Kroger's Crafting of Kentucky Derby Winner's Garland Has Become a Derby Event Itself

LOUISVILLE, Ky., May 1, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- For the 26th year, master floral designers from The Kroger Co.(NYSE: KR) will craft the famous "Garland of Roses" presented to the winning thoroughbred at this weekend's Kentucky Derby.

Visitors can watch Kroger's team of floral designers craft the garland at the Kroger store located at 12501 Shelbyville Road, in Louisville, KY, between 4 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Derby Eve. Last year, more than 6,000 people witnessed this all-night event. The completed garland will remain on display at Kroger until 8:30 a.m.Derby Day.

"The Garland of Roses is such a recognized symbol of the Kentucky Derby that its very creation has become a Derby tradition in its own right," said Carol Belser, Kroger master florist. "We take great pride in delivering the Garland each year, and it is a thrill to see our team of floral designers' craftsmanship televised around the world on Derby Day."

It will take nearly one dozen master florists approximately seven hours to create the "Garland of Roses," which will measure 122 inches long by 22 inches wide, weigh approximately 40 pounds, and contain more than 400 roses. To complete the design, a crown of roses, greenery and ribbons that represent each thoroughbred running in the Derby race will be placed at the very center of the garland. The garland is made entirely of "Freedom" roses, a variety that was selected for its rich red color, bloom size, stem length and foliage. At 8:45 a.m. Derby morning, the garland, along with the Jockey's Bouquet, will be transported to Churchill Downs with a police escort, where it will remain on display in the Clubhouse Gardens from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The "Garland of Roses" has been a tradition of the Kentucky Derby since 1932, when the first garland was designed by Louisvillian Grace Walker at the request of Churchill Downs. Prior to that time, a horseshoe-shaped wreath of roses was presented to the Derby winner.

Kroger will also create the Oaks Garland for the 22nd consecutive year. This event is also open to the public at the Shelbyville Road Kroger from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. on Thursday, May 3rd. The Oaks Garland is 126 inches long and 20 inches wide. It weighs approximately 20 pounds and features 160 hand-sewn white Star Fighter Lilies trimmed in a border of Oak Ivy leaves.

As the world's largest florist, Kroger and its family of stores – Dillons, Food 4 Less, Fred Meyer, Fry's, King Soopers, QFC, Ralphs and Smith's – is committed to providing customers with flowers fresh from the grower, for occasions large and small. The company reminds its customers that Mother's Day, May 13, is quickly approaching. The company has a variety of specially-themed Mother's Day bouquets available in stores nationwide, online at www.kroger.com, and by phone at 1-800-900-6575.

About Kroger:

Kroger, the nation's largest traditional grocery retailer, employs more than 339,000 associates who



serve customers in 2,435 supermarkets and multi-department stores in 31 states under two dozen local banner names. The company also operates 791 convenience stores, 348 fine jewelry stores, 1,090 supermarket fuel centers and 39 food processing plants in the U.S. Recognized by Forbes as the most generous company in America, Kroger supports hunger relief, breast cancer awareness, the military and their families, and more than 30,000 schools and grassroots organizations in the communities it serves. Kroger contributes food and funds equal to 125 million meals a year through more than 80 Feeding America food bank partners. For more information, please visit www.kroger.com.

Kroger's Mid South Division is based in Louisville and it includes 162 stores in Kentucky, Tennessee, S. Indiana and S Illinois.

SOURCE The Kroger Co.

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