Form 5500	Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan	OMB Nos. 1210-0110 1210-0089
Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	This form is required to be filed for employee benefit plans under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and sections 6057(b) and 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ **Complete all entries in accordance with the instructions to the Form 5500.**	**2023** **This Form is Open to Public Inspection**

Part I Annual Report Identification Information

For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2023 and ending 12/31/2023

A This return/report is for:
- [ ] a multiemployer plan
- [X] a multiple-employer plan (Filers checking this box must provide participating employer information in accordance with the form instructions.)
- [ ] a single-employer plan
- [ ] a DFE (specify) ____

B This return/report is:
- [ ] the first return/report
- [ ] the final return/report
- [ ] an amended return/report
- [ ] a short plan year return/report (less than 12 months)

C If the plan is a collectively-bargained plan, check here. . . . . ▶ [ ]

D Check box if filing under:
- [X] Form 5558
- [ ] automatic extension
- [ ] the DFVC program
- [ ] special extension (enter description)

E If this is a retroactively adopted plan permitted by SECURE Act section 201, check here. . . . . ▶ [ ]

Part II Basic Plan Information—enter all requested information

1a Name of plan
RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

1b Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 001

1c Effective date of plan 10/01/1992

2a Plan sponsor's name (employer, if for a single-employer plan)
Mailing address (include room, apt., suite no. and street, or P.O. Box)
City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code (if foreign, see instructions)
EMPIRE MARKETING STRATEGIES, INC.

11243 CORNELL PARK DRIVE
BLUE ASH, OH 45242

2b Employer Identification Number (EIN) 31-1133276

2c Plan Sponsor's telephone number 513-469-4330

2d Business code (see instructions) 424400

Caution: A penalty for the late or incomplete filing of this return/report will be assessed unless reasonable cause is established.

Under penalties of perjury and other penalties set forth in the instructions, I declare that I have examined this return/report, including accompanying schedules, statements and attachments, as well as the electronic version of this return/report, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.

SIGN HERE	Filed with authorized/valid electronic signature.	10/14/2024	SARAH LUERS
	Signature of plan administrator	Date	Enter name of individual signing as plan administrator
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of employer/plan sponsor	Date	Enter name of individual signing as employer or plan sponsor
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of DFE	Date	Enter name of individual signing as DFE

For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the Instructions for Form 5500.

3a Plan administrator's name and address [X] Same as Plan Sponsor

3b Administrator's EIN

3c Administrator's telephone number

4 If the name and/or EIN of the plan sponsor or the plan name has changed since the last return/report filed for this plan, enter the plan sponsor's name, EIN, the plan name and the plan number from the last return/report:

a Sponsor's name

c Plan Name

4b EIN

4d PN

5	Total number of participants at the beginning of the plan year	**5**	1857
6	Number of participants as of the end of the plan year unless otherwise stated (welfare plans complete only lines **6a(1), 6a(2), 6b, 6c,** and **6d**).		
a(1)	Total number of active participants at the beginning of the plan year	**6a(1)**	1181
a(2)	Total number of active participants at the end of the plan year	**6a(2)**	1152
b	Retired or separated participants receiving benefits	**6b**	14
c	Other retired or separated participants entitled to future benefits	**6c**	324
d	Subtotal. Add lines **6a(2)**, **6b**, and **6c**.	**6d**	1490
e	Deceased participants whose beneficiaries are receiving or are entitled to receive benefits.	**6e**	0
f	Total. Add lines **6d** and **6e**.	**6f**	1490
g(1)	Number of participants with account balances as of the beginning of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item)	**6g(1)**	1722
g(2)	Number of participants with account balances as of the end of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item)	**6g(2)**	1403
h	Number of participants who terminated employment during the plan year with accrued benefits that were less than 100% vested	**6h**	151
7	Enter the total number of employers obligated to contribute to the plan (only multiemployer plans complete this item)	**7**	

8a If the plan provides pension benefits, enter the applicable pension feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristics Codes in the instructions:

2E 2F 2G 2J 2K 2S 2T 3B 3D 3H

b If the plan provides welfare benefits, enter the applicable welfare feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristics Codes in the instructions:

9a Plan funding arrangement (check all that apply)

- **(1)** [ ] Insurance
- **(2)** [ ] Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts
- **(3)** [X] Trust
- **(4)** [ ] General assets of the sponsor

9b Plan benefit arrangement (check all that apply)

- **(1)** [ ] Insurance
- **(2)** [ ] Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts
- **(3)** [X] Trust
- **(4)** [ ] General assets of the sponsor

10 Check all applicable boxes in 10a and 10b to indicate which schedules are attached, and, where indicated, enter the number attached. (See instructions)

a Pension Schedules

- **(1)** [X] **R** (Retirement Plan Information)
- **(2)** [ ] **MB** (Multiemployer Defined Benefit Plan and Certain Money Purchase Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
- **(3)** [ ] **SB** (Single-Employer Defined Benefit Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
- **(4)** [ ] **DCG** (Individual Plan Information) – Number Attached _____
- **(5)** [X] **MEP** (Multiple-Employer Retirement Plan Information)

b General Schedules

- **(1)** [X] **H** (Financial Information)
- **(2)** [ ] **I** (Financial Information – Small Plan)
- **(3)** [ ] **A** (Insurance Information) – Number Attached 0
- **(4)** [X] **C** (Service Provider Information)
- **(5)** [X] **D** (DFE/Participating Plan Information)
- **(6)** [ ] **G** (Financial Transaction Schedules)

Part III Form M-1 Compliance Information (to be completed by welfare benefit plans)

11a If the plan provides welfare benefits, was the plan subject to the Form M-1 filing requirements during the plan year? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes" is checked, complete lines 11b and 11c.

11b Is the plan currently in compliance with the Form M-1 filing requirements? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ……..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

11c Enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the 2023 Form M-1 annual report. If the plan was not required to file the 2023 Form M-1 annual report, enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the most recent Form M-1 that was required to be filed under the Form M-1 filing requirements. (Failure to enter a valid Receipt Confirmation Code will subject the Form 5500 filing to rejection as incomplete.)

Receipt Confirmation Code_____

SCHEDULE C (Form 5500)	Service Provider Information	OMB No. 1210-0110
Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service	This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).	2023
Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration	▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**	**This Form is Open to Public Inspection.**
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation		

For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2023 and ending 12/31/2023

A Name of plan
RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 001

C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500
EMPIRE MARKETING STRATEGIES, INC.

D Employer Identification Number (EIN)
31-1133276

Part I Service Provider Information (see instructions)

You must complete this Part, in accordance with the instructions, to report the information required for **each person** who received, directly or indirectly, $5,000 or more in total compensation (i.e., money or anything else of monetary value) in connection with services rendered to the plan or the person's position with the plan during the plan year. If a person received **only** eligible indirect compensation for which the plan received the required disclosures, you are required to answer line 1 but are not required to include that person when completing the remainder of this Part.

1 Information on Persons Receiving Only Eligible Indirect Compensation

a Check "Yes" or "No" to indicate whether you are excluding a person from the remainder of this Part because they received only eligible indirect compensation for which the plan received the required disclosures (see instructions for definitions and conditions).. . . . . ☐ Yes ☒ No

b If you answered line 1a "Yes," enter the name and EIN or address of each person providing the required disclosures for the service providers who received only eligible indirect compensation. Complete as many entries as needed (see instructions).

