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Halifax, Nova Scotia

Leading Brands turns **TrueBlue** to East Coast

VANCOUVER - Leading Brands Inc. plans to start producing its TrueBlue blueberry drink in Eastern Canada in November, a move intended to improve customer service and sales.

Ralph McRae, the company's chairman and CEO, said the move should reduce freight charges and allow the company to be more responsive to customer demand and flexible on pricing.

"With this advancement, we're increasing our efforts to obtain listings on the eastern seaboard," McRae told a conference call with analysts.

The company, which has bottling plants in Edmonton and Richmond, B.C., said eastern production will likely be done on a contract basis initially.

McRae said TrueBlue is carried in more than 14,000 grocery stores in Canada and the United States and the company plans to begin a major advertising push in California next month.