

NLaws Produce, a leading Savannah-based family-owned wholesale produce distribution company, announced a new relationship with the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA), the Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

In May, an employee of GDA introduced NLaws to representatives of Georgia Fresh Pack (GFP). GFP repacks fruit for The Wonderful Company and knew of the need for a refrigerated container freight station. Meetings were then started with GPA and CBP.

As a result of this relationship, NLaws created a new venture, NLaws Refrigerated Port Services. Sharing space in the company's current 50,000 square-foot refrigerated warehouse near the Port of Savannah, the new enterprise is a CBP authorized licensed container freight station.

The refrigerated facility allows CBP to perform required produce inspections without breaking the 34-degree cold chain, which otherwise would negatively affect the produce because it raises the storage temperature.

"We're pleased to expand our business while contributing to the safety of produce shipped into the United States through our Savannah port," said Steve Kaplan, who co-founded the business in 2003 with his business partner and brother-in-law Jay Epstein. "It's really an extension of what we already do. We are thrilled that the Georgia Ports Authority supported us for this venture."

NLaws was the ideal company to handle the new service with its expertise in refrigerated produce and other perishable goods warehousing and distribution. All of the CBP inspections are performed in a bonded warehouse space, which is critical to ensuring proper inspections.

Chris Logan, Senior Director Trade Development, BCO Sales of Georgia Ports Authority, said, "This is another positive development that offers both perishable and temperature-control shippers another site for CBP/AG inspections that maintains the cold chain during the inspections. The location is also ideal in that it is in close proximity to both Garden City and Ocean Terminals. We look forward to their success as it will promote continued growth in perishable imports via the Port of Savannah."

The first company to utilize the new service will be The Wonderful Company, which owns several popular consumer brands, including Wonderful Halos, Wonderful Pistachios, POM Wonderful and more. NLaws expects to receive 17 containers from Los Angeles-based Wonderful within the next two weeks.

Initially, it will be citrus coming through the facility, starting with mandarin oranges from Peru. It will then shift to blueberries and avocados.