

ON THE MOVE

Tri Star Energy is focused on growth and improvement in its existing market

Tri Star Energy LLC may not be the largest convenience store chain in the United States, but the 15 stores it added in the last year marked tremendous growth for a relatively small chain. Going from No. 91 on last year's Top 100 ranking with 70 stores to No. 72 this year with 85 locations — a jump of 19 spots — makes the Nashville, Tenn.-based retailer the Biggest Mover of 2016.

The growth of Tri Star, which operates the Tri Star and Twice Daily brands, stems from a combination of factors, including: the growth of the Nashville marketplace; strong leadership within the company; and its ongoing conversion of stores to the Twice Daily brand.

The Twice Daily banner focuses on fresh food offerings, particularly hot and cold beverages, pastries, and hot and cold deli products. It also works to use locally sourced ingredients.

"We will continue to grow, and the growth is very intentional," Tom Woodard, director of communications for Tri Star, told *Convenience Store News*. "A true rebrand is taking place while this growth is going on, and the marketplace is responding very nicely."

The rebrand is not just a name change. Rather, it's a call to action that invites customers to visit a Twice Daily store once in the morning for coffee and a breakfast item and then in the afternoon for a sandwich, afterschool snack or anything else fresh and fulfilling.



Tri Star began converting stores to the Twice Daily banner several years ago and is approximately at the halfway point in the process. Rebranding an existing store can take up to 90 days, while adding a new-to-industry location or razing/rebuilding takes six months to a year. The company is taking an "aggressively conservative" approach to converting stores, balancing speed with intelligent practices, according to Woodard.

"As quickly as we can get them changed over, we are doing that," he said, noting the public's reaction has been "overwhelmingly positive," with individual customers inquiring as to when a Twice Daily store will open up in their neighborhoods.

Fueled by the confidence in its current store and business models, Tri Star has a goal of growing to 100 Twice Daily stores over the next three years. While

the company won't rule out breaking into new markets as it continues to expand, it is now working to be the best it can be within its current footprint. Not only does Tri Star have "really great" distribution points in middle Tennessee, but the retailer also has "great relationships" in its communities, said Woodard.

"We love where we are. We're very committed to being a local operator in this area," he concluded.

BIGGEST MOVERS

| 2016 RANK | 2015 RANK | COMPANY | SPOTS MOVED |
|-----------|-----------|--|-------------|
| 72 | 91 | Tri Star Energy LLC, Nashville, Tenn. | +19 |
| 39 | 23 | Western Refining Inc., El Paso, Texas | -16 |
| 80 | 90 | Buchanan Oil Co., Omaha, Neb. | +10 |
| 38 | 28 | United Pacific, Los Angeles | -10 |
| 25 | 34 | TravelCenters of America LLC, Westlake, Ohio | +9 |
| 59 | 67 | Blarney Castle Oil Co., Bear Lake, Mich. | +8 |
| 93 | 100 | Enmark Stations Inc., Savannah, Ga. | +7 |
| 80 | 87 | Express Mart Franchising Corp., Syracuse, N.Y. | +7 |
| 80 | 87 | Sampson Bladen Oil Co. Inc., Clinton, N.C. | +7 |
| 84 | 77 | MFA Oil Co., Columbia, Mo. | -7 |

Source: Company information; Nielsen TDLink, April 2016; Convenience Store News Market Research, 2016

— Angela Hanson