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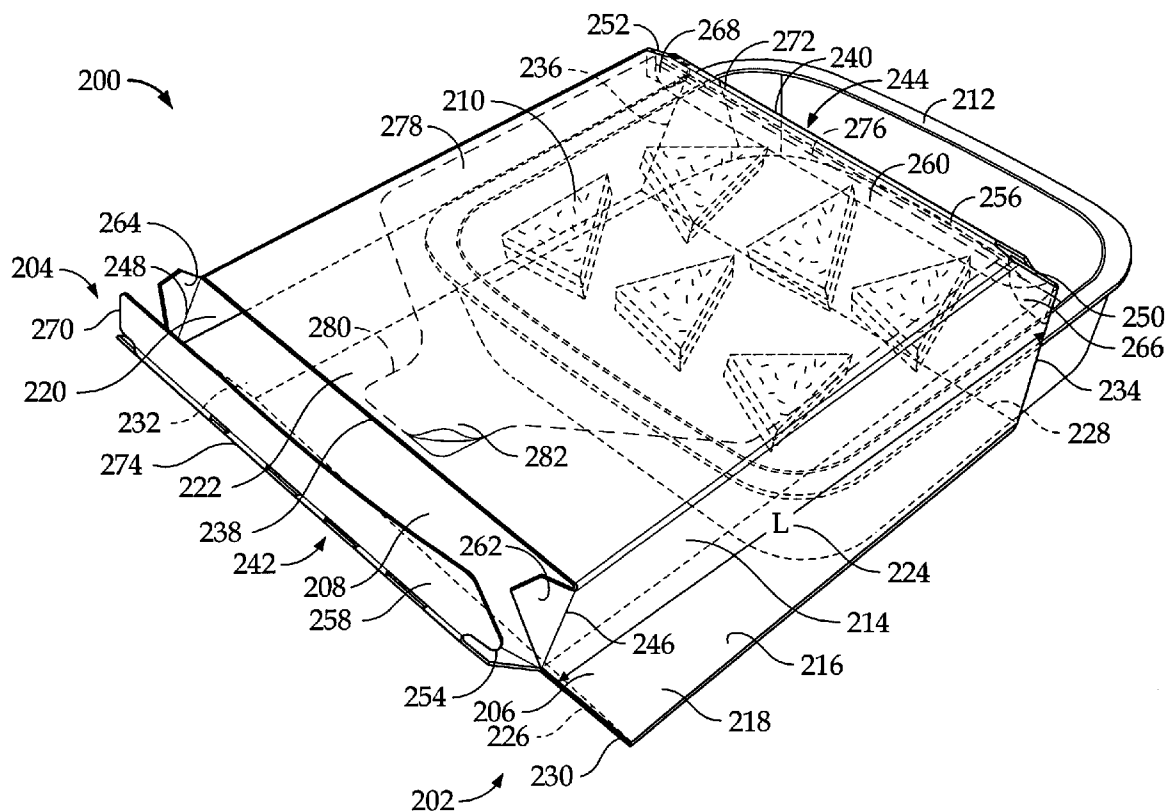
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A dual compartment container and a system for use of such containers. The container may be used for food products or other products, and preferably has a larger primary compartment containing a primary product and a smaller secondary compartment for related items.

