

For immediate release

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Bigelow Tea Becomes Benefit Corporation

FAIRFIELD — Bigelow Tea is proud to announce the recently attained distinction of becoming a Benefit Corporation. The family company is the #1 Specialty Tea market leader, manufacturing “Constant Comment”® and more than 150 tea varieties sold nationwide. Now officially registered as a Benefit Corporation, it is one of a select group of companies that has designated corporate social responsibility as a core business goal in the pursuit of a positive social and environmental impact.

This type of business structure legally formalizes corporate social responsibility in for-profit organizations. Being a Benefit Corporation codifies a company’s commitment to all stakeholders, including employees, customers, vendors and distributors. The legally defined goal of a Benefit Corporation is to use the business for a general public benefit and to have a positive impact on the environment and society.

The mission and vision of family-owned Bigelow Tea, that today employs more than 400 people, made it an ideal candidate for incorporation as a Benefit Corporation, now authorized in 33 states and the District of Columbia.

“Our purpose has always been about much more than making profits and making tea, so the more I learned about Benefit Corporations, the more I knew this was something I truly felt captured the spirit of our company -- a company that is inspired by trying to make a difference,” Cindi Bigelow, third generation President & CEO said. “Clearly, we need to maintain strong profitability, but we should never lose sight of the fact that we also need to focus on doing good things with the power we hold inside this company.”

Bigelow Tea has long prided itself on its environmental, sustainability and community programs, including charitable initiatives centered around the Bigelow Tea Community Challenge, an annual road race that has contributed \$1.5 million to local non-profits over the past 30 years.

“Ever since my grandmother Ruth Campbell Bigelow began our family company 75 years ago, social responsibility has been part of our DNA,” Bigelow said. “We have always believed that ethical leadership isn’t about just what we do every day. It’s about taking Corporate Social Responsibility seriously. We’re committed to good citizenship, ethical business practices, protecting the environment, sustainability, and supporting our communities.”

To qualify as a Benefit Corporation, Bigelow Tea leadership completed an extensive assessment report that required hundreds of hours of research and documentation, showing how the company met the established objectives in five specific areas: governance, employees, environment, community and customers.

“What was so exciting to uncover was that, by doing the very things that had been written into our mission statement over 30 years ago, we were already meeting the requirements,” Bigelow said. “In fact, our score exceeded the benchmarks.”

The Board of Directors amended Bigelow Tea's Articles of Incorporation to include a statement reflecting the unanimous desire to become a Benefit Corporation and ensure that in addition to profit-making, Bigelow Tea leadership will pursue goals that benefit the community in tangible ways.

"To me, ethical leadership has always been about more than what we do every day, it also means thinking about the long term and ensuring we are doing the right thing for our future," Bigelow said. "It means constantly working on creating an environment where we all feel motivated to be the best we can possibly be. Becoming a Benefit Corporation redoubles our long-standing efforts and helps everyone understand that we need to take corporate responsibility extremely seriously."

About Bigelow Tea Company

Based in Fairfield, CT and 100% family owned, the Bigelow Tea Company pioneered the specialty tea category more than 70 years ago. The three-generational company takes pride in its heritage and successful growth from a one-product, entrepreneurial venture into America's leading specialty tea company. Producing 2 billion tea bags annually, the Bigelow Tea line includes more than 130 varieties of Flavored, Traditional, Green, Organic, Herbal, Decaffeinated and Wellness teas – including its flagship specialty tea flavor, "Constant Comment"®, an all-time American favorite.

In 2003, the company purchased and restored the Charleston Tea Plantation, a 127-acre American tea plantation located on Wadmalaw Island, just south of Charleston, South Carolina. It is here where hundreds of thousands of ancestral tea bushes that go into the making of Charleston Tea Plantation teas are grown and cultivated without pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or insecticides. The Charleston Tea Plantation has become a "must see" destination for more than 70,000 travelers from around the world who visit annually to learn how tea is grown and harvested, and sample products made from tea grown on the premises.

Bigelow Tea products are available nationwide. Tea lovers and enthusiasts can also enjoy sharing entertaining stories and facts by visiting Bigelow Tea (bigelowtea.com), the Bigelow Tea Blog (www.bigelowteablog.com), Facebook www.facebook.com/bigelowtea, Twitter (www.twitter.com/bigelowtea), Pinterest (www.pinterest.com/bigelowtea) and Instagram (www.instagram.com/bigelowtea).

For more information, contact:
Elaine Gavoli
Corporate Media Relations Manager
203.330.2530
egavoli@bigelowtea.com