(b) Enter name and EIN or address of person who provided you disclosures on eligible indirect compensation

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(b) Enter name and EIN or address of person who provided you disclosures on eligible indirect compensation

2. Information on Other Service Providers Receiving Direct or Indirect Compensation. Except for those persons for whom you answered "Yes" to line 1a above, complete as many entries as needed to list each person receiving, directly or indirectly, $5,000 or more in total compensation (i.e., money or anything else of value) in connection with services rendered to the plan or their position with the plan during the plan year. (See instructions).

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

EMPOWER ANNUITY INSURANCE COMPANY O

8515 EAST ORCHARD ROAD
GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO 80111

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
64	RECORDKEEPER	129388	Yes [X] No [ ]	Yes [X] No [ ]	0	Yes [X] No [ ]

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

CREATIVE PLANNING LLC

5440 W 110TH ST STE 102
OVERLAND PARK, KS 66211

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
27	INVESTMENT ADVISOR	40000	Yes [ ] No [X]	Yes [ ] No [ ]		Yes [ ] No [ ]

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

EMPOWER ADVISORY GROUP, LLC

8515 EAST ORCHARD ROAD
GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO 80111

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
28	INVESTMENT MGMT	36257	Yes [ ] No [X]	Yes [ ] No [ ]		Yes [ ] No [ ]

2. Information on Other Service Providers Receiving Direct or Indirect Compensation. Except for those persons for whom you answered "Yes" to line 1a above, complete as many entries as needed to list each person receiving, directly or indirectly, $5,000 or more in total compensation (i.e., money or anything else of value) in connection with services rendered to the plan or their position with the plan during the plan year. (See instructions).

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

BARNES, DENNIG AND CO. LTD

150 E FOURTH ST 3RD FL
CINCINNATI, OH 45202

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
10	AUDITOR	19533	Yes ☐ No ☒	Yes ☐ No ☐		Yes ☐ No ☐

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
			Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐		Yes ☐ No ☐

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
			Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐		Yes ☐ No ☐

Part I Service Provider Information (continued)

3. If you reported on line 2 receipt of indirect compensation, other than eligible indirect compensation, by a service provider, and the service provider is a fiduciary or provides contract administrator, consulting, custodial, investment advisory, investment management, broker, or recordkeeping services, answer the following questions for (a) each source from whom the service provider received $1,000 or more in indirect compensation and (b) each source for whom the service provider gave you a formula used to determine the indirect compensation instead of an amount or estimated amount of the indirect compensation. Complete as many entries as needed to report the required information for each source.

(a) Enter service provider name as it appears on line 2	**(b)** Service Codes (see instructions)	**(c)** Enter amount of indirect compensation

(d) Enter name and EIN (address) of source of indirect compensation	**(e)** Describe the indirect compensation, including any formula used to determine the service provider's eligibility for or the amount of the indirect compensation.

(a) Enter service provider name as it appears on line 2	**(b)** Service Codes (see instructions)	**(c)** Enter amount of indirect compensation

(d) Enter name and EIN (address) of source of indirect compensation	**(e)** Describe the indirect compensation, including any formula used to determine the service provider's eligibility for or the amount of the indirect compensation.

(a) Enter service provider name as it appears on line 2	**(b)** Service Codes (see instructions)	**(c)** Enter amount of indirect compensation

(d) Enter name and EIN (address) of source of indirect compensation	**(e)** Describe the indirect compensation, including any formula used to determine the service provider's eligibility for or the amount of the indirect compensation.

Part II Service Providers Who Fail or Refuse to Provide Information

4 Provide, to the extent possible, the following information for each service provider who failed or refused to provide the information necessary to complete this Schedule.

(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	**(b)** Nature of Service Code(s)	**(c)** Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide

(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	**(b)** Nature of Service Code(s)	**(c)** Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide

(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	**(b)** Nature of Service Code(s)	**(c)** Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide

(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	**(b)** Nature of Service Code(s)	**(c)** Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide

(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	**(b)** Nature of Service Code(s)	**(c)** Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide

(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	**(b)** Nature of Service Code(s)	**(c)** Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide

Part III Termination Information on Accountants and Enrolled Actuaries (see instructions)

(complete as many entries as needed)

a Name:	**b** EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	**e** Telephone:

Explanation:

a Name:	**b** EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	**e** Telephone:

Explanation:

a Name:	**b** EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	**e** Telephone:

Explanation:

a Name:	**b** EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	**e** Telephone:

Explanation:

a Name:	**b** EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	**e** Telephone:

Explanation:

SCHEDULE D (Form 5500)	DFE/Participating Plan Information	OMB No. 1210-0110
Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration	This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). ▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**	**2023** **This Form is Open to Public Inspection.**

For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2023 and ending 12/31/2023

A Name of plan
RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 001

C Plan or DFE sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500
EMPIRE MARKETING STRATEGIES, INC.

D Employer Identification Number (EIN)
31-1133276

Part I Information on interests in MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs (to be completed by plans and DFEs)

(Complete as many entries as needed to report all interests in DFEs)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: PUTNAM STABLE VALUE FUND

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): PUTNAM INVESTMENTS

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)
04-3159710-202	C	2803109

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:

b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):

c EIN-PN	**d** Entity code	**e** Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

Part II Information on Participating Plans (to be completed by DFEs, other than DCGs)

(Complete as many entries as needed to report all participating plans. DCGs must report each participating plan using Schedule DCG.)

a Plan name

b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

a Plan name

b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

a Plan name

b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

a Plan name

b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

a Plan name

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b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

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b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

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b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

a Plan name

b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

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b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

a Plan name

b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

a Plan name

b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

a Plan name

b Name of plan sponsor | **c** EIN-PN

SCHEDULE H (Form 5500)	Financial Information	OMB No. 1210-0110
Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**	**2023** **This Form is Open to Public Inspection**

For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2023 and ending 12/31/2023

A Name of plan
RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 001

C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500
EMPIRE MARKETING STRATEGIES, INC.

D Employer Identification Number (EIN)
31-1133276

Part I Asset and Liability Statement

1 Current value of plan assets and liabilities at the beginning and end of the plan year. Combine the value of plan assets held in more than one trust. Report the value of the plan's interest in a commingled fund containing the assets of more than one plan on a line-by-line basis unless the value is reportable on lines 1c(9) through 1c(14). Do not enter the value of that portion of an insurance contract which guarantees, during this plan year, to pay a specific dollar benefit at a future date. **Round off amounts to the nearest dollar.** MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 1b(1), 1b(2), 1c(8), 1g, 1h, and 1i. CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 1d and 1e. See instructions.

