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Published November 10, 2007 10:56 pm - Beef jerky is as American as apple pie — some would argue more. Local meat processor Stripling's General Store came up with the idea to ship jerky in Operation USO Care Packages after receiving numerous requests from family and friends of troops and the troops themselves.

Company sending jerky to troops

Staff Reports

MOULTRIE — Beef jerky is as American as apple pie — some would argue more. Local meat processor Stripling's General Store came up with the idea to ship jerky in Operation USO Care Packages after receiving numerous requests from family and friends of troops and the troops themselves.

Thus far, donations of more than $7,000 from customers, civic organizations and churches have rolled in.

Jerky for Our Troops is an on-going project created through the partnership of Stripling's General Store and the USO. The project was created to help boost military morale.

Beef jerky is one of the most requested snack items by the U.S. troops serving overseas, said Ashley Goss, marketing manager for Stripling's.

The goal is to send $25,000 worth of jerky to the USO by the beginning of the year. That dollar amount translates into 8,000 two-ounce packages, Goss said. Stripling's has pledged to match every dollar with a dollar worth of jerky, she said. With that match, Stripling's has raised $14,000 so far.

"The project has been a great success," Goss said, adding that with local news and media coverage word has spread fast. Stripling's also has depended on special events such as the Georgia Outdoor News Outdoor Blast, the Big Pig Jig and the Sunbelt Agricultural Expo to spread the word about the project.

"We recently received permission from the state to promote the project during the Veterans Day Services at the Georgia Veteran's State Park, which is very exciting for us. Of course, all of this would not be possible without the enthusiasm of our employees and volunteers. In fact, a couple of weeks ago Sgt. 1st Class Terry Peterson volunteered his time and efforts to raise awareness for the cause by working at our location on Highway 280. It has just been a wonderful rewarding experience for all of us," Goss said.

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With the continued support and efforts of the community Stripling's will be able to continue to support the troops.

SKSN Kyle G. Alday wrote in an e-mail recently, "I'm currently on deployment in the Gulf. I've always been a fan of your jerky and products every since I was a child and my grandfather introduced me to it. Last time I was home I bought five pounds of jerky and brought it back to Norfolk before I left thinking it would make it on deployment, but it was eaten before we even got out of sight of the USA border."

The USO is a nonprofit, congressionally chartered, private organization; it relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations and corporations to support USO activities. The USO is not part of the U.S. government but is supported by the president of the United States, as honorary chairman, and the Department of Defense. USO Care Packages are distributed to boost morale among troops participating in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The care packages contain an assortment of items that the servicemen have specifically requested, such as prepaid international calling cards, disposable cameras, toiletries, entertainment items and Striplings beef jerky.

Those interested can donate locally by visiting the Stripling's location at 1401 West Blvd. or by mailing donations to that address. In addition, the Moultrie retail store will be open for the month of December from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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