano Style,” represents an improvement over a home-style product.

“We’ve tried to improve the quality of both products by limiting the preservatives,” Nettles explained. “The Mi Pueblo tortilla has a 21- to 30-day shelf life at retail, while the Tejano product will have very little preservative and a seven-day shelf life.”

“Our guests won’t find a fresher product anywhere.”

The Mi Pueblo product hit the shelves in the company’s 50 supermarket stores in April, while Tejano Style tortillas rolled out in late May.

From the two recipes, United is able to control not only the per-package tortilla count, but also the size of the tortillas, giving store guests a wide variety of products from which to choose. Right now, guests can choose from a fajita-sized tortilla, which is six inches in diameter, and a burrito-style tortilla, which is 10 inches. Guests can also choose from 10- and 20-count packages.

Praters also will produce other tortilla styles, including a WIC-approved wheat product and “thins,” a much thinner tortilla that is lower in calories. The plan ultimately calls for producing tortillas used by store delis in food service.

“One of the other reasons we purchased this equipment is it gives us greater production capacity,” Springer said. “We will have plenty of room left for growth (of tortilla sales). The other thing is this could allow us to do specialized items such as naan bread and pizza crusts. Those are opportunities down the road.”

Springer also pointed out the tortilla machine is not intended to supplant tortilla making in the bakeries of more than a dozen stores. “We do have some machines out there now in bakeries around the company,” he said. “Those will continue to run, and those bakeries will continue to make their own. These tortillas are located elsewhere in the store, and they are the product we will supply.”

### **About United Supermarkets**

Now in its 97<sup>th</sup> year of operation, [United Supermarkets, LLC](#), is a Texas-based, family-owned grocery chain with stores in 30 markets across north and west Texas. A self-distributing company with its headquarters in Lubbock and distribution centers in Lubbock and Roanoke, United currently operates 52 stores under four distinct formats: [United Supermarkets](#), [Market Street](#), [Amigos United](#) and United Express.

# # #