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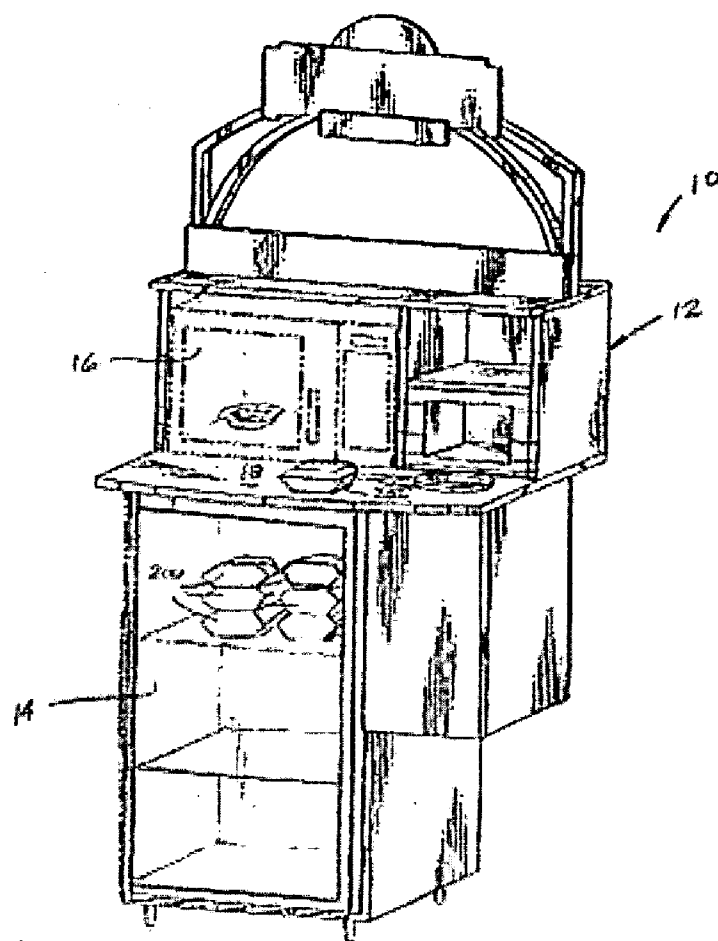