Assets		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
a Total noninterest-bearing cash	1a	0	0
b Receivables (less allowance for doubtful accounts):			
(1) Employer contributions	1b(1)	0	0
(2) Participant contributions	1b(2)	0	0
(3) Other	1b(3)	0	0
c General investments:			
(1) Interest-bearing cash (include money market accounts & certificates of deposit)	1c(1)	0	0
(2) U.S. Government securities	1c(2)	0	0
(3) Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(3)(A)	0	0
(B) All other	1c(3)(B)	0	0
(4) Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(4)(A)	0	0
(B) Common	1c(4)(B)	0	0
(5) Partnership/joint venture interests	1c(5)	0	0
(6) Real estate (other than employer real property)	1c(6)	0	0
(7) Loans (other than to participants)	1c(7)	0	0
(8) Participant loans	1c(8)	662716	990121
(9) Value of interest in common/collective trusts	1c(9)	3753612	2803109
(10) Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1c(10)		
(11) Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	1c(11)	0	0
(12) Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	1c(12)	0	0
(13) Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	1c(13)	53228355	63168025
(14) Value of funds held in insurance company general account (unallocated contracts)	1c(14)		
(15) Other	1c(15)	0	0

		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
1d Employer-related investments:			
(1) Employer securities	1d(1)	0	0
(2) Employer real property	1d(2)	0	0
e Buildings and other property used in plan operation	1e	0	0
f Total assets (add all amounts in lines 1a through 1e)	1f	57644683	66961255
Liabilities			
g Benefit claims payable	1g	0	0
h Operating payables	1h		
i Acquisition indebtedness	1i	0	0
j Other liabilities	1j	0	0
k Total liabilities (add all amounts in lines 1g through1j)	1k	0	0
Net Assets			
l Net assets (subtract line 1k from line 1f)	1l	57644683	66961255

Part II Income and Expense Statement

2 Plan income, expenses, and changes in net assets for the year. Include all income and expenses of the plan, including any trust(s) or separately maintained fund(s) and any payments/receipts to/from insurance carriers. Round off amounts to the nearest dollar. MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 2a, 2b(1)(E), 2e, 2f, and 2g.

Income		(a) Amount	(b) Total
a Contributions:			
(1) Received or receivable in cash from: **(A)** Employers	2a(1)(A)	1907750	
(B) Participants	2a(1)(B)	4885337	
(C) Others (including rollovers)	2a(1)(C)	1132066	
(2) Noncash contributions	2a(2)	0	
(3) Total contributions. Add lines **2a(1)(A), (B), (C),** and line **2a(2)**	2a(3)		7925153
b Earnings on investments:			
(1) Interest:			
(A) Interest-bearing cash (including money market accounts and certificates of deposit)	2b(1)(A)	0	
(B) U.S. Government securities	2b(1)(B)	0	
(C) Corporate debt instruments	2b(1)(C)	0	
(D) Loans (other than to participants)	2b(1)(D)	0	
(E) Participant loans	2b(1)(E)	50790	
(F) Other	2b(1)(F)	0	
(G) Total interest. Add lines **2b(1)(A)** through **(F)**	2b(1)(G)		50790
(2) Dividends: **(A)** Preferred stock	2b(2)(A)	0	
(B) Common stock	2b(2)(B)	0	
(C) Registered investment company shares (e.g. mutual funds)	2b(2)(C)	1954948	
(D) Total dividends. Add lines **2b(2)(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**	2b(2)(D)		1954948
(3) Rents	2b(3)		0
(4) Net gain (loss) on sale of assets: **(A)** Aggregate proceeds	2b(4)(A)	0	
(B) Aggregate carrying amount (see instructions)	2b(4)(B)	0	
(C) Subtract line **2b(4)(B)** from line **2b(4)(A)** and enter result	2b(4)(C)		0
(5) Unrealized appreciation (depreciation) of assets: **(A)** Real estate	2b(5)(A)	0	
(B) Other	2b(5)(B)	0	
(C) Total unrealized appreciation of assets. Add lines **2b(5)(A)** and **(B)**	2b(5)(C)		0

		(a) Amount	(b) Total
(6) Net investment gain (loss) from common/collective trusts	2b(6)		109058
(7) Net investment gain (loss) from pooled separate accounts	2b(7)		0
(8) Net investment gain (loss) from master trust investment accounts	2b(8)		0
(9) Net investment gain (loss) from 103-12 investment entities	2b(9)		0
(10) Net investment gain (loss) from registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	2b(10)		6714390
c Other income	2c		0
d Total income. Add all **income** amounts in column (b) and enter total	2d		16754339
Expenses			
e Benefit payment and payments to provide benefits:			
(1) Directly to participants or beneficiaries, including direct rollovers	2e(1)	7218430	
(2) To insurance carriers for the provision of benefits	2e(2)	0	
(3) Other	2e(3)	0	
(4) Total benefit payments. Add lines **2e(1)** through **(3)**	2e(4)		7218430
f Corrective distributions (see instructions)	2f		0
g Certain deemed distributions of participant loans (see instructions)	2g		-5841
h Interest expense	2h		0
i Administrative expenses:			
(1) Salaries and allowances	2i(1)	0	
(2) Contract administrator fees	2i(2)	0	
(3) Recordkeeping fees	2i(3)	129388	
(4) IQPA audit fees	2i(4)	19533	
(5) Investment advisory and investment management fees	2i(5)	76257	
(6) Bank or trust company trustee/custodial fees	2i(6)	0	
(7) Actuarial fees	2i(7)	0	
(8) Legal fees	2i(8)	0	
(9) Valuation/appraisal fees	2i(9)	0	
(10) Other trustee fees and expenses	2i(10)	0	
(11) Other expenses	2i(11)	0	
(12) Total administrative expenses. Add lines **2i(1)** through **(11)**	2i(12)		225178
j Total expenses. Add all **expense** amounts in column (b) and enter total	2j		7437767
Net Income and Reconciliation			
k Net income (loss). Subtract line **2j** from line **2d**	2k		9316572
l Transfers of assets:			
(1) To this plan	2l(1)		
(2) From this plan	2l(2)		

Part III Accountant's Opinion

3 Complete lines 3a through 3c if the opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is attached to this Form 5500. Complete line 3d if an opinion is not attached.

a The attached opinion of an independent qualified public accountant for this plan is (see instructions):

(1) [X] Unmodified **(2)** [ ] Qualified **(3)** [ ] Disclaimer **(4)** [ ] Adverse

b Check the appropriate box(es) to indicate whether the IQPA performed an ERISA section 103(a)(3)(C) audit. Check both boxes (1) and (2) if the audit was performed pursuant to both 29 CFR 2520.103-8 and 29 CFR 2520.103-12(d). Check box (3) if pursuant to neither.

(1) [X] DOL Regulation 2520.103-8 **(2)** [ ] DOL Regulation 2520.103-12(d) **(3)** [ ] neither DOL Regulation 2520.103-8 nor DOL Regulation 2520.103-12(d).

c Enter the name and EIN of the accountant (or accounting firm) below:

(1) Name: BARNES DENNIG **(2)** EIN: 31-1119890

d The opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is **not attached** as part of Schedule H because:

(1) [ ] This form is filed for a CCT, PSA, DCG or MTIA. **(2)** [ ] It will be attached to the next Form 5500 pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.104-50.

Part IV Compliance Questions

4 CCTs and PSAs do not complete Part IV. MTIAs, 103-12 IEs, and GIAs do not complete lines 4a, 4e, 4f, 4g, 4h, 4k, 4m, 4n, or 5. 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 4j and 4l. MTIAs also do not complete line 4l. DCGs do not complete lines 4e, 4f, 4k, 4l, and 5, and DCGs generally complete the rest of Part IV collectively for all plans in the DCG, except as otherwise provided (see instructions).

