



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Columbia Distributing Pledges to Help Fight Human Trafficking in Oregon & Washington

*Local beverage distributor to train thousands of employees to identify and report signs of human trafficking*

**KENT, Washington** – March 14, 2023 – Columbia Distributing is taking steps to become a vigilant community partner in the fight to end human trafficking. Today the Pacific Northwest’s largest total beverage distributor is announcing its mission to educate over 2,800 employees how to recognize and report signs of human trafficking.

“As a business with deep roots and a wide network across Oregon and Washington, we’re always looking for positive ways to impact our communities,” said Columbia’s Chief Operating Officer Dave Stander. “Sadly, every community is vulnerable to the horrors of human trafficking, and our beautiful corner of the U.S. is no exception. Our hardworking teammates who are out in the market and on our roads daily will be an extra set of eyes and ears in the fight against human trafficking.”

Human trafficking continues to plague communities in the United States. In 2021 alone, the Polaris Project identified [16,554 total likely victims](#) of human trafficking. Additionally, human trafficking disproportionately targets already-vulnerable populations like [women and children](#). [Over half](#) of the active criminal human trafficking cases in the U.S. involved children.

Columbia’s employees are set to participate in the initial awareness training session this month. Each employee is also provided tools and resources to help them spot suspicious behaviors and alert authorities while on their routes.

“Human trafficking is modern-day slavery,” said [Washington Trucking Association](#) President and CEO Sheri Call. “This ugly and despicable crime is unfortunately happening every day across the country, including here in Washington and Oregon. Raising awareness and sharing information on how everyone can get involved to help combat these horrible practices is priority number one. Columbia’s commitment will surely make a powerful impact.”

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### About Columbia Distributing

Since 1935, Columbia Distributing has helped build some of the best-known brands in the beverage business. Today Columbia Distributing and its 2,800 teammates service over 24,000 retail customers covering more than 135,000 square miles in Oregon and Washington. We operate eight warehouses in Washington, located in the cities of Kent, Everett, Poulsbo, Tumwater, Spokane, Kennewick, Yakima and Vancouver. Oregon is composed of seven warehouses, located in the cities of Canby, Springfield, Medford, Bend, Pendleton, La Grande and Ontario. Columbia’s success is based on the deep-rooted

tradition of delivering quality products, timely service and a genuine concern for customers' needs. This is achieved by providing ongoing, sustainable opportunities and growth for its teammates, customers, suppliers, shareholders and communities. For more information on Columbia Distributing, including employment opportunities, please visit [www.coldist.com](http://www.coldist.com).