

Walmart Expands Mini Melts Vending Kiosk Pilot To 12 States

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NORWICH, CT -- A test of dedicated **Mini Melts** vending machines in Walmart stores has led to an expanded pilot in a dozen states that will likely set the stage for further expansion and present an opportunity for independent operators to service them.

The test of Mini Melts-branded Evolution venders, made by Danbury, CT-based **Fastcorp**, began in February in 20 stores in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Sales exceeded expectations and, based upon the results, Walmart expanded the program to additional markets, according to Shawn Kilcoyne, chief executive of Norwich, CT-based Mini Melts USA Inc.

The ice cream venders -- which the companies call kiosks -- are now in Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas and Virginia.

The most recent market, added in mid-October, is Dallas, where the Mini Melts team installed machines in 52 stores in one day, marking the largest single-day rollout in the company's history.

The machines are merchandised with cups of the novel cryogenically frozen ice cream beads in six flavors. All of them are equipped with wireless technology, enabling automated reporting to Walmart, as well as credit card acceptance.



Mini Melts USA president Dan Kilcoyne credits the Wal-Mart team for much of the vending pilot's success. "We had originally set a high-bar for performance and to date we have exceeded expectations," he said.

Current Walmart machines are operated by "a 50-50 mix" of Mini Melts corporate staff and members in its network of independent operators, which it would seek to expand, if the Walmart program is extended to other states.

Fastcorp president Todd Piatnik said that if the newer deployments continue to perform well, there will be prospects for further expansion to additional markets in 2013. "There will be substantive opportunity for vending operators to get involved should Walmart expand this," he said.