



TWO NEW AGENCIES for the cRc

Something exciting is always happening at the cRc, as we continue to reach out to and hear from consumers and *vaadim* [kosher certification agencies] around the globe. Our app and website are used throughout the world and all hours of the day and night. We get calls from consumers down the block and in cities across the country and from agencies and consumers in communities near and far. In addition, from our home in Chicago, “the cRc has traditionally supported many smaller *vaadim* by advising their leadership how to better run proper *kashrus* agencies,” said Rabbi Sholem Fishbane, cRc Kashruth Administrator. “*Vaadim* have expressed great admiration for the help we offer in a non-competitive way.”

It was understandable, therefore, that as Rabbi Baruch M. Clein, head of **Blue Ribbon Kosher** (BRK), began to plan his retirement, he approached the cRc and proposed that we might acquire his agency and to continue to provide kosher supervision for the companies under their certification. Rabbi Yechezkel Greenberg, then head of the Rabbinical Board of **Minnesota Kosher**, also reached out to us for help in “cementing the cRc involvement in the community,” explained Rabbi Fishbane, by having the cRc take over Minnesota Kosher (MK) as well. Minnesota Kosher concentrates primarily on local establishments, while Blue Ribbon companies can be found in Minnesota, North Dakota, Texas, Pennsylvania, and even as far as Thailand.

Last year, cRc rabbinical coordinators visited many companies certified by Blue Ribbon Kosher to assess what would be involved in assuming responsibility for this supervision, and arrangements were completed by March 2017. The cRc’s purchase of Minnesota Kosher was finalized in July. “When the *kashrus* agencies in Minnesota recognized the need to give over the reins to an established *hashgacha*, it was only natural for them to contact the cRc,” added Rabbi Fishbane. “This is testament to the culture of cRc and how we interact with others to work toward the betterment of *kashrus* overall.”

The companies whose products have been certified by BRK are enthusiastic about the purchase, according to Rabbi Moshe Moscowitz, cRc Senior Rabbinical Coordinator. Through BRK the cRc broadens the type of products the cRc certifies, and for the agencies and their companies, cRc certification affords global recognition and provides advanced computer systems for data entry and publicity, as well.

Rabbi Fishbane recruited Rabbi Eli Markowitz, whose wife is originally from Minneapolis, as the cRc’s local representative in Minnesota to oversee *kashrus* for many of the companies and plants formerly under Blue Ribbon Kosher and Minnesota Kosher. Rabbi Markowitz attended Yeshiva Torah Vodaath in New York and received *semicha* from Rabbi Yisroel Belsky zt”l. He is also a *talmid* of Rabbi Yisroel Reisman shlit”a. Both Rabbi Belsky and then Rabbi Reisman influenced Rabbi Markowitz to enter the *kashrus* field. Often Rabbi Markowitz and those in his *shiur* accompanied Rabbi Belsky zt”l on visits to the Orthodox Union. “Rabbi Reisman showed me the way to take *halachos* and make them practical for *kashrus sheilos*,” said Rabbi Markowitz. “I regularly consult with him.” We are also fortunate to have the guidance of Rabbi Shimon Perez, who previously led *hashgacha* for Minnesota Kosher and helped Rabbi Clein with BRK.

Rabbinical coordinators of the cRc travel to Minneapolis to work with and mentor Rabbi Markowitz and ensure cRc policy is adopted by the new accounts. “The companies are

impressed with the cRc's level of professionalism and the scope of what they are able to do," said Rabbi Markowitz. Rabbi Markowitz, himself, is impressed by how much time and effort the cRc office and rabbinical coordinators put into every visit and company. "Seeing their dedication is motivating," he said.

As we welcome Blue Ribbon Kosher and Minnesota Kosher to the cRc family, we look forward to continuing to offer superior customer service and exemplary support for individuals and agencies in Chicago, the Midwest, and everywhere in the world where kosher consumers are found.