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Company Kitchen

Local businesses have a new food service option. Company Kitchen is a healthier alternative to traditional vending machines and is now serving the Emporia area.

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By Jessie Wagoner jessie@emporia.com | 0 comments

Short lunch breaks and the pang of hunger often leave people scouring the vending machines in their places of employment looking for a snack. There is a new option in the area for businesses: Company Kitchen.

"There are a lot of great places to eat in Emporia," said Tara Eichorn with Treat America, parent company of Company Kitchen. "But if you don't have time to get there and get back to your job on time you are either fixing your lunch or eating out of vending machines."

Eichorn, from Emporia, has been employed by Treat America for close to a year. She originally covered markets in Wichita and Topeka. As she watched the good response to Company Kitchen in those areas, she was motivated to bring the concept to her hometown. After discussions with Treat America they agreed Emporia would be a good fit.

"It was important to me to provide this benefit to my people in the place I grew up in," Eichorn said. "Having additional choices is never bad."

The Company Kitchen model is much different than traditional vending machines. It is an open market, similar to walking into a convenience store. Open-door coolers, snack racks and coffee machines are present and filled with fresh foods.

"We bring in fresh food that is made in our own commissary," Eichorn said. "That's the difference. You aren't eating out of a vending machine anymore where the food comes in frozen. This is food that is made fresh, delivered daily or every other day."

Salads, sandwich items, yogurt and breakfast items are common finds in the Company Kitchen. There are a variety of beverages, fresh fruits and vegetables. In an effort to help individuals make healthier choices, all of the items are tagged with a green label if they are a healthier pick.

One company in Emporia is already enjoying Company Kitchen and Eichorn is hopeful the number of businesses using the service will increase. Installing a Company Kitchen is free of charge to companies that have 100 or more employees. Eichorn says many businesses have found Company Kitchen is a good incentive for employees.

Employees are all given a Company Kitchen pre-pay card they can use for their purchases. Debit or credit cards are also accepted at the self-service kiosk for payment. A benefit of using the Company Kitchen card is that they can receive discounts or take part in promotions offered

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"Every employee has a Company Kitchen account," Eichorn said. "They can log in and see every item they have purchased and the nutritional information of the item they purchased."

In addition to Company Kitchen, Treat America also provides traditional vending services, office coffee service, cafe and cafeteria services, school lunches and contract feeding. For more information, contact Eichorn at tarae@treatamerica.com.

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