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**BLOMMER CHOCOLATE COMPANY ACCELERATES GLOBAL GROWTH STRATEGY WITH ACQUISITION OF CHINA MANUFACTURING FACILITY**

*Cocoa Manufacturer to Invest \$40 million in Jinshan, China Plant*

CHICAGO (Feb. 24, 2016) – Blommer Chocolate Company, the largest cocoa processor and ingredient chocolate supplier in North America, today announced the acquisition of a manufacturing plant in China’s Jinshan district near Shanghai.

The acquisition of the Jinshan facility is part of Blommer’s estimated \$40 million investment in a fully integrated bean processing and chocolate manufacturing facility, which will support the growing demand both in China and the Asian region.

“Expanding our operations to China represents a new chapter in the growth of our company,” said Rick Blommer, President of Global Expansion for Blommer. “We assembled a talented sales and applications support team in our Pudong office near Shanghai over the past year to develop our market presence and, with this acquisition, we are now well positioned to expand our offerings to the growing Chinese market.”

The plant will provide critical ingredient supply chain solutions for Blommer’s existing multinational-branded customers and the expanding number of local Chinese companies entering the market.

“A hallmark of Blommer’s success during its 77-year history as a family owned business has been our ability to continuously and flexibly adapt and expand our capabilities to serve the needs of our customers,” said Peter Blommer, President and CEO of Blommer and Chairman of the National Confectioners Association. “This acquisition is an important component of our exciting multi-pronged strategy to further strengthen our leading market position in North America and establish strong growth platforms in developing global cocoa markets.”

In the last 18 months, this multi-phase initiative has increased Blommer’s chocolate and compound capacity by over 70 million pounds in North America. Current projects will add an additional 70 million pounds of capacity over the next 12 months.

Blommer’s growth plan is supported by a significant investment in research and development, which has nearly tripled over the last 5 years, bringing enhanced capabilities in product and process technology.

Blommer also has expanded its presence in West Africa and South America both directly and through strategic alliances to ensure a reliable and competitive supply of both sustainable and conventional cocoa beans and products. This includes the recently opened office in Abidjan, Ivory Coast and

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expansion of on-the-ground staff there to manage its growing commercial and sustainability initiatives in the region.

“As one of the largest cocoa processors and ingredient chocolate manufacturers in the world, Blommer is committed to expanding its global footprint to support a healthy cocoa sector and the growing global needs of our customers,” added Peter Blommer. “We recognize the need to expand our global presence as Blommer plays a critical role in ensuring a competitive supply chain amidst the continued consolidation of our industry.”

#### **About Blommer Chocolate Company**

Blommer Chocolate Company is the largest cocoa processor and ingredient chocolate supplier in North America. With over 800 employees and five strategically located manufacturing facilities in North America and China, the company provides comprehensive business solutions for domestic and international customers of all sizes in the confectionery, baking and dairy industries. Among Blommer’s core competencies are cocoa bean processing, chocolate manufacturing, commodity risk management, and product and process R&D. The company is a leader in advancing sustainable cocoa farming as a founding member of the World Cocoa Foundation, a member of the Cocoa Action sustainability initiative, and through its privately managed farmer programs in Cote d'Ivoire, Indonesia and Ecuador. Founded in 1939, the family-owned and operated company maintains an outstanding reputation for customer service and quality. For more information about Blommer Chocolate Company, please visit [www.blommer.com](http://www.blommer.com).

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