During the plan year:

		Yes	No	Amount
a Was there a failure to transmit to the plan any participant contributions within the time period described in 29 CFR 2510.3-102? Continue to answer "Yes" for any prior year failures until fully corrected. (See instructions and DOL's Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program.)	**4a**		X	
b Were any loans by the plan or fixed income obligations due the plan in default as of the close of the plan year or classified during the year as uncollectible? Disregard participant loans secured by participant's account balance. (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part I if "Yes" is checked.)	**4b**		X	
c Were any leases to which the plan was a party in default or classified during the year as uncollectible? (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part II if "Yes" is checked.)	**4c**		X	
d Were there any nonexempt transactions with any party-in-interest? (Do not include transactions reported on line 4a. Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part III if "Yes" is checked.)	**4d**		X	
e Was this plan covered by a fidelity bond?	**4e**	X		500000
f Did the plan have a loss, whether or not reimbursed by the plan's fidelity bond, that was caused by fraud or dishonesty?	**4f**		X	
g Did the plan hold any assets whose current value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?	**4g**		X	
h Did the plan receive any noncash contributions whose value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?	**4h**		X	
i Did the plan have assets held for investment? (Attach schedule(s) of assets if "Yes" is checked, and see instructions for format requirements.)	**4i**	X		
j Were any plan transactions or series of transactions in excess of 5% of the current value of plan assets? (Attach schedule of transactions if "Yes" is checked and see instructions for format requirements.)	**4j**		X	
k Were all the plan assets either distributed to participants or beneficiaries, transferred to another plan, or brought under the control of the PBGC?	**4k**		X	
l Has the plan failed to provide any benefit when due under the plan?	**4l**		X	
m If this is an individual account plan, was there a blackout period? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-3.)	**4m**		X	
n If 4m was answered "Yes," check the "Yes" box if you either provided the required notice or one of the exceptions to providing the notice applied under 29 CFR 2520.101-3.	**4n**			

5a Has a resolution to terminate the plan been adopted during the plan year or any prior plan year? [ ] Yes [X] No

If "Yes," enter the amount of any plan assets that reverted to the employer this year _____.

5b If, during this plan year, any assets or liabilities were transferred from this plan to another plan(s), identify the plan(s) to which assets or liabilities were transferred. (See instructions.)

5b(1) Name of plan(s)	**5b(2)** EIN(s)	**5b(3)** PN(s)

5c Was the plan a defined benefit plan covered under the PBGC insurance program at any time during this plan year? (See ERISA section 4021 and instructions.) …….. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not determined

If "Yes" is checked, enter the My PAA confirmation number from the PBGC premium filing for this plan year _____.

SCHEDULE R (Form 5500)	Retirement Plan Information	OMB No. 1210-0110
Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	This schedule is required to be filed under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**	**2023** **This Form is Open to Public Inspection.**

For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2023 and ending 12/31/2023

A Name of plan
RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 001

C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500
EMPIRE MARKETING STRATEGIES, INC.

D Employer Identification Number (EIN)
31-1133276

Part I Distributions

All references to distributions relate only to payments of benefits during the plan year.

1 Total value of distributions paid in property other than in cash or the forms of property specified in the instructions **1** 0

2 Enter the EIN(s) of payor(s) who paid benefits on behalf of the plan to participants or beneficiaries during the year (if more than two, enter EINs of the two payors who paid the greatest dollar amounts of benefits):

EIN(s): 84-1455663 _____

Profit-sharing plans, ESOPs, and stock bonus plans, skip line 3.

3 Number of participants (living or deceased) whose benefits were distributed in a single sum, during the plan year **3**

Part II Funding Information (If the plan is not subject to the minimum funding requirements of section 412 of the Internal Revenue Code or ERISA section 302, skip this Part.)

4 Is the plan administrator making an election under Code section 412(d)(2) or ERISA section 302(d)(2)? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **N/A**

If the plan is a defined benefit plan, go to line 8.

5 If a waiver of the minimum funding standard for a prior year is being amortized in this plan year, see instructions and enter the date of the ruling letter granting the waiver. **Date:** Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

If you completed line 5, complete lines 3, 9, and 10 of Schedule MB and do not complete the remainder of this schedule.

6 a Enter the minimum required contribution for this plan year (include any prior year accumulated funding deficiency not waived) **6a**

b Enter the amount contributed by the employer to the plan for this plan year **6b**

c Subtract the amount in line 6b from the amount in line 6a. Enter the result (enter a minus sign to the left of a negative amount) **6c**

If you completed line 6c, skip lines 8 and 9.

7 Will the minimum funding amount reported on line 6c be met by the funding deadline? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **N/A**

8 If a change in actuarial cost method was made for this plan year pursuant to a revenue procedure or other authority providing automatic approval for the change or a class ruling letter, does the plan sponsor or plan administrator agree with the change? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **N/A**

Part III Amendments

9 If this is a defined benefit pension plan, were any amendments adopted during this plan year that increased or decreased the value of benefits? If yes, check the appropriate box. If no, check the "No" box. ..... ☐ **Increase** ☐ **Decrease** ☐ **Both** ☐ **No**

Part IV ESOPs (see instructions). If this is not a plan described under section 409(a) or 4975(e)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code, skip this Part.

10 Were unallocated employer securities or proceeds from the sale of unallocated securities used to repay any exempt loan? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

11 a Does the ESOP hold any preferred stock? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

b If the ESOP has an outstanding exempt loan with the employer as lender, is such loan part of a "back-to-back" loan? (See instructions for definition of "back-to-back" loan.) ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

12 Does the ESOP hold any stock that is not readily tradable on an established securities market? ..... ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Part V Additional Information for Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

13 Enter the following information for each employer that (1) contributed more than 5% of total contributions to the plan during the plan year or (2) was one of the top-ten highest contributors (measured in dollars). See instructions. *Complete as many entries as needed to report all applicable employers.*

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify):

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN **c** Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires *(If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.)* Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information *(If more than one rate applies, check this box* ☐ *and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)*

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

14 Enter the number of deferred vested and retired participants (inactive participants), as of the beginning of the plan year, whose contributing employer is no longer making contributions to the plan for:

a The current plan year. Check the box to indicate the counting method used to determine the number of inactive participants: ☐ last contributing employer ☐ alternative ☐ reasonable approximation (see instructions for required attachment)	**14a**	
b The plan year immediately preceding the current plan year. ☐ Check the box if the number reported is a change from what was previously reported (see instructions for required attachment)	**14b**	
c The second preceding plan year. ☐ Check the box if the number reported is a change from what was previously reported (see instructions for required attachment)	**14c**	

15 Enter the ratio of the number of participants under the plan on whose behalf no employer had an obligation to make an employer contribution during the current plan year to:

a The corresponding number for the plan year immediately preceding the current plan year	**15a**	
b The corresponding number for the second preceding plan year	**15b**	

16 Information with respect to any employers who withdrew from the plan during the preceding plan year:

a Enter the number of employers who withdrew during the preceding plan year	**16a**	
b If line 16a is greater than 0, enter the aggregate amount of withdrawal liability assessed or estimated to be assessed against such withdrawn employers	**16b**	

17 If assets and liabilities from another plan have been transferred to or merged with this plan during the plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment ☐

Part VI Additional Information for Single-Employer and Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

18 If any liabilities to participants or their beneficiaries under the plan as of the end of the plan year consist (in whole or in part) of liabilities to such participants and beneficiaries under two or more pension plans as of immediately before such plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment ☐

19 If the total number of participants is 1,000 or more, complete lines (a) and (b):

a Enter the percentage of plan assets held as:

Public Equity: _____% Private Equity: _____% Investment-Grade Debt and Interest Rate Hedging Assets: _____%

High-Yield Debt: _____% Real Assets: _____% Cash or Cash Equivalents: _____% Other: _____%

b Provide the average duration of the Investment-Grade Debt and Interest Rate Hedging Assets:

☐ 0-5 years ☐ 5-10 years ☐ 10-15 years ☐ 15 years or more

20 **PBGC missed contribution reporting requirements.** If this is a multiemployer plan or a single-employer plan that is not covered by PBGC, skip line 20.

a Is the amount of unpaid minimum required contributions for all years from Schedule SB (Form 5500) line 40 greater than zero? ☐ Yes ☐ No

b If line 20a is "Yes," has PBGC been notified as required by ERISA sections 4043(c)(5) and/or 303(k)(4)? Check the applicable box:

☐ Yes.