FIG. 1

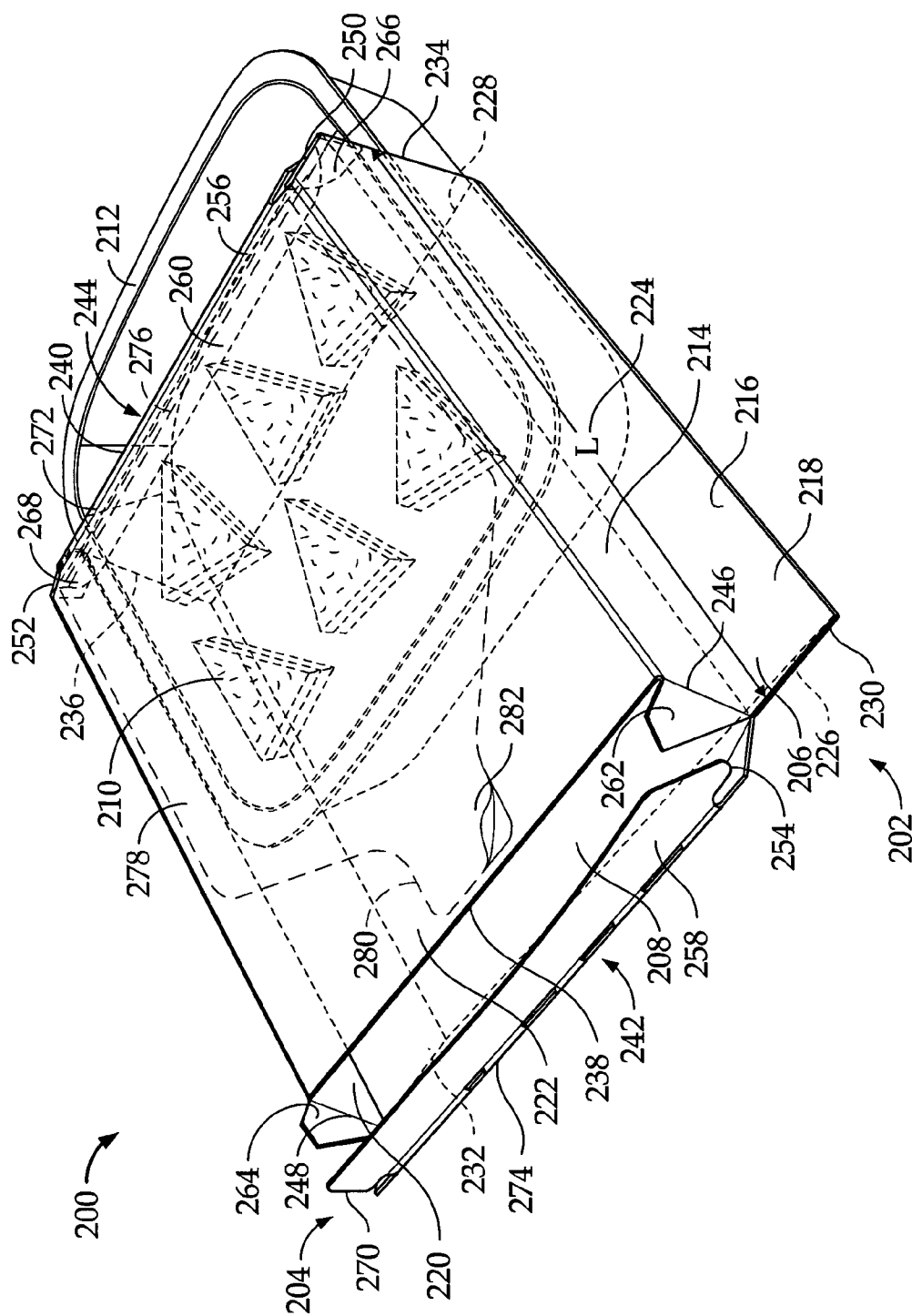


FIG. 2

