

# HOT SPOT

By Art Snyder

Day in and day out, your snack bar is at the core of your profitability. Competitive times demand action, and that's why you have to deliver the goods there, without fail. When you do your customers a favor, you do yourself — and your future — an even *bigger* favor, so let everyone know about new and updated items like Monster Energy Zero Ultra, Crackle Snaps, Sprite, Chips Deluxe With M&M'S, Star Wars, Pretzel Crisps, Mtn Dew Kickstart and numerous Disney properties. Details are below.

## Canned juice drinks

Sales of ordinary carbonated soft drinks continue to slide, but other beverage categories surge. A bright spot: canned juice drinks. With a touch of healthy-for-you fruit juice, two brands — AriZona and Mtn Dew Kickstart — dominate category sales, with all other brands trailing far behind. They're available in numerous flavor varieties. Most AriZona varieties contain tea, too, while Kickstart offer three flavors, Black Cherry, Fruit Punch and Limeade.

Be sure to stock these canned favorites for your thirsty customers right away, with warm weather reigning across the country. (Mountain Dew is a principal member of the PepsiCo family.) For more, visit [MountainDew.com/kickstart](http://MountainDew.com/kickstart), [Facebook.com/mountaindew](http://Facebook.com/mountaindew), [DrinkAriZona.com](http://DrinkAriZona.com) and [Facebook.com/AriZonaIcedTea](http://Facebook.com/AriZonaIcedTea). Contact your Pepsi supplier for signage, specials, discounts and promotions, too.

## Sprite® 6Mix™ by LeBron James

It was only a matter of time before NBA mega-star LeBron James was honored with his own soft drink: Sprite® 6Mix™ by LeBron James. Just introduced, this new Sprite flavor is based on the custom way James likes his Sprite, with cherry and orange accents to go with Sprite's fresh lemon-lime

flavor. Both bottle and can formats of Sprite® 6Mix™ by LeBron James are available, for vending and counter sales alike.

This special-edition Sprite is tentatively set for a limited time, so get moving to stock it in your rink ASAP. (Sprite is a billion-dollar Coca-Cola brand.) For more, visit [Sprite.com/6mix-story](http://Sprite.com/6mix-story), <http://x.co/4CK0P> and <http://x.co/4CKA4>. Contact your Coca-Cola supplier for signage, as well as specials, discounts and promotions.

## Monster sales boom

Despite downturns in much of the soft drink industry, especially carbonated soft drinks (CSDs), Monster energy beverages have been on a record sales pace this past year. Overall Monster sales are up more than 10 percent, and one of the company's hottest sub-brands has been Monster Zero Energy Ultra. Be sure you keep Monster highlighted at your rink this summer and into the new school year, and ask your Monster supplier for all the latest signage, incentives and discounts to keep Monster piling up those profits for you as you head into 2015.

## Mountain Dew news

Pepsi's big-selling Mountain Dew franchise plans on keeping its dominant position with consumers, thanks to the company's summer partnership with 20th Century Fox and their *X-MEN: Days of Future Past* release. This international effort on behalf of the "Dew Nation," as the company calls its fan base, is dubbed "Unleash Your X" and

includes behind-the-scenes Facebook conversations with *X-MEN* stars Hugh Jackman, James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence, Halle Berry, Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart, Ellen Page and others.

TV commercials supporting Mountain Dew and the latest *X-MEN* installment will complement the online outreach. Look for appropriate marketing signage and promotions to key into this superhero blockbuster in the weeks ahead.

Further, Mountain Dew announced that it is introducing Mtn Dew Baja Blast, in bottles and cans, for a limited time this summer. Ask your supplier for all the signage, incentives and other information, including apps for Android and iOS, to kick up the excitement level — and sales — at your rink in the next several weeks with tropical lime-flavored Mtn Dew Baja Blast. (This specialty flavor was offered a decade ago at Taco Bell, and it will return there exclusively by summer's end.)

For more, visit [MountainDew.com/BajaBlast](http://MountainDew.com/BajaBlast) and [Facebook.com/MountainDew](http://Facebook.com/MountainDew), and join the Baja Blast conversation at [@mtn\\_dew/SummerOfBaja](https://twitter.com/mtn_dew/SummerOfBaja) and [@TacoBell/SummerOfBaja](https://twitter.com/TacoBell/SummerOfBaja).

the profit picture in your rink snack, foodservice and vending areas. Contact your candy and sweets suppliers for promotional materials that'll ensure the success of Crackle Snaps puffed rice chips. Crackle Snaps ought to have a solid place as an accent with birthday parties, too.

## Chips Deluxe Cookies with Mini M&M'S

The fabled elves of Keebler have joined forces with the candy juggernaut Mars to generate three prospective new winners: Chips Deluxe Rainbow Chocolate Chip Mini Cookies with Mini M&M'S; Chips Deluxe Triple Chocolate Chip Cookies with M&M'S; and Chips Deluxe Rainbow Chocolate Chip Cookies with M&M'S (the latter two have full-sized M&Ms). Available nationwide, these pouches of cookies should find a satisfying welcome with skaters everywhere.

## Disney news

Riding the monster success of *Frozen* — it's now the all-time top animated film and soundtrack, having surpassed *Toy Story 3* — the Walt Disney empire is going non-stop. The company has announced upcoming installments of its hit franchises of *Cars* and *The Incredibles*, with yet another rebirth of *Star Wars* in the works.

Called *Star Wars: Episode VII*, this installment should ensure a continuing huge demand in your redemption, video, vending, foodservice and other areas for any *Star Wars*-branded merchandise. Considered "the gold-plated franchise," because it's delivering a 25 percent boost in profits, *Star Wars* should generate big bucks for another several decades within your rink walls. (For ideas and to keep abreast of anything related to *Star Wars*, visit [StarWars.com](http://StarWars.com).)

Think birthday parties, teen and school sessions, and themed sessions, as well, and work all the angles for younger customers, including day-cares, with Disney animation fare. The most recent Disney action luminary of 2014 has been *Thor: The Dark World*, which is closing in on \$1 billion in ticket sales, on top of that franchise's \$500 million installment of *Thor* in 2011. Moreover, a fifth installment of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise is in development, for more rink prospects.

Looking very strong this year: the upcoming films *Maleficent* and *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. After those, the Disney pipeline has a live-action *Cinderella* set for 2015, with *Tomorrowland*, a George Clooney sci-fi film, also on the schedule. This is the best of times for Disney at your rink, so get your staff together for some serious thinking and piggybacking. All of Disney's marketing muscle with these projects and prospects can be put to outstanding use by you.

## In the news with Zero Ultra, M&Ms, Star Wars and more

## Kellogg's Crackle Snaps

The super-max combo-taste of chocolate, marshmallow and caramel is sure to excite skaters, and that's what new Kellogg's Crackle Snaps delivers. This new line is in the Rice Krispies Treats family of handy bagged snacks, the No. 1 treat-bar/bite in sales, and this added excitement should pump up