☐ No. Reporting was waived under 29 CFR 4043.25(c)(2) because contributions equal to or exceeding the unpaid minimum required contribution were made by the 30th day after the due date.

☐ No. The 30-day period referenced in 29 CFR 4043.25(c)(2) has not yet ended, and the sponsor intends to make a contribution equal to or exceeding the unpaid minimum required contribution by the 30th day after the due date.

☐ No. Other. Provide explanation._____

Part VII IRS Compliance Questions

21a Does the plan satisfy the coverage and nondiscrimination tests of Code sections 410(b) and 401(a)(4) by combining this plan with any other plans under the permissive aggregation rules? ☐ Yes ☒ No

21b If this is a Code section 401(k) plan, check all boxes that apply to indicate how the plan is intended to satisfy the nondiscrimination requirements for employee deferrals and employer matching contributions (as applicable) under Code sections 401(k)(3) and 401(m)(2).

☒ Design-based safe harbor method

☐ "Prior year" ADP test

☐ "Current year" ADP test

☐ N/A

22 If the plan sponsor is an adopter of a pre-approved plan that received a favorable IRS Opinion Letter, enter the date of the Opinion Letter 11 / 14 / 2022 (MM/DD/YYYY) and the Opinion Letter serial number Q702518A .

SCHEDULE MEP (Form 5500)	MULTIPLE-EMPLOYER RETIREMENT PLAN INFORMATION	OMB No. 1210-0110
Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration	This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and Section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code) ▶ **File as an attachment to Form 5500.**	**2023** **This Form is Open to Public Inspection**

For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2023 and ending 12/31/2023

A	Name of plan RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN	**B**	Three-digit Plan number (PN) ..... ▶ 001
C	Plan administrator's name as shown on line 3a of Form 5500/Form 5500-SF EMPIRE MARKETING STRATEGIES, INC.	**D**	Administrator's EIN 31-1133276

Part I Type of Multiple-Employer Pension Plan. All multiple-employer pension plans must complete.

1 Check the appropriate box to indicate type of multiple-employer pension plan. (Only defined contribution plans may check lines 1a, 1b, and 1c. Defined benefit plans and defined contribution plans not checking lines 1a, 1b, or 1c should check line 1d. See Instructions).

a ☒ association retirement plan (See 29 CFR 2510.3-55) (Complete Part II)

b ☐ professional employer organization plan (PEO Plan) (See 29 CFR 29 CFR 2510.3-55) (Complete Part II)

c ☐ pooled employer plan (PEP) (See 29 CFR 2510.3-44) (Complete Parts II and III)

d ☐ other multiple-employer pension plan (Describe)_____ (Complete Part II)

Part II Participating Employer Information.

2 All multiple-employer pension plans that are subject to section 210(a) of ERISA (see instructions for filing the Form 5500) must complete Part II, in addition to Part I, in accordance with the instructions, to report the information for each employer participating in the multiple-employer pension plan**. Defined contribution plans must complete lines 2a-2d. All other multiple-employer pension plans complete lines 2a-2c only. Complete as many entries as needed to list the required information for each participating employer that is not an individual person (see instructions).**

2a Name of Participating Employer	**2b** EIN	**2c** Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	**2d** Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
EMPIRE MARKETING STATEGIES, INC.	31-1133276	76.08	49981748
2a Name of Participating Employer	**2b** EIN	**2c** Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	**2d** Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
MPF SALES AND MARKETING, LLC	27-2458534	19.84	11778815

CAUTION Do not individually list information for working owners (see instructions and 29 CFR 2510.3-55(d)(2)) or other individuals who are participants or beneficiaries in the plan or arrangement that are no longer associated with a particular participating employer or participating employer plan (see instructions). Providing identifying information for individuals may result in rejection of this filing. If there are any such individuals in the plan, answer "Yes" to line 2e and provide the total information for all such individuals, without providing names or other identifying information.

2e	Does the plan include any individuals not participating through an employer or who are individual working owners?	**2e**	☐ Yes ☒ No
2f	If you answer "Yes" in line 2e, enter a good faith estimate of the percentage of total contributions made by all such individuals that are not listed on line 2a during the plan year.	**2f**	
2g	If you answer "Yes" in Line 2e, enter the aggregate account balances for all such individuals that are not listed on line 2a.	**2g**	

Part II Participating Employer Information (Continued).

Use this page for additional participating employer information.

2 All multiple-employer pension plans that are subject to section 210(a) of ERISA (see instructions for filing the Form 5500) must complete Part II, in addition to Part I, in accordance with the instructions, to report the information for each employer participating in the multiple-employer pension plan**.**

Defined contribution plans must complete lines 2a-2d. All other multiple-employer pension plans complete lines 2a-2c only. Complete as many entries as needed to list the required information for each participating employer that is not an individual person (see instructions).

2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
EMPIRE BAKERY COMMISARY, LLC	47-3559198	4.08	2566508
2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer
2a Name of Participating Employer	2b EIN	2c Percentage of Total Contributions for the Plan Year	2d Aggregate Account Balances Attributable to Participating Employer

CAUTION Do not individually list information for working owners (see instructions and 29 CFR 2510.3-55(d)(2)) or other individuals who are participants or beneficiaries in the plan or arrangement that are no longer associated with a particular participating employer or participating employer plan (see instructions). Providing identifying information for individuals may result in rejection of this filing. If there are any such individuals in the plan, answer “Yes” to line 2e and provide the total information for all such individuals, without providing names or other identifying information.

Part III Pooled Employer Plan Information

Line 3. All Pooled employer plans must answer all of the questions in Part III, in addition to completing all of Parts I and II.

3a Is the pooled plan provider (identified as the plan sponsor and administrator in Part II of the Form 5500) currently in compliance with the Form PR (Pooled Plan Provider Registration Statement) requirements? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2510.3-44) ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

3b If line 3a is "Yes", enter the ACK ID for the most recent Form PR that was required to be filed under the Form PR filing requirements. (Failure to enter a valid ACK ID will subject the Form 5500 filing to rejection as incomplete.)