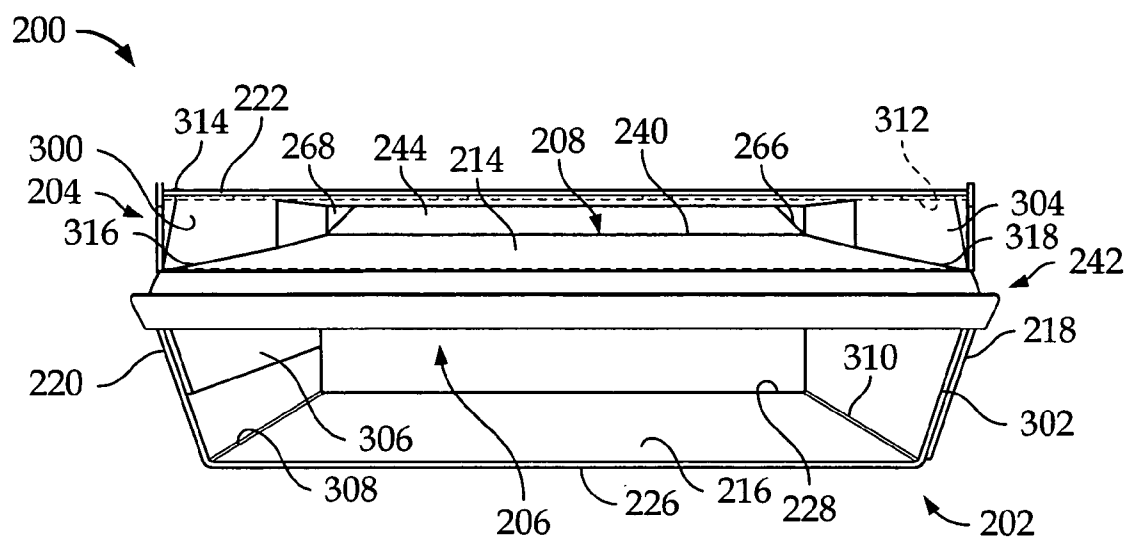


FIG. 3

