November 19, 2019

KONTOOR™

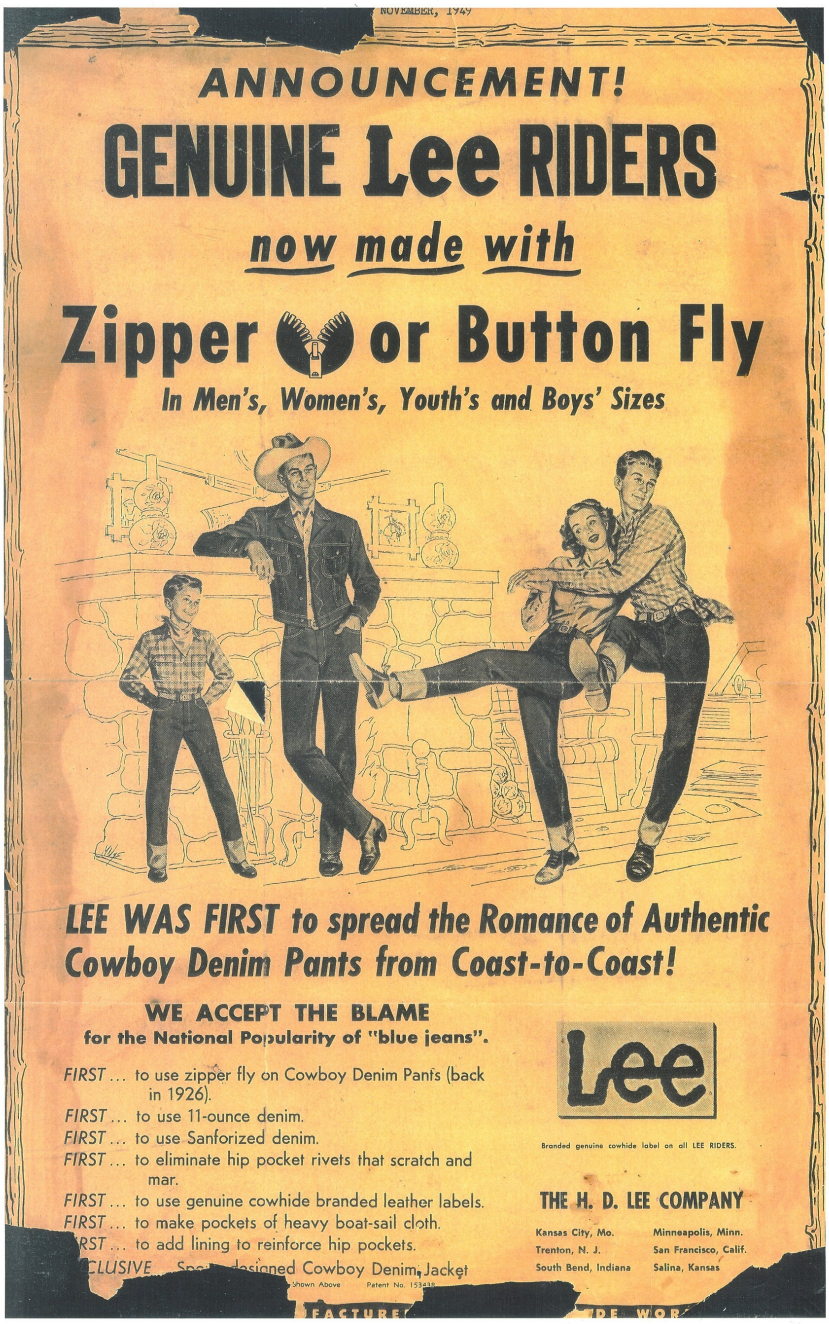
INSPIRING CONFIDENCE, EVERY DAY

Lee® Celebrates 130 Years

The Iconic American Denim Brand Shapes the Apparel Landscape with Bold Choices, Inclusivity, Wit and Irreverence

GREENSBORO, N.C., Nov. 19, 2019 /PRNewswire/ --*Lee*® *(*www.Lee.com), the iconic American apparel brand known for its quintessential workwear and timeless denim style, celebrates 130 years this month. Founded in 1889 by pioneering entrepreneur, Henry David (H.D.) Lee, *Lee* was immediately a disruptor in the marketplace. From the early days in 1912 when the company produced workwear for farmers, coal miners and railroad workers, to its current place as a titan in the denim industry, *Lee* has always been at the forefront of welcomed change.

"Lee helped create the denim category and continues to define modern culture today," said Scott Baxter, President and CEO, Kontoor Brands. "Lee's commitment to harnessing innovative technology and incredible quality to bring consumers apparel that looks good and fits great, has inspired generations of brand loyalists and solidified Lee's position as an icon in the denim category. We are honored to celebrate this milestone and are excited for our beloved brand and its promising future."



The brand was the first to introduce the one-piece Union-All and the groundbreaking Zipper Fly. By 1939, it was recognized as the largest manufacturer of workwear in the U.S. Preceding WWII, *Lee* was the first to bring denim to the women's market in a major way, and forty years later, it became the number one brand for women and girls. Today, *Lee* can be found across all tiers of distribution throughout the globe, from specialty boutiques and department stores to mass retailers.

Lee is inclusive in its advertising as well. Never taking itself too seriously, the brand introduced the iconic Buddy Lee doll to promote its overalls in 1921 and used the irreverent mascot for decades.

Hollywood took notice, which propelled *Lee* to even greater success, and a place in film history. When denim first hit Hollywood in the early 50s, stars were seen in *Lee* both on and

off the screen.

And in the 80's and 90's the biggest stars in the world were wearing the iconic label. From musicians, to super models and Hollywood's rebels and sweethearts, the *Lee* brand was hotter than ever.

"H.D. Lee would be pleased to see how far the Lee brand has come since its inception," said Chris Waldeck, Vice President and Global Brand President, *Lee*. "Today, we honor the brand's rich history while planning for its future. A future that includes reaching new consumers in new geographies, with best-in-class product and brand experiences. We have built a strong foundation, and I'm confident this next chapter will be the brand's best yet."

Retaining the same ethos and mission with which it began, the*Lee* brand continues to dress consumers with quality products that stand the test of time. With the recent launch of *Lee* Reissue, *Lee* MVP, Vintage Modern, and Shape Illusions, *Lee* continues to push the boundaries of what is possible. Combining timeless styles from its illustrious archives, the most innovative technologies and a legacy of inclusivity - *Lee* is a brand for every body, and undoubtedly is ready for the next 130 years.

About *Lee*

Lee®, a Kontoor Brands (NYSE: KTB) brand, is an iconic American denim and casual apparel brand. *Lee*®'s collections include a uniquely styled range of jeans, pants, shirts, shorts and jackets for men, women, and boys. Founded by H.D. Lee and backed by nearly 130 years of purposeful design and craftsmanship, *Lee*®'s movement-inspired innovations, versatile styling and superior fit continue to inspire generations of brand loyalists. For more information, please visit www.lee.com.

View original content to download multimedia:http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/lee-celebrates-130-years-300960220.html

SOURCE LEE