ACK ID _____

Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan

Financial Statements
With Supplemental Schedules
Years Ended December 31, 2023, and 2022
With Independent Auditors' Report

BARNES DENNIG
Accounting • Tax • Business Insight

OHIO
CINCINNATI OFFICE
150 E. 4th Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
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Independent Auditors' Report

To the Plan Administrator of the
Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan

Scope and Nature of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) Audit

We have performed audits of the accompanying financial statements of Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan, an employee benefit plan subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), as permitted by ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) [ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit]. The financial statements comprise the statements of net assets available for benefits as of December 31, 2023, and 2022, and the related statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management, having determined it is permissible in the circumstances, has elected to have the audits of Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan's financial statements performed in accordance with ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.103-8 of the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA. As permitted by ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C), our audits need not extend to any statements or information related to assets held for investment of the plan (investment information) by a bank or similar institution or insurance carrier that is regulated, supervised, and subject to periodic examination by a state or federal agency, provided that the statements or information regarding assets so held are prepared and certified to by the bank or similar institution or insurance carrier in accordance with 29 CFR 2520.103-5 of the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA (qualified institution).

Management has obtained a certification from a qualified institution as of December 31, 2023, and 2022, and for the year ended December 31, 2023, stating that the certified investment information, as described in Note 4 to the financial statements, is complete and accurate.

Opinion

In our opinion, based on our audits and on the procedures performed as described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section -

- The amounts and disclosures in the financial statements referred to above, other than those agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
- The information in the financial statements referred to above related to assets held by and certified to by a qualified institution agrees to, or is derived from, in all material respects, the information prepared and certified by an institution that management determined meets the requirements of ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit opinion.

Independent Auditors' Report
(Continued)

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. Management's election of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit does not affect management's responsibility for the financial statements.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date the financial statements are available to be issued.

Management is also responsible for maintaining a current plan instrument, including all plan amendments; administering the plan; and determining that the plan's transactions that are presented and disclosed in the financial statements are in conformity with the plan's provisions, including maintaining sufficient records with respect to each of the participants, to determine the benefits due or which may become due to such participants.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audits of the Financial Statements

Except as described in the Scope and Nature of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) Audit section of our report, our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if, there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Independent Auditors' Report
(Continued)

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audits of the Financial Statements (Continued)

Our audits did not extend to the certified investment information, except for obtaining and reading the certification, comparing the certified investment information with the related information presented and disclosed in the financial statements, and reading the disclosures relating to the certified investment information to assess whether they are in accordance with the presentation and disclosure requirements of accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Accordingly, the objective of an ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit is not to express an opinion about whether the financial statements as a whole are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Supplemental Schedule Required by ERISA

The supplemental schedule of Schedule H, Line 4i – Schedule of Assets (Held at End of Year) as of December 31, 2023 is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements but is supplementary information required by the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information included in the supplemental schedule, other than that agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, has been subjected to auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS. For information included in the supplemental schedule that agreed to or is derived from the certified investment information, we compared such information to the related certified investment information.

In forming our opinion on the supplemental schedule, we evaluated whether the supplemental schedule, other than the information agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, including their form and content, is presented in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.

In our opinion:

- The form and content of the supplemental schedule, other than the information in the supplemental schedule that agreed to or is derived from the certified investment information, are presented, in all material respects, in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.
- The information in the supplemental schedule related to assets held by and certified to by a qualified institution agrees to, or is derived from, in all material respects, the information prepared and certified by an institution that management determined meets the requirements of ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C).

Barnes, Dennig & Co., Ltd

Cincinnati, Ohio
October 10, 2024

RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

Statements of Net Assets Available for Benefits
December 31, 2023, and 2022

	2023	2022
Assets:		
Investments at fair value:		
Common/collective trust	$ 2,803,109	$ 3,753,612
Mutual funds	63,168,025	53,228,355
Total investments at fair value	65,971,134	56,981,967
Receivables:		
Notes receivable from participants	990,121	662,716
Employer contributions	-	71,174
Employee contributions	-	170,844
Total receivables	990,121	904,734
Total assets	66,961,255	57,886,701
Liabilities:		
Excess contributions payable	-	1,513
Total liabilities	-	1,513
Net assets available for benefits	$ 66,961,255	$ 57,885,188

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

Statement of Changes in Net Assets Available for Benefits
Year Ended December 31, 2023

Additions:	
Investment income:	
Net appreciation in fair value of investments	$ 6,714,390
Interest and dividends	2,064,006
Total investment income	8,778,396
Interest income on notes receivable from participants	50,790
Contributions:	
Employee	4,714,493
Employer	1,836,576
Rollover	1,132,066
Total contributions	7,683,135
Total additions	16,512,321
Deductions:	
Benefit payments to participants	7,211,076
Administrative expenses	225,178
Total deductions	7,436,254
Net increase	9,076,067
Net assets available for benefits:	
Beginning of year	57,885,188
End of year	$ 66,961,255

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

Notes to Financial Statements

NOTE 1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

The following description of Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan (the "Plan") provides only general information. Participants should refer to the Plan agreement for a more complete description of the Plan's provisions.

General

The Plan is a defined contribution plan covering substantially all employees of a controlled group of employers that during 2023 included the plan sponsor, Empire Marketing Strategies, Inc., and the following other employers: Empire Food Brokers of Atlanta, Inc.; Epic Sales Partners, LLC; Epic Sales Partners – Central, LLC; Epic Sales Partners – West, LLC; and Empire Bakery Commissary, LLC (collectively, the Company). The Plan is subject to the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Contributions

Eligible employees are automatically enrolled at 6%, unless the employee affirmatively elects otherwise. Participants direct the investment of their contributions into various investment options offered by the Plan. Contributions may be made on a pre-tax basis or on an after-tax basis. However, contributions may not exceed limitations established under Section 402(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended ($22,500 at December 31, 2023). For 2023, Section 414(v) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended allowed a maximum catch-up contribution of $7,500.

Participants may change the percentage of contribution invested in each account and may make transfers between accounts anytime during the year. The Plan allows the Company to make fixed employer matching contributions. In 2023, the Company made matching contributions equal to 100% of participants' elective deferrals that do not exceed 1% of compensation, plus 50% of elective deferrals between 1% and 6% of eligible compensation. Contributions are subject to certain limitations.

Rollover Contributions

Participants may roll over their taxable portion of funds previously held for their account in another employee benefit plan to the Plan on a tax-free basis.

Participant Accounts

Each participant's account is credited with the participant's and Company's contributions and Plan earnings (losses) and charged with an allocation of administrative expenses. Allocations are based on the participant earnings or account balances, as defined. The benefit to which a participant is entitled is the benefit that can be provided form the participant's vested account.

NOTE 1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN (CONTINUED)

Vesting

Participants are vested immediately in their contributions plus actual earnings thereon. Qualified safe harbor contributions plus actual earnings thereon are fully vested upon completion of two years of service. Vesting in other employer contributions plus actual earnings thereon are based on years of continuous service, and a participant is 100 percent vested after four years of service.

Forfeited and Unallocated Accounts

At December 31, 2023 and 2022, unallocated accounts totaled $132,921 and $53,889, respectively. At December 31, 2023, the balance was comprised of $132,358 in forfeited non-vested accounts and $563 in an ERISA asset holding account (ERISA account). At December 31, 2022, the balance was comprised of $53,329 in forfeited non-vested accounts and $560 in an ERISA account. The ERISA account is a cash account, similar in design to forfeiture accounts, and is used to record the redistribution of plan-generated fund revenue and expenses that exceed the costs associated with the plan administration. The ERISA account can only be used to pay plan expenses or be allocated to participants. Forfeited non-vested accounts may be used to reduce future Company contributions or to pay plan expenses. During 2023, $88,352 was used to reduce employer contributions.

