

CRAFTING GLOBAL FLAVOR IN COLUMBUS

How Georgia's Trade Team Helps River City Beverages Expand Internationally

River City Beverages (RCB) is carrying on the tradition of beverage innovation with a modern twist from their home base in Columbus. This small, family-owned business has quietly become a key player in the international beverage market, and thanks to support from the Georgia Department of Economic Development's (GDEcD) Trade team, they're continuing to expand their global footprint one market at a time.

Founded in 2008 by Chris and Kelly McKinstry, RCB specializes in beverage concentrate and flavor development for everything from sodas and teas to protein-enhanced waters and cocktail mixes.

"A customer will come to me with an idea or a concept of a flavor," said Chris McKinstry. "I go from the concept through development to the end product."

Today, RCB's reach extends far beyond Georgia. The company supplies beverage formulas to companies in South America and Africa, shipping through European ports, and continues to develop popular products like Red Cola, which has carved out a market niche in Mexico.

Opening New Doors

The McKinstrys credit much of their international expansion to their partnership with GDEcD. After joining the Georgia Made® program to promote Zamm's, a locally produced cocktail sauce developed by Kelly's father, RCB was introduced to GDEcD's Trade team.

"State programs like Georgia Made® helped us meet the GDEcD and have a relationship. They've all been great in wanting to help us," said Kelly McKinstry.

The Trade team provided guidance on exporting, market research, and navigating increasingly complex international documentation. With over a decade of export experience, the RCB team was already seasoned. GDEcD efficiently helped open more doors.

Ready to Scale

RCB operates out of a 50,000-square-foot facility in Columbus, with additional warehouse space ready for expansion. And while they continue to serve domestic partners – including a local brewpub and margarita producers in Newnan – the international market is where they see the most potential.

"For us, it's easier doing business abroad than here in the States," said Kelly. "We have some business here in the U.S., but international opportunities have been the most promising. The market is picking up, and we're ready to grow."

A Model of Georgia Innovation

With deep roots in Georgia's beverage history and a future focused on global growth, River City Beverages is a perfect example of how small businesses can scale with the right support. Their story reflects what makes Georgia's economic development ecosystem unique: a collaborative spirit that drives success from the local to the international level. As the McKinstrys look ahead to new markets and opportunities, their success story is just one of many proving that from Columbus to Colombia, Georgia businesses are built to go global.

Learn more about the services Georgia offers to local business at **Georgia.org/trade**.



The Georgia Department of Economic Development's nationally recognized Trade team works with Georgia-based small businesses like American Dakota to expand their global sales, making companies more resilient and creating opportunities for growth. The Trade team's services, ranging from market research to international connections, are provided at no cost to eligible Georgia businesses. **To learn more or connect with one of our trade team members, visit Georgia.org/trade.**

