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Project of the Month: Dacon Corp. constructs new 52,000 s/f Designers Choice distribution facility

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Boston, MA A strong proponent of business ethics, Designers Choice is known for consistent quality, fair pricing, employee well-being and environmental sensitivity. As a leading distributor of cut flowers in New England that quietly supplies major brands, they needed a geographically advantageous location for both retail distribution and employment purposes. A new 52,000 s/f facility

now houses the distribution of a portfolio spanning 500 varieties across 33 flower types to wholesale florist channels, as well as their signature brand Benchmark Growers to prominent retailers and e-commerce channels. Leading brands including Stop & Shop, Shaw's, Whole Foods, Giant Foods, Life Is Good, Amazon and ACME Markets are supplied by Designers Choice. A partner within the Queen's Bouquet Network – a global breeder noted for producing one billion flowers annually – Designers Choice distributes in MA, NY, PA and CA.

Propagating a positive approach to change, Designers Choice embraces a scientific view to beauty and an ethical view towards relationship management, working with 45 suppliers in Bogota and Medellin, Colombia that are both Florverde Sustainable and Rainforest Alliance certified. Cool and overcast, the Bogota and Medellin regions experience a stable annual temperature range of 44-66 °F and nutrient dense soil for incubating flowers. As with other floral providers, they sit in a global supply chain that brings economic development to less advanced countries. Ecuador and Colombia remain top exporters to the U.S., which imports 80% of its national floral supply. The U.S. market for cut flowers constitutes \$7.5 billion (7%) of the global market. Prior to the pandemic, the industry employed over 83,000 people (source Properlyrooted.com).

As a product expressing emotion, flowers are subject to fluxes in consumer demand for color, style, varietal type and price, reflecting sentiments of celebration, design aspiration or remembrance. The firm's portfolio is tailored to consumer preferences, holidays and seasonal periods with types spanning focal, accent and filler flowers. Floral designers and event management companies rely on Designers Choice to deliver a depth of unique varieties, abundant blooms and diverse spectrum of color that results in impactful arrangements with a long lifespan.

The design of this facility is centered on three ethos – operational efficiency, ideal treatment of product and employee well-being. A preeminent issue was creating four different temperature zones ranging from 35 °F to ambient for optimal product quality while not forsaking human comfort. Efficiency lies at the center of this floorplan – four docking stations back into the cold storage and dry goods area for product unloading which opens to the main work floor space with four assembly lines. Finished product then leaves the assembly area via five additional docking stations. Additionally, a wholesale showroom, breakroom, executive office and amenities were installed.

This facility is in response to market growth and is focused on enhancing client service via operational efficiencies. Kevin Quinn, Dacon's CEO said, "From their business ethics to product quality, Designers Choice is an admirable company. By applying scientific growing principles to a simple product – flowers – they deliver an uplifting experience to the recipient. It is a rewarding business model and one we've enjoyed working with." Relocating from Chelsea, their former facility will be converted into a new business initiative within cannabis cultivation and distribution.

Dacon Corp. is a fully integrated design build firm providing comprehensive facility development services to address clients' unique project requirements. With a process centered on transparency and collaboration, Dacon's multidisciplinary team is comprised of professionals specializing in architectural design, engineering and construction management. Dacon provides comprehensive building solutions while eliminating the inherent risks of traditional construction processes.

Project team includesL Dacon Corp., design build; Environmental Systems, Inc., HVAC; Drywall Services, Inc., metal stud & drywall ; Northeast Flooring Solutions, flooring; and Savignano Electric. Co., electrical

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