

Ireland Seeks Green With L.A. Showcase

New prime minister's initiative aims to boost trade, draw investment

THE inaugural IrelandWeek is set to kick off this week in Los Angeles as part of the island nation's new prime minister's Creative Ireland Programme, a five-year plan that began this year to bolster trade efforts.

"It will be a showcase of Irish creativity and innovation with a focus on L.A.," said Robert O'Driscoll, the consul general of Ireland for the western United States.

IrelandWeek's purpose is to display its talents abroad while encouraging foreign investment in its home market. The week-long trade event will have cultural shows, live performances and an anchor for the week, a conference called Connect353, happening on Wednesday and Thursday at LA Live Regal Theatre. The conference will have a series of panel discussions that will include topics on Brexit, technology, gaming, film, animation, music, culture and tourism.

O'Driscoll said it made sense to start with an event in California.

"There's a history of trade between Ireland and L.A. that encompasses several industries including entertainment, pharmaceuticals and manufacturing," he said.

He said there were about 430 Irish companies in the United States, of which 60, or about 14 percent, were in California. L.A. County numbers were not available.

"There is significant potential for growing trade & economic links between Ireland and Los Angeles," Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said in a statement announcing Ireland

Week. "This initiative will help our agencies to promote Ireland as an attractive location for trade and investment."

Boxing Up Wine Operations

Irvine-based wine storage products maker Vinotemp International Corp., is consolidating its company's operations from Rancho Dominguez and Long Beach to an undisclosed Los Angeles County facility, the company announced this month.

The privately held firm's chief executive, India Hynes, said the new 100,000-square-foot facility will house part of the company's operations. Vinotemp is a designer and distributor of custom wood wine cabinets, wine racks, cooling systems and other wine storage items.

The company employs around 100 workers, and the expansion will add 10 to 20 more workers, Hynes said. She said she had personal reasons to keep the new location unlisted.

Hynes declined to comment on financials.

The company's wine cabinets range in price from \$5,000 to \$6,200 and its wine coolers from \$180 to \$1,600, depending on the model.

The idea for the company's relocation was rooted in an on-going sale process of the company's 30,000-square-foot Long Beach facility, Hynes said.

"We bought that property in 2013 for \$2 million. The sale now can net us a profit five times more than the purchase amount," she said.

That location is expected to close, Hynes said.

Vinotemp was founded by Francis Ravel, Hynes' father, in 1985. It caters to the hotel and restaurant industries as well as private clients who want wine storage units in their homes.



Bottled Up: Vinotemp, which makes wine racks and storage cases, is consolidating its operations.

The company said it will keep its headquarters in Irvine.

Port Emissions Efforts

Nine air-filtration projects sought by local schools, health facilities and after-school programs are the latest set to receive a piece of the \$46 million in health-related grants being funded by the Port of Long Beach.

The port's Board of Harbor Commissioners approved \$743,631 in funding for the programs last week.

The projects are designed to provide better air filters as well as heating, ventilation and air-conditioning upgrades at facilities most im-

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pected by port operations, port officials said.

Port officials in March announced plans to give out \$46 million in grants over 12 to 15 years to community organizations to develop health programs in areas most affected by port-related pollution.

The Port Community Grants Program is part of the port's efforts in recent years to reduce pollution, including using lower-emission trucks and cutting shipping vessel pollution.

The program specifically set aside \$3 million annually over three years for health services to help those affected by asthma and other respiratory diseases. The services include screening and diagnosis, outreach, education, and health worker training.

Priority will be given to groups in zones covering downtown Long Beach and extending north along the 710 freeway. Both zones cover parts of Wilmington, Carson, Compton and Paramount. However, groups based anywhere in Long Beach can apply.

The port is scheduled to hold three public workshops to discuss grant funding priorities for 2018 and beyond at 6 p.m. Oct. 25 at First Congregational Church, 241 Cedar Ave., Long Beach.

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