

SKATE BUZZ

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BREAKING NEWS AT PRESS TIME: EMPIRE SKATEBOARD DISTRIBUTION CO. OPENS U.S. HEADQUARTERS

A news bomb exploded this month when a press release dropped in early January announced the formation and opening of a new company called Empire Skateboard Distribution Co. Committed to the distribution of brands Diamond Supply Co., Fillmore Wheels, Force Trucks, UXA Clothing, as well as more brands to be announced, Empire is staffed by some of the most well-known and respected names in skateboarding who together have over one-hundred years of experience as amateur and professional skateboarders and employees in the skateboarding industry, along with company and brand ownership experience. That's all the info we're going to give you for now, but stay tuned to *TransWorld Business* for more comprehensive coverage of Empire Distribution because believe us, it's something you'll want to know about.

SKATE MOVERS

After several months of uncertainty, it's finally a printable fact that **Leo Romero** is now officially on Baker. Original rail killer and street innovator **Pat Duffy** is back riding for his alma mater, Plan B. **Ryan Smith** just inked a contract with Analog this month. Skating under the supervision of team manager **Lance Dawes**, **Chris Haslam** and **Cooper Wilt** are riding for Indy. **Joey Brezinski** has a pro model out on Cliché. Scottish slayer **John Rattray** is now rolling around on Modus bearings. **Andrew Currie** is the Modus team manager, and the rest of the squad consists of **Andrew Brophy**, **Cale**

Doing Good In Los Angeles

Baker holds its third annual Christmas Demo.

In what's being called the longest product toss in history, Baker, Emerica, KR3W, Active, RVCA, and Deluxe gave away more than 40,000 dollars in product while collecting food for the needy at the third annual Baker demo held this December in downtown Los Angeles. Designed to collect food for the Downtown Women's Center of Los Angeles, as well as to help make the Christmas of L.A.'s inner-city youth a little brighter, the Baker team barged two blocks that were roped off by the city for the event.

Close to 3,000 kids descended on the venue to watch Andrew Reynolds, Grecs, Spanky, Leo Romero, and the rest of the Baker squad put it down for a good cause. While Baker handled the demo, it wasn't the only company involved. Vans' own Steve Van Doren pulled out the barbecue grill and served more than 900 dogs and more than 700 quesadillas over the course of the day



Tiny and Zeus from Big Black Security had to hold back the anxious crowd of nearly 3,000 kids.



Dave Duncan held down the mic and called out the names of 200 lucky raffle ticket winners.

to a seemingly endless line of skaters. Even Jim Greco's band, Cosa Nostra, came out and played a set for the eager crowd.

"Six of us inside of a truck were hucking hoodies and T-shirts for an entire hour straight."

—Ari Evan Gold

"Shane Wallace from Active was a huge help," says Baker Brand Manager Robin Fleming. "He hooked us up with a truck, we got man hours from him, and he put us in touch with the guys at FourDown, Inc. who built the ramps."

Fleming, along with Doogood Conservatory Executive Director Ari Evan Gold and Heidi Lemmon of SPAUSA, was instrumental in organizing the event. Fleming

says that while working with the city was a tedious process at first, once they saw how much food was being donated, they had no problem cordoning off two city blocks.

"Heidi Lemmon and I worked with the city over a seven-week period," says Fleming. "Baker put 17,000 dollars in cash into this day, and 40,000 wholesale dollars' worth of goods was given away—it was a massive gesture."

In order to participate in the raffle, each spectator was requested to donate one can of food. Dave Duncan called out raffle numbers and more than 200 lucky winners were laced to the teeth with hoodies, decks, wheels, shirts, and hats. As the sun began to set, boxes of product were still full, and the crazy product toss began. "Six of us inside of a truck were hucking hoodies and T-shirts for an entire hour straight," says Gold. "It's got to be the most amount of gear given away by product toss ever."

According to Baker Sales Rep Steve Clare, the kids at the demo—many of whom came from lower-income neighborhoods—went crazy for the free product. "All the kids really appreciated it," says Clare. "They got packages bigger than most ams get."

At the end of the day, more than 3,000 cans of food were collected. "Andrew's [Reynolds] brother-in-law and I personally delivered all the food to the shelter," says Fleming. "They couldn't believe it all came from skateboarding."

—Cullen Poythress

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