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22nd Century Group (Nasdaq: XXII) Launches VLN[®] Reduced Nicotine Content Cigarettes in Colorado with Circle K, Smoker Friendly and New Distribution Points

- *Two Additional Distribution Partnerships Will Target Thousands of Additional Colorado Retail Stores*
- *Strong Pilot Results Lead to Expanding VLN[®] Points of Sale in Chicago and the State of Illinois*

BUFFALO, N.Y., Sept. 07, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- 22nd Century Group, Inc. (Nasdaq: [XXII](#)), a leading agricultural biotechnology company dedicated to improving health with reduced nicotine tobacco, hemp/cannabis, and hops advanced plant technologies, today announced that in September the Company will expand Illinois sales of VLN[®] to additional stores plus launch in the state of Colorado with both current and new distribution partners. 22nd Century's proprietary VLN[®] brand premium tobacco cigarettes smoke, smell, and taste like cigarettes but contain approximately 95% less nicotine than conventional cigarettes, a level shown to be non-addictive. As noted on the packaging, VLN[®] is the only cigarette in the world purposefully designed to **"help you smoke less."**

In order to make VLN[®] available to adult smokers, 22nd Century has already initiated partnerships with two of America's leading cigarette retailers. Circle K is the largest chain of company-owned and operated (non-franchised) convenience chains in the United States and the second largest in North America overall. Smoker Friendly[®] is a leading pioneer in the cigarette and tobacco store category, with more than 800 independently owned and operated retail stores.

Additionally, and to further expand its sales reach in Colorado and elsewhere as it continues to roll out VLN[®], 22nd Century will announce two additional distribution partners as part of its launch in Colorado, adding thousands of potential points of sale statewide and new regional and national retail logos where VLN[®] can be purchased.

In parallel with the Company's launch in Colorado and based on the strong pilot results in Chicago, Circle K is also expanding VLN[®] distribution to additional stores in the State of Illinois.

The steps being taken in Colorado and Illinois are in keeping with 22nd Century's plans to have distribution and retail partnerships in place to support expanding availability of VLN[®] to adult smokers across the country. At this date, the Company has already completed state Attorney General registrations for VLN[®] in 44 U.S. States and the District of Columbia.

"We are excited to expand our VLN[®] launch to Colorado with both current and new partners. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from consumers during our Chicago pilot has demonstrated impressive demand and rapid market entry for VLN[®] as the first and only tobacco cigarette that actually helps adult smokers smoke less," said John J. Miller, president of 22nd Century's Tobacco Business. "Extrapolating our strong pilot market results to a national scale with additional points of sale and geographic coverage gives us confidence we can disrupt and rapidly take significant share in the more than \$80 billion U.S. market and \$800 billion global tobacco market to create substantial value for our stakeholders."

"We are thrilled to partner with 22nd Century Group to introduce VLN[®] to adult smokers in Colorado," said Terry Gallagher, President of Smoker Friendly[®]. "VLN[®] is the first of its kind, unlike any tobacco product out there in the marketplace today. We look forward to growing our portfolio of products with innovations such as this one."

"These are exciting times for 22nd Century! With an unprecedented FDA MRTP marketing order, VLN[®] is now on

store shelves and has been extremely well received by adult smokers. Our goal is to offer a truly non-addictive conventional cigarette to adult smokers seeking alternatives, in line with the FDA's separately stated policy interests to reduce nicotine levels to minimally or non-addictive levels in all tobacco cigarettes and to eliminate menthol as a flavoring characteristic. As an off-ramp for current adult smokers, 22nd Century VLN[®] King cigarettes are the only combustible cigarette product on the market to already meet the reduced nicotine target, and we expect our VLN[®] Menthol King cigarettes to be exempt from the FDA's proposed ban on menthol cigarettes as a key step in bringing those policy goals to reality," explained James A. Mish, chief executive officer of 22nd Century Group.

About 22nd Century Group, Inc.

22nd Century Group, Inc. (Nasdaq: [XXII](#)) is a leading agricultural biotechnology company focused on tobacco harm reduction, reduced nicotine tobacco and improving health and wellness through plant science. With dozens of patents allowing it to control nicotine biosynthesis in the tobacco plant, the Company has developed proprietary reduced nicotine content (RNC) tobacco plants and cigarettes, which have become the cornerstone of the [FDA's Comprehensive Plan](#) to address the widespread death and disease caused by smoking. The Company received the first and only FDA MRTP authorization of a combustible cigarette in December 2021. In tobacco, hemp/cannabis, and hop plants, 22nd Century uses modern plant breeding technologies, including genetic engineering, gene-editing, and molecular breeding to deliver solutions for the life science and consumer products industries by creating new, proprietary plants with optimized alkaloid and flavonoid profiles as well as improved yields and valuable agronomic traits.

Learn more at [xxiicentury.com](#), on [Twitter](#), on [LinkedIn](#), and on [YouTube](#).

Learn more about VLN[®] at [tryvln.com](#).

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

Except for historical information, all of the statements, expectations, and assumptions contained in this press release are forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements typically contain terms such as "anticipate," "believe," "consider," "continue," "could," "estimate," "expect," "explore," "foresee," "goal," "guidance," "intend," "likely," "may," "plan," "potential," "predict," "preliminary," "probable," "project," "promising," "seek," "should," "will," "would," and similar expressions. Actual results might differ materially from those explicit or implicit in forward-looking statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially are set forth in "Risk Factors" in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K filed on March 1, 2022, and in the Company's Quarterly Report filed on August 9, 2022. All information provided in this release is as of the date hereof, and the Company assumes no obligation to and does not intend to update these forward-looking statements, except as required by law.

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