

Rum Distillery Receives Federal Approval

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LACASSINE, LA, February 16, 2012 - A new rum distillery in Lacassine has been approved for operation by the U.S. Treasury Department. "I am happy to say that we have received our Federal Distilled Spirits Plant (DSP) Permit to operate our rum distillery in Lacassine," said one of the owners of Louisiana Spirits, Trey Litel. "This is an important milestone, and we are excited to share the news. The company is now approved and is fully bonded, with a basic permit and operations permit to manufacture distilled spirits, according to a Louisiana Spirits news release. Construction of the 18,000-square-foot facility began in November. Litel said the building, on a 23-acre site, is still under construction and that the federal approval came ahead of schedule. Litel said that recent rain has caused some construction delays, but the warehouse that will house the distillery equipment, storage barrels, raw materials and the bottling line have been completed. So far, the roof and walls of the warehouse building have been completed. The next phase includes dirt work for ponds, an entrance road and the foundation for offices and a visitor center, which will include a gift shop, tasting room and viewing gallery that explores the state's historic role as a sugarcane producer and rum distiller with memorabilia and curated exhibits. Also, a 1903 farmhouse will be relocated to the site once the offices are built. "Things are beginning to take shape," Litel said, "and we are well on our way to realizing the vision of producing an authentic Louisiana rum in Southwest Louisiana from Louisiana sugarcane." Louisiana Spirits LLC plans to use Louisiana sugar cane as the primary ingredient in its rum. The company says it is investing \$4 million to \$5 million in the distillery and will employ 17 to 20 people at the distillery once it opens. The company will create 17-20 full-time jobs, and additional economic opportunities for contractors, partners and suppliers will be created. The company hopes to have its first rum available by summer, but Litel said the recent rainy weather could delay production by a couple months. "We still think we will be in position to start production by the end of this year," he said.