

COCA COLA CO
Form 8-K
September 18, 2015

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of
the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported):
September 18, 2015 (September 17, 2015)
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware
(State or other jurisdiction
of incorporation)

001-02217
(Commission
File Number)

58-0628465
(IRS Employer
Identification No.)

One Coca-Cola Plaza
Atlanta, Georgia
(Address of principal executive offices)

30313
(Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (404) 676-2121

Not Applicable
(Former name or former address, if changed since last report)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions:

- ☐ Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- ☐ Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- ☐ Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
- ☐ Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Item 8.01. Other Events

On September 17, 2015, The Coca-Cola Company (the “Company”) received a Statutory Notice of Deficiency (“Notice”) from the Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) for the tax years 2007 — 2009, after a five-year audit. In the Notice, the IRS claims that the Company’s United States taxable income should be increased by an amount that creates a potential additional federal income tax liability of approximately \$3.3 billion for the period, plus interest. No penalties were asserted. The disputed amounts largely relate to a transfer pricing matter involving the appropriate amount of taxable income the Company should report in the United States in connection with its licensing of intangible property to certain related foreign licensees regarding the manufacturing, distribution, sale, marketing and promotion of products in overseas markets.

The Company has followed the same transfer pricing methodology for these licenses since the methodology was agreed with the IRS in a 1996 closing agreement that applied back to 1987. The closing agreement provides prospective penalty protection as long as the Company follows the prescribed methodology, and the Company has continued to abide by its terms for all subsequent years. The Company’s compliance with the closing agreement was audited and confirmed by the IRS in five successive audit cycles covering the subsequent 11 years through 2006, with the last audit concluding as recently as 2009.

The IRS provided the Company no economist’s report or other detailed explanation for the asserted adjustments until approximately two weeks before the issuance of the Notice. The Company has also been notified by the IRS that a recommendation has been made to the Chief Counsel of the IRS that this matter be designated for litigation. The Company has requested a meeting with the Chief Counsel. If the matter is designated, the Company will be prevented from pursuing any administrative settlement at IRS Appeals or under the IRS Advanced Pricing and Mutual Agreement Program.

The Company firmly believes that the assessments are without merit and plans to pursue all administrative and judicial remedies necessary to resolve this matter. Initially, the Company expects to file a petition in the United States Tax Court challenging the Notice. The Company intends to vigorously defend its position and is confident in its ability to prevail on the merits. The Company regularly assesses the likelihood of adverse outcomes resulting from examinations such as this to determine the adequacy of its tax reserves. The Company believes that the final adjudication of this matter will not have a material impact on its consolidated financial position, results of operations or cash flows and that it has adequate tax reserves for all tax matters. However, the ultimate outcome of disputes of this nature is uncertain, and if the IRS were to prevail on its assertions, the assessed tax and deficiency interest could have a material adverse impact on the Company’s financial position, results of operations or cash flows.

Forward-Looking Statements

This Current Report on Form 8-K may contain statements, estimates or projections that constitute “forward-looking statements” as defined under U.S. federal securities laws. Generally, the words “believe,” “expect,” “intend,” “estimate,” “anticipate,” “project,” “will” and similar expressions identify forward-looking statements, which generally are not historical in nature. Forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from The Coca-Cola Company’s historical experience and our present expectations or projections. These risks include, but are not limited to, obesity concerns; water scarcity and poor quality; evolving consumer preferences; increased competition and capabilities in the marketplace; product safety and quality concerns; perceived negative health consequences of certain ingredients, such as non-nutritive sweeteners and biotechnology-derived substances, and of other substances present in our beverage products or packaging materials; increased demand for food products and decreased agricultural productivity; changes in the retail landscape or the loss of key retail or foodservice customers; an inability to expand operations in emerging and developing markets; fluctuations in foreign currency exchange rates; interest rate increases; an inability to maintain good relationships with our bottling partners; a deterioration in our bottling partners’ financial condition; increases in income tax rates, changes in income tax laws or unfavorable resolution of tax matters; increased or new indirect taxes in the United States or in other major markets; increased cost, disruption of supply or shortage of energy or fuels; increased cost, disruption of supply or shortage of ingredients, other raw materials or packaging materials;

changes in laws and regulations relating to beverage containers and packaging; significant additional labeling or warning requirements or limitations on the availability of our products; an inability to protect our information systems against service interruption, misappropriation of data or breaches of security; unfavorable general economic conditions in the United States; unfavorable economic and political conditions in international markets; litigation or legal proceedings; adverse weather conditions; climate change; damage to our brand image and corporate reputation from negative publicity, even if unwarranted, related to product safety or quality, human and workplace rights, obesity or other issues; changes in, or failure to comply with, the laws and regulations applicable to our products or our business operations; changes in accounting standards; an inability to achieve our overall long-term growth objectives; deterioration of global credit market conditions; default by or failure of one or more of our counterparty financial institutions; an inability to timely implement our previously announced actions to reinvigorate growth, or to realize the economic benefits we anticipate from these actions; failure to realize a significant portion of the anticipated benefits of our strategic relationships with Keurig Green Mountain, Inc. and Monster Beverage Corporation; an inability to renew collective bargaining agreements on satisfactory terms, or we or our bottling partners experience strikes, work stoppages or labor unrest; future impairment charges; multi-employer plan withdrawal liabilities in the future; an inability to successfully integrate and manage our Company-owned or -controlled bottling operations; an inability to successfully manage the possible negative consequences of our productivity initiatives; global or regional catastrophic events; and other risks discussed in our Company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), including our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, and our subsequently filed Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, which filings are available from the SEC. You should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date they are made. The Coca Cola Company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized.

THE COCA-COLA COMPANY
(REGISTRANT)

Date: September 18, 2015

By: /s/ LARRY M. MARK
Larry M. Mark
Vice President and Controller