Payment of Benefits

Upon a participant's retirement, death, total and permanent disability, other termination of employment with the Company, or termination of the Plan, the participant's account is distributed under several options. Participants may elect to receive their benefits in a lump sum or equal installments.

In-service distributions are permissible from the Plan for participants that have attained the age of 59 ½. Withdrawals from the rollover portion of participant accounts are permitted at any time.

In conditions of "financial hardship", as defined, a participant may apply to the Plan administrator for approval to withdraw that portion of their 401(k) retirement account balance necessary to meet the financial hardship, subject to the limitations of the Plan and the Internal Revenue Code.

Notes Receivable from Participants

Notes receivable from participants are available on amounts in the participant's account. The minimum note receivable amount is $1,000 and the maximum is the lesser of one-half of the participant's vested account balance or $50,000. A participant is permitted to have up to one outstanding note at any given time. All notes bear interest at a fixed rate as determined by the Plan Administrator. Note receivable terms range from one to five years or beyond five years, as agreed upon by the Participant and the Loan Administrator, for the purchase of a primary residence. Outstanding note receivable balances are $990,121 and $662,716 at December 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively.

NOTE 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Presentation

The accompanying financial statements of Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan have been prepared on the accrual basis.

Investment Valuation and Income Recognition

Investments are reported at fair value. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. See Note 3 for discussion of fair value measurements.

Purchases and sales of securities are recorded on a trade date basis. Interest income is recorded on the accrual basis. Dividends are recorded on the ex-dividend date. Net appreciation (depreciation) includes the Plan's gains and losses on investments bought and sold as well as held during the year.

The Plan utilizes various investment instruments. Investment securities, in general, are exposed to various risks such as interest rate, credit and overall market volatility risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investments, it is reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and those changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the statements of net assets available for benefits.

Expenses

Certain expenses of the Plan were paid by Empire Marketing Strategies, Inc. and accordingly, are not reflected in the Plan's financial statements. Certain investment related expenses are included in net appreciation (depreciation) in fair value of investments.

Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP) requires the Plan administrator to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results may differ from these estimates.

Expenses

Notes receivable from participants shall be measured at their unpaid balance plus any accrued but unpaid interest. Delinquent notes receivable are reclassified as distributions based upon the terms of the plan document.

Related Party Transactions

Certain plan assets are in investment funds managed by Empower Trust Company, LLC or its affiliates. Empower Trust Company, LLC is the trustee of the Plan and therefore, these transactions qualify as party-in-interest transactions.

Several employees of the Company provide administrative services to the Plan. These services include Plan oversight and day-to-day Plan administration. The Plan is not charged by the Company for the services of their employees to the Plan.

NOTE 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Benefit Payments to Participants

Benefit payments are recorded when paid.

Subsequent Events

The Company has evaluated subsequent events through October 10, 2024, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

NOTE 3 FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

FASB Accounting Standards Codification (ASC) 820, Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures, provides the framework for measuring fair value. That framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs.

The hierarchy is broken down into three levels based on the ability to observe inputs as follows:

Level 1 – Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the Plan has the ability to access.

Level 2 – Inputs to the valuation methodology include:

- Quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets;
- Quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets;
- Inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability;
- Inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the Level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3 – Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

The asset's or liability's fair value measurement level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Valuation techniques used need to maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for instruments measured at fair value, including the general classification of such instruments pursuant to the valuation hierarchy. There have been no changes in methodologies used at December 31, 2023 and 2022.

NOTE 3 FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (CONTINUED)

Following is a description of the valuation approaches used for assets measured at fair value.

Common/collective trust: Valued based on the NAV of units of a collective trust published by the custodian.

Certain events limit the liability of the Plan to transact with participants at fair value of the Putnam Stable Value Fund, a common/collective trust. Such events include: employer-initiated transaction provision including percentage allowances for targeted layoffs, bankruptcy resulting in employee job loss, reorganization, spin-offs, and Plan termination. Due to the size of the fund and specific percentage allowances negotiated by the fund, it is highly unlikely (not probable) that any event would occur that would limit the fund's ability to transact at contract value with each issuer under these events

Mutual funds: Valued at the daily closing price as reported by the fund. Mutual funds held by the Plan are open-end mutual funds that are registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. These funds are required to publish their daily net asset value and to transact at that price. The mutual funds held by the Plan are deemed to be actively traded.

The methods described above may produce a fair value calculation that may not be indicative of net realizable value or reflective of future fair values. Furthermore, while the Plan believes its valuation methods are appropriate and consistent with other market participants, the use of different approaches or assumptions to determine the fair value of certain financial instruments could result in a different fair value measurement at the reporting date.

The following table sets forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Plan's assets at fair value as of December 31, 2023:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Common/collective trust	$ -	$ 2,803,109	$ -	$ 2,803,109
Mutual funds	63,168,025	-	-	63,168,025
Total	$ 63,168,025	$ 2,803,109	$ -	$ 65,971,134

The following table sets forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Plan's assets at fair value as of December 31, 2022:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Common/collective trust	$ -	$ 3,753,612	$ -	$ 3,753,612
Mutual funds	53,228,355	-	-	53,228,355
Total	$ 53,228,355	$ 3,753,612	$ -	$ 56,981,967

NOTE 4 INFORMATION CERTIFIED BY QUALIFIED INSTITUTION

The following information provided by Empower Trust Company, LLC, was certified to be complete and accurate:

a) The assets held by Empower Company, LLC as of December 31, 2023, and 2022, as well as the transactions involving these assets for the year ended December 31, 2023.

b) The amount of investment income/(loss) for the year ended December 31, 2023.

c) The Schedule H, Line 4i – Schedule of Assets (Held at End of Year) for the year ended December 31, 2023.

NOTE 5 TAX STATUS

The Plan has not obtained a determination letter from the IRS stating that the Plan was in compliance with the applicable requirement of the Internal Revenue Code (the "IRC"). The Plan is relying on the IRS approval of the prototype plan that it is utilizing. The IRS has determined and informed the document sponsor by a letter dated June 30, 2020 that the prototype plan document was designed in accordance with applicable sections of the IRC. The plan administrator believes that the Plan is currently designed and being operated in compliance with the applicable requirements of the IRC. Therefore, the plan administrator believes that the Plan was qualified, and the related trust was tax-exempt as of the financial statement date.

NOTE 6 PLAN TERMINATION

Although it has not expressed any intent to do so, the Company has the right under the Plan to discontinue its contributions at any time and to terminate the Plan subject to the provisions of ERISA. In the event of Plan termination, participants will become 100% vested in their employer contributions. Upon termination of the Plan, the assets will be distributed to participants in accordance with the Plan's provisions and existing laws and regulations.

