



An employee-owned company

For Immediate Release: November 5, 2009

Contact:

Warner Johnston (ESD) | wjohnston@empire.state.ny.us | 800.260.7313

Laura Magee (ESD) | lmagee@empire.state.ny.us | 800.260.7313

Rich Tobe (Robinson Home Products) | rtobeesq@roadrunner.com | 716.553.6716

WESTERN NEW YORK COMPANY ACQUIRES ONEIDA LTD.

Robinson Home Products to keep famed products in New York State, pledges to more than double its current staff

Empire State Development today announced that Robinson Home Products, a kitchen tool and gadget distributor in Cheektowaga, New York, has acquired the exclusive rights to manufacture and sell Oneida Ltd. brand flatware and dinnerware to all consumer markets in the United States. Through this acquisition, Robinson will invest a total of \$16.1 million, retain its current workforce of 81 employees and create an additional 88 jobs in Western New York.

“Oneida is one of New York State’s iconic companies with a recognized global brand,” said ESD Chairman & CEO designate Dennis M. Mullen. “Because of the important history this company has with our state, it was critical to us to help keep this product line in New York. As a result, ESD was happy to support Robinson’s growth and acquisition of these rights to keep not only the product line, but more importantly, those jobs right here in New York State.”

Robinson Home Products was the only company in New York State seeking to purchase the rights to the Oneida Ltd. brands. Robinson’s acquisition of the rights to sell and market this iconic brand ensures not only that this product line is distributed and marketed in New York State, but the associated jobs will remain in-state as well. ESD offered Robinson a \$400,000 capital grant to help offset machinery and equipment costs and will provide the company approximately \$130,000 in Empire Zone benefits. Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA), through its Regional Development Corporation, provided a \$2 million loan and M & T Bank also provided the company a significant loan for this project.

Robinson Home Products CEO Robert B. Skerker said: “I would like to thank Governor Paterson for his support of our efforts, and in particular, Dennis Mullen, who paid a personal visit to Robinson earlier this year. This expansion wouldn’t have been possible without the cooperation and collaboration of New York State, ECIDA and M&T Bank. I’d also like to thank Congressman Brian Higgins, Senator Stachowski, Assemblymen Gabryszak, Schroeder and Schimminger and Cheektowaga Supervisor Mary Holtz for their acknowledgement and unflagging understanding of Robinson Home Products as an important component of the regional economy. The strong support Robinson Home Products received from New York State

and local governments has not only retained the Oneida brand in New York State, but has made Robinson Home Products a stronger company that will be able to continue its growth trajectory.”

In 2006, Robinson Home Products purchased a large warehouse in Buffalo—formerly owned by Oneida Ltd.—and moved its warehousing operations from Walden Avenue in Cheektowaga to the Empire Zone location in Buffalo. The completion of the Oneida deal signifies the reopening of the Cheektowaga warehouse, adjacent to the company’s headquarters. As a result, it is expected that Robinson’s shipments and sales will triple and the workforce will more than double from its current staff of 81 employees over the next several years.

Robinson Home Products was founded in 1921 as the Robinson Knife Company in Springville, New York, manufacturing knives, kitchen products and industrial parts. Today, Robinson Home Products—an employee-owned company—designs, manufactures, sells and distributes over 1,100 different kitchen tools and gadgets. The company has become an innovative developer and marketer of branded household products under licensing agreements with Sunbeam, Rubbermaid, Crock Pot, the Culinary Institute of America Masters Collection and now Oneida. Robinson has a sales volume of over one million items shipped per week from its Buffalo warehouse to retail outlets throughout the United States, including Wal-Mart, Kohl’s, Target, Bed Bath and Beyond, Macy’s and JC Penney. The company also has operations in Manhattan.

New York State Senator and Chair of the Senate Commerce, Economic Development Committee William Stachowski said: “Robinson Home Products’ acquisition of Oneida is wonderful news for Buffalo and Western New York. The retention of 81 Robinson jobs, plus the addition of almost 100 more in the future to support the Oneida line benefits our region’s economy, and reflects our efforts to utilize state resources to put people to work. I think it’s also noteworthy that Robinson is keeping the historic Oneida brand here in Buffalo.”

New York State Assemblymember Dennis Gabryszak said: “The Oneida brand is world class and I welcome with open arms this acquisition to our district. This is an important economic development move and a smart business decision by Robinson Home Products, Inc. As an employee owned and operated company, they are dedicated to keeping and creating more jobs in our area.”

Erie County Executive Chris Collins said: “Robinson Home Products has been a fixture in the Buffalo community for decades and the acquisition of Oneida creates more than 80 jobs and helps to ensure this employee-owned company will be around for decades to come. I want to thank Bob Skerker for his commitment to Western New York, and I am pleased this acquisition and hometown business is being appropriately supported by Empire State Development and the Erie County Industrial Development Agency.”

Mayor Byron W. Brown said: “I commend the Empire State Development Corporation and Robinson Home Products for working together, along with other key partners, to preserve the historic Oneida brand in Buffalo and position the company for future job growth.”

Cheektowaga Town Supervisor Mary Holtz said: “We are extremely happy that Robinson Home Products’ acquisition of the rights to manufacture and sell the Oneida Ltd. brand will result in the

return of warehousing operations and job growth for its location on Walden Avenue in Cheektowaga. The location is ideally suited for the anticipated growth in sales with easy access to several transportation modes in close proximity. With the support of Empire State Development, the Erie County Industrial Development Agency and M&T Bank, Robinson Home Products has been given the ability to demonstrate how a local business can play an important role in growing our local economy.”

ECIDA Chief Operating Officer Al Culliton said: “The ECIDA, through its Regional Development Corporation affiliate, funded a \$2 million loan, one of the largest in its history, to support Robinson’s acquisition of the exclusive rights to sell Oneida flatware and dinnerware. We are happy to partner with the State and the bank to enable Robinson to retain 81 employees and add a further 88 jobs to this growing local company.”

Empire State Development is New York’s chief economic development agency. ESD also oversees the marketing of “I LOVE NY,” the State’s iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit www.nylovesbiz.com.

##