

# HOT SPOT

By Art Snyder

The new year is shaping up to be a major time for sales opportunities with candy, as lots of developments are happening with Hershey and Nestlé USA, among other candy manufacturers. Plus, pop star Natasha Bedingfield is ready to lend you a hand. You'll find all the s-w-e-e-t details — and other news — below.

## New, hot candies

Candy and sweet snacks remain central to entertainment and sports activities — as with rinks — and you can thank numerous producers for a bounty of tempting, new products. Several show great promise or have already seen consumer demand jump. Among the products you should offer at your rink, at several profit centers:

- General Mills' Nature Valley Fruit Twists: Made with fruit, and in a fun

they'll enjoy what the company calls "flavor changing beads." These beads, or nuggets, morph in color from orange to orange strawberry or cherry to cherry lime, in every single piece of Starburst candy.

- Jelly Belly Snapple Flavors: Jelly Belly Candy Co. has brought top Snapple flavors on board for new Jelly Belly excitement. They have crafted jelly beans

with Snapple concentrates in five tasty flavors: Fruit Punch, Mango Madness, Cranberry Raspberry, Pink Lemonade and Kiwi Strawberry.

candies should do extra-well as part of at least some rink birthday parties.

- Hawaiian Punch's Splashers Fruit Snacks: From the innovative Farley's & Sathers Candy Co. comes the flavor-rich and colorful extension of the company's Hawaiian Punch line, Hawaiian Punch Splashers Fruit Snacks. These fruity treats have a liquid center and are available in Fruit Juicy Red, Berry Blue and Lemon Berry Squeeze.

- Snickers Peanut Butter Squared: Parent Mars corporation, noted for their niche-leading candies like M&Ms, Snickers and Twix brands, have peanut butter in their sights for 2012. Expect a huge Mars advertising effort beginning this month — with all of today's media — to pump demand for one candy bar in particular: Snickers Peanut Butter Squared. But that's not all. Mars will keep peanut butter in focus with massive advertising for two other nutty candies, M&Ms Peanut Butter Chocolate Candies and TWIX Peanut Butter Cookie Bars. The overall marketing plan will run all year long, wearing the banner of "Take Your Peanut Butter Pick." Since Mars has seen an impressive 20 percent boost in peanut butter-based candy sales in

specials, signage and other promotions of your own. Be sure to get your Bedingfield music ready to go during teen, school and related sessions, and ask your Coca-Cola rep for suitable new signage, promotional materials and discounts.

## BIGS Sunflower Seeds Slammer packs

All is not candy and other sweets at your rink, of course, and you can expect a "natural" customer demand for BIGS Sunflower Seeds Slammer packs. Tasty sunflower seeds in many flavor varieties are at the heart of the Thanasi Foods snack-food company offerings, and your skaters should go in a big-time way for packaged, easy-to-eat sunflower seeds in either Salted & Roasted Original or Vlasic Dill Pickle flavor. Thanasi Foods also features Slammer packs in Bacon Salt Sizzlin' Bacon, Frank's RedHot Buffalo Wing, Zesty Ranch, and Sea Salt & Black Pepper flavors, as well.

## Nestlé USA and Hispanics

As a reader of this column, you know that the greatest growth prospects for the U.S. population — and very likely your rink customer base — are with the Hispanic consumer. Ignore this market segment at your own peril, as solid profits await the savvy rink operator who taps into this often-overlooked member of U.S. society. For further proof, look to Nestlé USA. The venerable global

## Hershey and other candies, Hispanic consumers continues to grow

recent years, the company clearly is onto something promising. Further, a part of the promotional outreach will include 2-for-1 incentives. Be sure your rink is



format like licorice wands, Nature Valley Fruit Twists are available in kid-friendly strawberry and cherry flavors.

- Mars' 3 Musketeers Coconut: Building on the perennial success of 3 Musketeer candies, parent Mars first introduced the M&M's Coconut line, to great demand. So, Mars is giving the coconut treatment to 3 Musketeers Coconut, which contains fluffy chocolate nougat, milk chocolate and shredded coconut.

- Wrigley's Starburst Flavor Morph: The younger set loves Starburst, and with the new Starburst Flavor Morph,

- Red Velvet Cupcake Bites: Taste of Nature, Inc., has gone bite-sized with their yummy Red Velvet Cupcake Bites. These smallish snacks feature a cupcake center and a luscious red frosting that offers a signature red velvet taste.

- CandyRific's Scooby-Doo lineup: CandyRific stands apart with numerous licensed candy brands, and the firm has bumped up its line of Scooby-Doo items. These include a Scooby-Doo candy fan, a Scooby-Doo Prism Vision (to help solve mysteries), and a Scooby-Doo Giggle Head with Sound, much like a bobble-head product. All of these new Scooby

part of that sales success.

## Coca-Cola 2012

Coca-Cola has enlisted pop music sensation and Grammy®-winning Natasha Bedingfield to be the centerpiece figure in the company's 2012 year-long marketing and advertising plans. The campaign will utilize all media tools — new TV spots, online and mobile avenues (like wallpaper and ringtones), in-store signage and promotions, and snazzy new packaging — to reach consumers. The target demographic coincides with your rink customer base, a genuine plus for

food giant has made its policy for 2012 to reach out to the Spanish-dominant Hispanic consumer, whether that person is of Mexican, Puerto Rican or any other such group. Nestlé USA this year is using all available Hispanic-related media and similar platforms, such as a bilingual Web site, ads on Spanish TV networks, Facebook, in-store marketing and product sampling, to show good faith, generate trust and meet that consumer's needs. Central to all of this marketing will be the iconic red Nestlé logo, and you should ask your Nestlé USA supplier for all the available signage so your rink can key on this strategy. Another vital element with Nestlé USA is a focus on family, which is paramount with most Hispanic families. Likewise, that dovetails with your rink's own family-based appeal. For specific brands, note these familiar Nestlé USA brands: Crunch, Kit Kat, Butterfinger, Wonka, Juicy Juice, Nestea, Nesquik, Dreyer's, Nestlé Ice Cream, Häagen-Dazs and PowerBar (I wrote this column eating a PowerBar, in fact, and it was great!). Most are ideal for rink