NOTE 7 RECONCILIATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO FORM 5500

The following is a reconciliation of net assets available for benefits at December 31, 2023, and 2022 per the financial statements to Schedule H of Form 5500:

	2023	2022
Ending net assets available for benefits per financial statements	$ 66,961,255	$ 57,885,188
Addback: Excess contributions payable	-	1,513
Less: Contributions receivable	-	242,018
Ending net assets available for benefits per Form 5500	$ 66,961,255	$ 57,644,683

	2023
Contributions per financial statements	$ 7,683,135
Addback: Prior year contribution receivable	242,018
Total contributions per Form 5500	$ 7,925,153

RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN

Schedule H, Line 4i – Schedule of Assets (Held at End of Year)
December 31, 2023

Schedule H (Form 5500)
EIN 31-1133276
Plan Number – 001

Column A	Column B Identity of issuer, borrower or similar entity	Column C Description of Investment	Column D Cost	Column E Current Value
	American Funds Capital World Growth & Income Fund	Mutual Fund		$ 687,649
	American Funds Euro Pacific Growth Fund	Mutual Fund		688,012
	JP Morgan Small Cap Growth Fund R6	Mutual Fund		113,986
	Columbia Dividend Income Fund	Mutual Fund		991,314
	Fidelity 500 Index	Mutual Fund		3,034,896
	Fidelity Large Cap Growth Index	Mutual Fund		990,253
	Fidelity Large Cap Value Index	Mutual Fund		675,282
	Fidelity Mid Cap Index	Mutual Fund		1,168,257
	Fidelity Small Cap Index	Mutual Fund		593,406
	Fidelity Total International Index	Mutual Fund		1,040,164
	Fidelity US Bond Instl	Mutual Fund		1,850,843
	Franklin Small Cap Value Fund	Mutual Fund		571,303
	MFS Growth Fund	Mutual Fund		830,484
	MFS Total Return Bond Fund	Mutual Fund		470,027
	PIMCO Income Instl	Mutual Fund		342,804
	PIMCO Real Return Instl Fund	Mutual Fund		559,983
	Vanguard Mid-Cap Growth Index Admiral Fund	Mutual Fund		399,515
	Vanguard Mid-Cap Value Index Admiral Fund	Mutual Fund		301,910
	Vanguard Small Cap Growth Index Admiral Fund	Mutual Fund		338,040
	Vanguard Small Cap Value Index Admiral Fund	Mutual Fund		104,658
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2020 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		5,375,653
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2025 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		11,957,647
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2030 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		8,203,055
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2035 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		6,691,967
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2040 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		3,370,575
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2045 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		3,159,454
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2050 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		2,650,671
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2055 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		1,377,765
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2060 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		460,423
	Vanguard Target Retirement 2065 Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		246,324
	Vanguard Target Retirement Income Inv Fund	Mutual Fund		3,921,705
	Putnam Stable Value Fund	Common/collective trust		2,803,109
*	Participant loans	4.25% - 9.5%		990,121
				$ 66,961,255

NOTE: The above data is based upon information that has been certified as complete and accurate by Empower Trust Company, LLC.

* Denotes Party-In-Interest

See independent auditors' report

Multiple Employer Plan Participating Employer Information
RETAIL SPECIALISTS 401(K) PLAN 31-1133276
1/1/2023-12/31/2023

EMPIRE MARKETING STATEGIES, INC.	31-1133276	76.08%	$49,981,747.65
MPF SALES AND MARKETING, LLC	27-2458534	19.84%	$11,778,815.07
EMPIRE BAKERY COMMISARY, LLC	47-3559198	4.08%	$2,566,508.45

SCHEDULE OF ASSETS (HELD AT END OF YEAR)

Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan

01-JAN-23 to 31-DEC-23

INVESTMENT OPTION	MATURITY DATE	INTEREST RATE	COST OF ASSETS	CURRENT VALUE
1VTINX			3,955,273.36	3,921,705.00
1VTWNX			5,793,034.76	5,375,653.36
1VTTVX			12,353,560.93	11,957,646.81
1VTHRX			8,239,500.61	8,203,054.85
1VTTHX			6,647,418.11	6,691,966.99
1VFORX			3,301,921.38	3,370,575.20
1VTIVX			3,091,218.62	3,159,454.47
1VFIFX			2,567,800.27	2,650,670.65
1VFFVX			1,326,556.18	1,377,765.25
1VTTSX			433,281.63	460,423.02
1VLXVX			229,023.01	246,322.73
1RWIGX			617,537.81	687,648.79
1RERGX			709,522.60	688,011.58
1FTIHX			978,664.18	1,040,164.44
1FSSNX			533,365.56	593,405.87
1FRSCV6			548,721.69	571,303.47
1JGSMX			157,272.24	113,985.70
1VSGAX			312,225.36	338,039.98
1VSIAX			93,206.03	104,657.92
1FSMDX			1,013,996.30	1,168,257.23
1VMGMX			337,602.05	399,514.93
1VMVAX			278,924.85	301,910.15
1CDDYX			845,918.16	991,314.26
1FSPGX			840,117.22	990,252.50
1FLCOX			620,478.03	675,282.22
1FXAIX			2,436,693.16	3,034,895.70
1MFEKX			621,082.30	830,483.90
1FXNAX			1,919,154.94	1,850,843.12
1MRBKX			364,503.45	353,569.09
1PIMIX			340,292.89	342,804.31
1PRRIX			618,227.63	559,983.30
1PCSV15			2,786,556.95	2,786,646.54
			64,912,652.26	**65,838,213.33**
PARTICIPANT LOANS	VARIOUS	4.250-9.500	989,987.78	990,121.06
FORFEITURES			130,548.11	132,920.91

SCHEDULE OF ASSETS (HELD AT END OF YEAR)

Retail Specialists 401(k) Plan

01-JAN-23 to 31-DEC-23

25-JAN-24 11:30:33

INVESTMENT OPTION	MATURITY DATE	INTEREST RATE	COST OF ASSETS	CURRENT VALUE

LEGEND

INVESTMENT OPTION:

1VTINX	Vanguard Target Retirement Income Inv	1VTWNX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2020 Inv
1VTTVX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2025 Inv	1VTHRX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2030 Inv
1VTTHX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2035 Inv	1VFORX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2040 Inv
1VTIVX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2045 Inv	1VFIFX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2050 Inv
1VFFVX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2055 Inv	1VTTSX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2060 Inv
1VLXVX	Vanguard Target Retirement 2065 Inv	1RWIGX	American Funds Capital World G/I R6
1RERGX	American Funds EuroPacific Gr R6	1FTIHX	Fidelity Total International Index
1FSSNX	Fidelity Small Cap Index	1FRSCV6	Franklin Small Cap Value R6
1JGSMX	JPMorgan Small Cap Growth R6	1VSGAX	Vanguard Small Cap Growth Index Admiral
1VSIAX	Vanguard Small Cap Value Index Admiral	1FSMDX	Fidelity Mid Cap Index
1VMGMX	Vanguard Mid-Cap Growth Index Admiral	1VMVAX	Vanguard Mid-Cap Value Index Admiral
1CDDYX	Columbia Dividend Income Instl 3	1FSPGX	Fidelity Large Cap Growth Index
1FLCOX	Fidelity Large Cap Value Index	1FXAIX	Fidelity 500 Index
1MFEKX	MFS Growth R6	1FXNAX	Fidelity US Bond Index
1MRBKX	MFS Total Return Bond R6	1PIMIX	PIMCO Income Instl
1PRRIX	PIMCO Real Return Instl	1PCSV15	Putnam Stable Value Fund

COST OF ASSETS: The original cost of the assets in each investment option as of the last day of the plan year
CURRENT VALUE: The value of all assets in each investment option as of the last day of the plan year