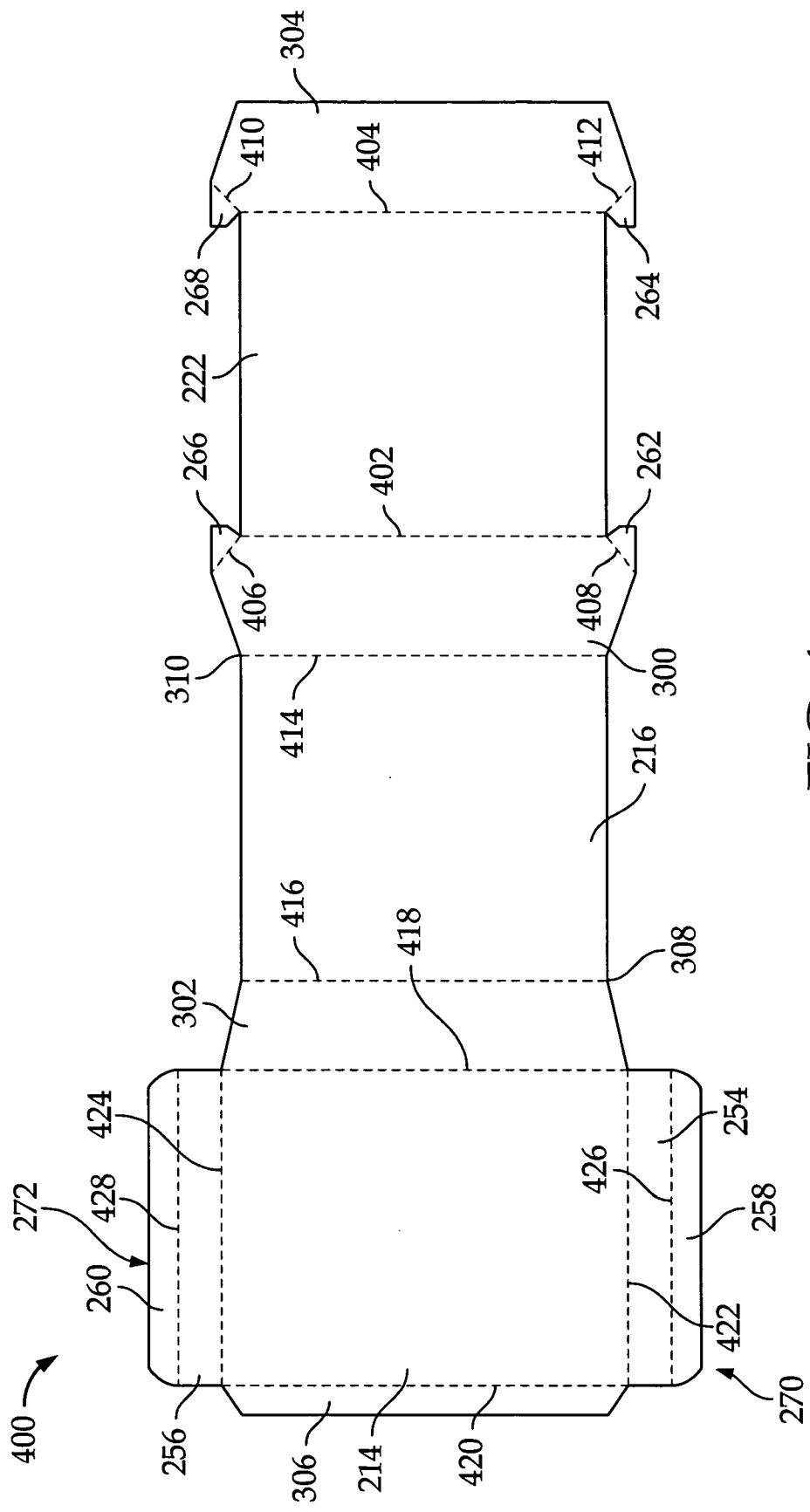


FIG. 4

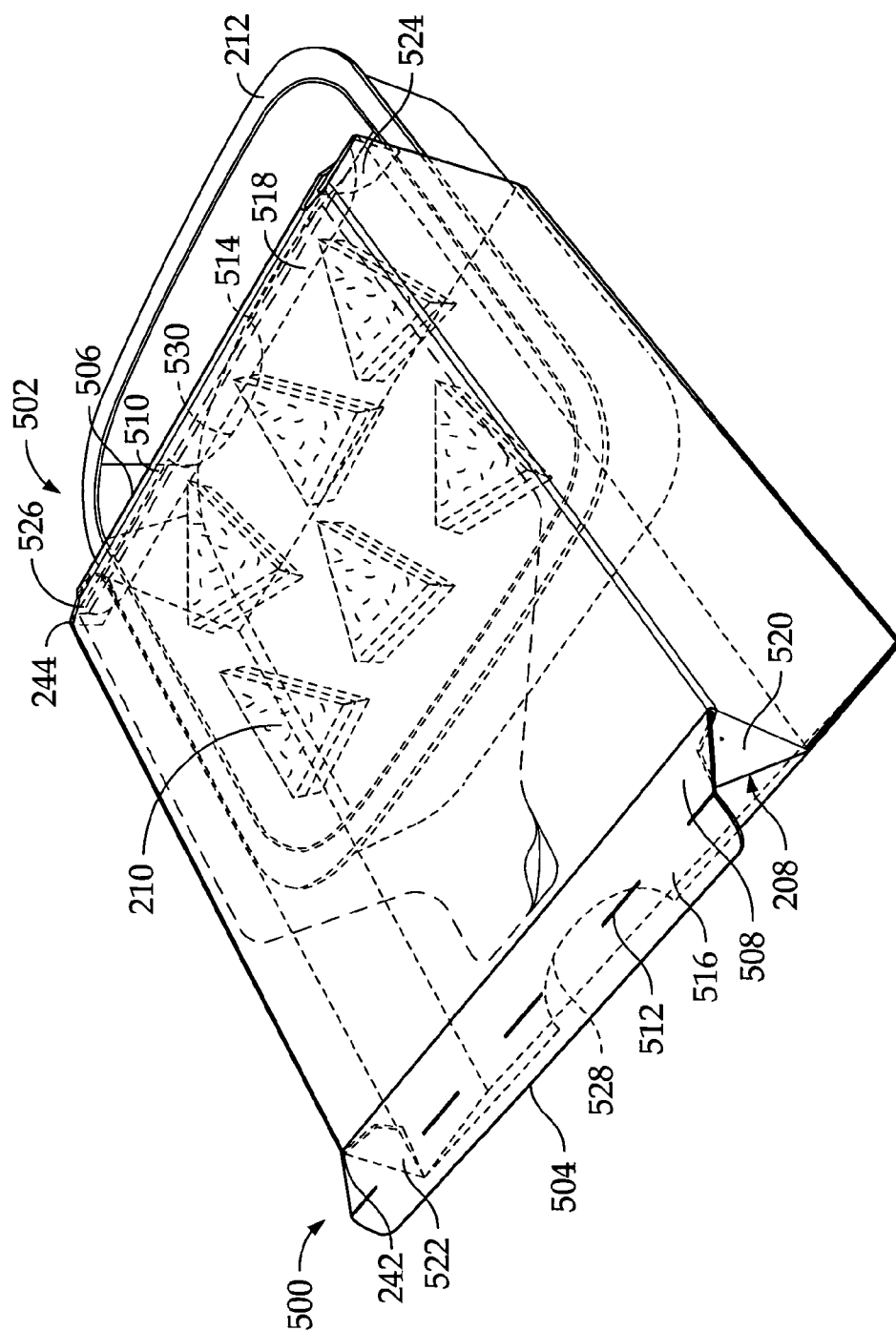
