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best for us.”

With trademarks secured for Chute Eight — named after the Chute 8 entertainment venue at the arena — and the handshake motto, Barnett said the board began searching for a company to make a product befitting of the label. He said the board was fortunate to find Portland-based Indio Spirits, which also produces a whiskey for the Snake River Stampede rodeo in Nampa, Idaho.

“We’ve had a really good experience partnering with rodeos,” Indio distiller Mark White said. “I think the whole Western personality is one of tradition and loyalty, and when they get behind something, they really get behind something. That’s something we really value as a company as well.”

White said he brought several different samples for the board members to try, and they selected the final product.

The 80-proof whiskey is actually a blend of two different whiskeys: a rye whiskey from Indiana and a rye, corn and barley blend from Alberta, Canada. White said Indio does not distill the spirits but ages them in different barrels — American oak, used wine, used rye — to create unique flavor profiles.

“It’s got a terrific caramel and spice nose and a sweet cherry nose. On the palate, it’s got a lot of rye spice, so it’s kind of aggressive,” he said. “This is unique for Chute Eight brands. We blend a lot of whiskeys, but I’ve never blended anything like this whiskey.”

The vodka is made from a 190-proof corn distillate

from the Corn Belt, which is diluted and refined into an 80-proof sipping vodka, White said.

“We run it through charcoal filtration, which strips the hard edges out and imparts a smooth mouth feel,” he said. “It really just softens the initial spirits. We run it through charcoal for about 72 hours straight, and then we run it through basically a pharmaceutical-grade filtration system, and from there, we bottle.”

White said Indio is working to expand distribution of the label, which was launched in May. He said the products are currently available in Oregon, with limited distribution in Washington and on the East Coast.

Barnett said both the whiskey and the vodka are high-quality products, and as more people try them, sales will increase. Those

who have tasted them have given “rave reviews,” he said.

“It should be a successful brand just because of the quality of what’s in the bottle,” Barnett said. “The key with it is to get somebody to drink it for the first time because the quality of the product will support it after they drink it.”

After a temporary hiatus

to establish the new Chute Eight products, Barnett said Farm-City Pro Rodeo would begin receiving the royalties later this year. And he gave his word the money would be used to make the rodeo created for cowboys by cowboys even better, with the majority going back to the cowboys themselves through purse increases.

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