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Miller Oil Sells Colonial Pantry Stores

VPS picks up seven locations in Illinois as owner plans retirement

By [JENNIFER BULAT](#)

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CHAMPAIGN, Ill. -- Looking to retire, Miller Oil president John Miller has sold the company's seven Colonial Pantry convenience stores in Illinois to Village Pantry Stores, Wilmington, N.C.

As reported in a Morgan Keegan/*CSP Daily News* Flash yesterday, the Champaign, Ill.-based company's stores are located in Champaign, Georgetown, Paxton, Stonington, Ogden, Danville and Oakwood.

Wilmington, N.C.-based VPS Convenience Store Group, an affiliate of Sun Capital Partners Inc., operates more than 400 c-stores throughout the Southeast and Midwest under the names Scotchman, Village Pantry, Lil Cricket, Young's, Next Door Stores and Everyday Shops.

Colonial Pantry previously operated 13 stores, but that number was down to seven at the time of the acquisition.



The sale is the result of a strategic decision by Miller. According to Terry Monroe, president of Effingham, Ill.-based American Business Brokers, Miller previously ran his stores with two brothers, but they passed away over the past 10 years. Miller, who is in his mid-60s, has been handling the entire business by himself, and now he wants to retire. He has no other business interests.

"Miller Oil has successfully operated these outstanding stores for a number of years," said Monroe. "Mr. Miller has reached a point in his successful business career where he is ready to downsize."

Monroe told *CSP Daily News* that Miller engaged American Business Brokers last August to find a strategic buyer for his stores. Village Pantry "was a good fit for the stores," he said.

The locations will convert to Village Pantry from Colonial Pantry.

"It's a natural extension for Village Pantry," extending the company's Midwest presence into Illinois, he said. The stores will carry Village Pantry foodservice offerings, which the company has been looking to expand.

Bill Fecht, president of Bloomington, Ill.-based WJF Services, which facilitated the transaction along with American Business Brokers, said, "This transaction will add the ConocoPhillips brand to [VPS Convenience Store Group's] list of other brands and now puts them in the state of Illinois with a definite foothold in the Midwest."

With this acquisition, VPS now operates 425 stores in eight states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia) in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and Southeast.

"We are very excited about the addition of the Colonial Pantry stores to the VPS group," said VPS chairman and CEO Jeff Turpin. "These sites align well with our brand philosophy of being convenient neighborhood stores with fast and friendly

service, fresh-food offerings and coffee. Customers can expect a seamless transition with no interruption in service as we integrate these locations into our VPS family of stores."

The transaction marks the third time in the past year that VPS has added stores to its roster. The company added Virginia Oil Co., a group of 17 stores in western Virginia, last April, and 22 former Appco stores in northeastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia in January 2011.

VPS offers fuel brands including Exxon, Mobil, Marathon, Valero, BP, Shell, ConocoPhillips and its own proprietary brand, Carolina Petro.

Source: [CSP Daily News](#)

Retailer Focus: [VPS Convenience Store Group](#)

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