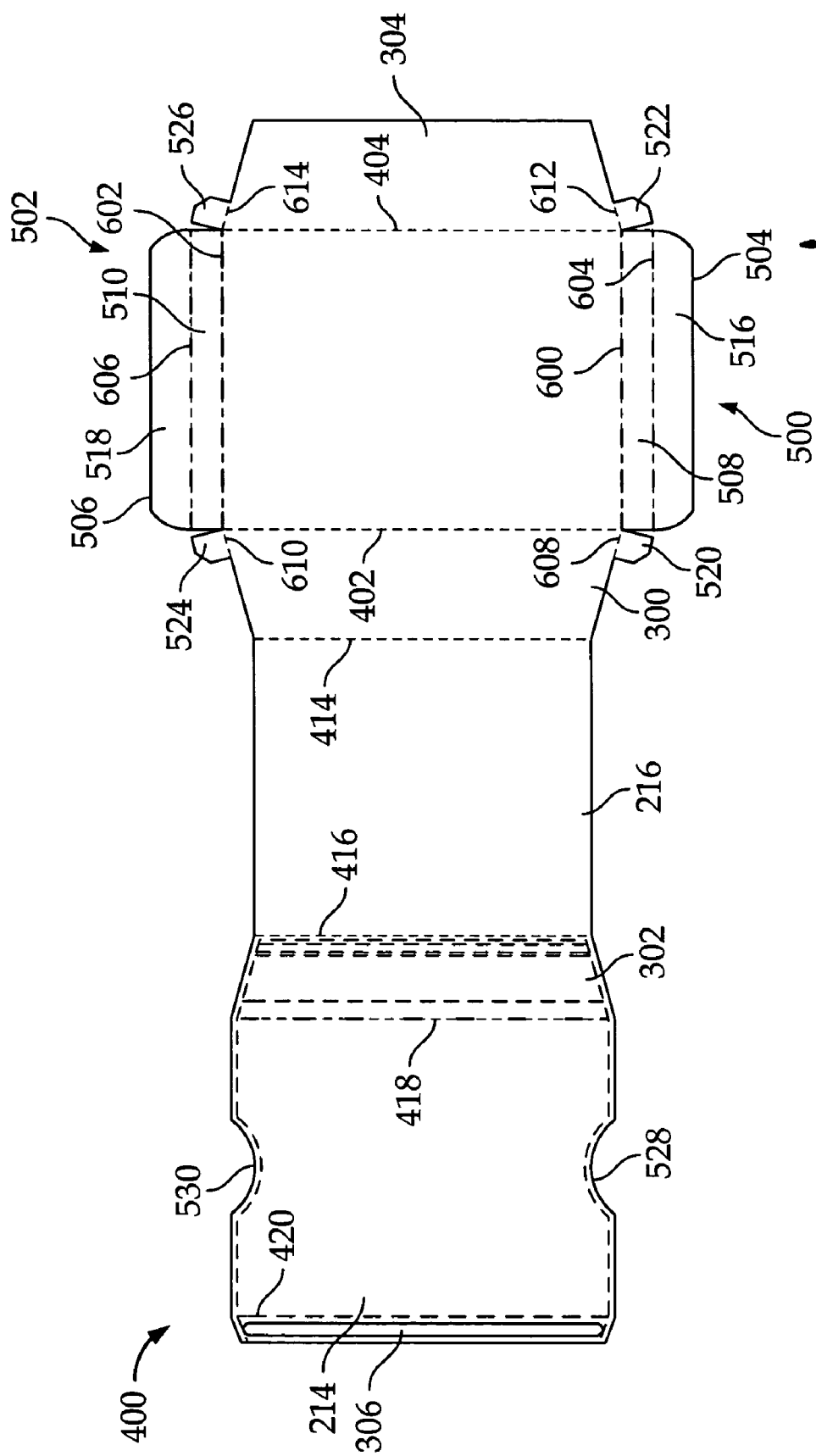


