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## **Freedom Solar Set to Install Solar at Ben E. Keith Beverage Distribution Centers in Austin and Llano**

### ***Freedom Solar's Installation to Offset 2/3 of the Revered Texas Distribution Company's Energy Costs***

**AUSTIN, TEXAS—May 5, 2021.** Austin-based Freedom Solar, the leading turnkey solar energy installer in Texas and the longest-existing residential and commercial solar power provider in the state, today announced it has contracted with Fort Worth-based food and beverage distributor Ben E. Keith Company to perform major solar energy installations at their Austin and Llano facilities.

"We are extremely pleased to have this new relationship with Ben E. Keith Beverage, a revered Texas name in business for a remarkable 115 years," said Freedom Solar CEO Bret Biggart. "This is the second major distributing company in the Austin area we have helped moved to solar, and it is particularly gratifying that the folks at Ben E. Keith were referred to us by the first distributor we served and that we can provide them with the same exceptional service and product."

"Sustainability is becoming increasingly important to businesses and customers, and these projects are the first steps in our developing sustainability plan," said Jon Thompson, Ben E. Keith Beverage Vice President of Operations. "We decided to move ahead now for reasons of financial and corporate sustainability. Solar is an increasingly affordable, smart investment that will produce excellent cost savings."

Thompson said Ben E. Keith Beverage approached Freedom Solar based on another distributor's recommendation, but also put the jobs out for competitive bids. No other company could match Freedom's knowledge, approach, experience, professionalism, quality or pricing.

Freedom Solar will install 2,430 solar panels with a capacity to produce 1,336,037 kilowatt hours of energy on the rooftop of Ben E. Keith Beverage distribution center at 4101 McKinney Falls Parkway in Austin. It will be one of the largest commercial solar installations to date in Austin. Slated for completion later this month, the solar power produced by the installation will offset 2/3 of the facility's energy costs, with a projected five-year return on investment.

Starting June 1, Freedom will install 1,020 solar panels on the roof of Llano's distribution center 1604 Bessemer Avenue in Llano. The installation will provide enough capacity to produce 557,792 kWh's of energy, offsetting 40% of the facility's electricity costs. Because this will be the first commercial solar project in the Llano area, the project's start-up was delayed to allow time to put into place an interconnection agreement, which defines how solar connects with the local electricity grid. The project is expected to be complete in this summer.

Established in 1906 in Fort Worth, Texas, Ben E. Keith Beverage Division operates 14 sales and distribution centers in Texas, distributing beer, wine, spirits and nonalcoholic brands originating in 36

countries to more than 16,000 retail accounts. The Austin facility— Ben E. Keith Beverage’s sixth-largest location in terms of sales—also operates a shuttle site in San Antonio and services 24 counties from the Austin/San Antonio areas to the Rio Grande Valley. The Llano facility, located at 1604 Bessemer Avenue, services satellite offices/shuttle sites in Brownwood and Kerrville. The entire Llano footprint consists of 19 counties and is the company’s fourth-largest location in terms of sales. Combined, the Austin and Llano centers account for roughly 10% of total sales volume.

Since 2020, the federal investment tax credit has been a big factor in the decisions of many customers to go solar. Biggart is excited that Congress recently passed legislation to extend the ITC past its planned expiration timeline. The newly signed legislation—part of a broad congressional initiative to make renewable energy like solar an attractive alternative to traditional electric power—extends the 26% solar tax credit through 2022 before it drops to 22% in 2023. Additional legislation is in the pipeline to further stimulate broad adoption of clean, renewable energy.

“Solar energy’s time has come,” said Biggart. “It is a smart, affordable financial investment for both businesses and residential customers, and the public is increasingly looking to do business with companies that demonstrate sustainability. Freedom Solar is proud to be leading the way in the 21<sup>st</sup> century solar revolution with respected, high-profile businesses like the Ben E. Keith Beverage as our valued clients.”

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#### **About Freedom Solar**

Freedom Solar is the leader in turnkey solar installations in Texas, providing high-quality, cost-effective, reliable solar solutions for the residential and commercial markets. Also a Tesla Powerwall Certified installer, Freedom Solar has installed more than 88 megawatts of solar panels since 2007 and ranks number 338 on *Inc.* magazine’s 500 fastest-growing private companies in America. The company has been recognized by Austin Energy as the number-one supplier of residential solar systems in Austin, by *GreenTech Media* as the largest residential solar installer in Texas for three years running and by the *Austin Business Journal* as the fourth fastest-growing company in Central Texas. Freedom Solar was named by the *Austin Business Journal* as a Best Place to Work for the second consecutive year in 2020 and was ranked 129th on the 2019 Top Solar Contracts List by *Solar Power World* magazine, up from 220th the previous year. Freedom Solar has completed projects for numerous corporate clients including Whole Foods, Office Depot, Lake Flato Architects, and The University of Texas, among others. For more information, visit [www.freedomsolarpower.com](http://www.freedomsolarpower.com).

#### **About Ben E. Keith Beverages**

Ben E. Keith Company, established in 1906, began selling Anheuser-Busch products in 1928. Today, Ben E. Keith Company’s Beverage division is the third largest independent beer wholesaler in the country. With fourteen Sales & Distribution Centers the company operates throughout the state of Texas and distributes import beers, craft beers, spirits, wine products, and nonalcoholic beverages. For more information, please visit [www.benekeith.com](http://www.benekeith.com).