FIG. 5



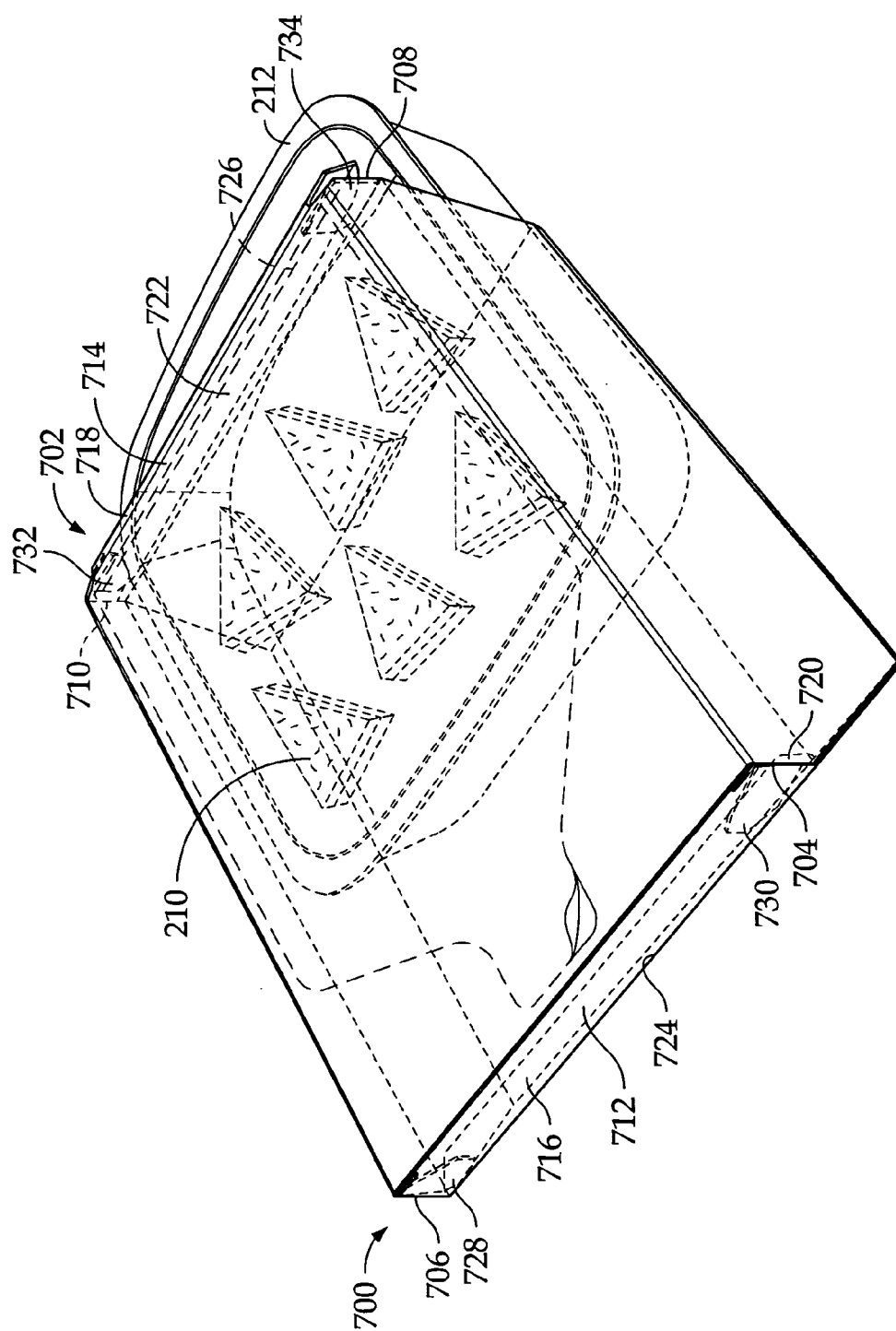


FIG. 7

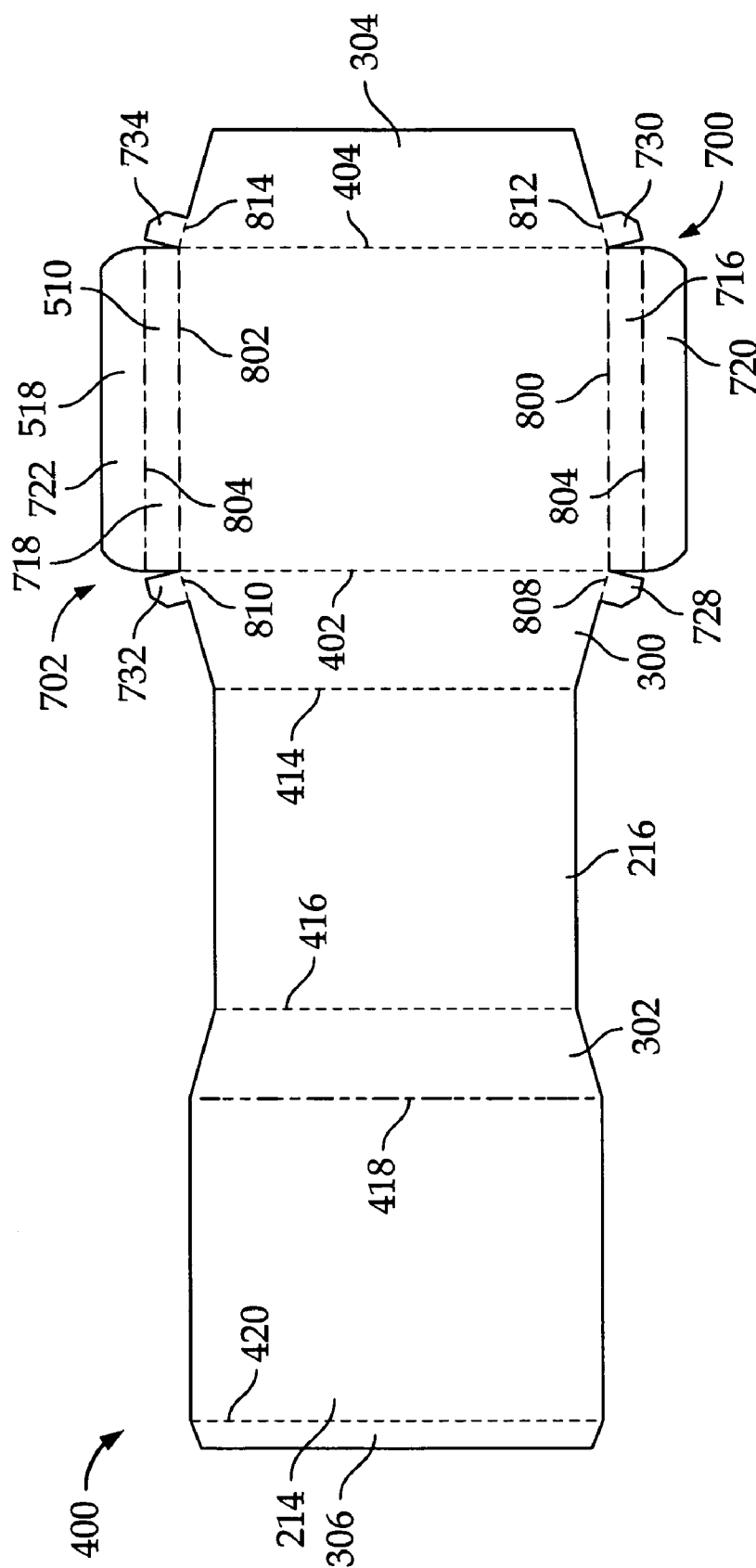


FIG. 8

DUAL COMPARTMENT CONTAINER

FIELD

[0001] This invention relates generally to dual compartment containers, and more particularly to dual compartment containers for food products.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Containers for packaging of food products for retail sale in grocery stores, convenience stores, kiosks, vending machines and other locations may need to meet various requirements relating to issues such as size, shape, strength, durability, cost and labeling. Such containers may need to be able to withstand significant stacking loads without undue deformation, and in some cases the containers must be configured to facilitate automated or manual handling during operations such as shipping, loading in display cases, refrigerators, freezers, kiosks, or vending machines, automated handling in vending machines, and other operations.

[0003] Such containers must be capable of maintaining a closed configuration while being subjected to stresses associated with shipping and handling from the point of manufacture through the point of purchase, while at the same time the containers must be capable of being opened by the consumer without undue difficulty. It is generally desirable that such containers also have an attractive appearance.

[0004] There is a continuing need for improved containers for packaging of food products.

SUMMARY

[0005] The invention relates to a dual compartment container. The preferred container is suitable for use as a package for food products, and comprises a first, open-ended compartment containing a food product that may easily be removed from and replaced in the container, and a second, closed-ended compartment that may contain one or more additional food products, condiments, napkins, eating utensils and/or other items.

[0006] The container is preferably capable of being formed from a one-piece blank and includes a top panel, a bottom panel substantially parallel to the top panel, a plurality of side wall panels extending between the top panel and the bottom panel, and an intermediate panel dimensioned according to a predefined length and attached between the top panel and the bottom panel to provide a primary cavity having opposite open ends exposed to pass a product through the primary cavity without obstruction and a secondary cavity having opposite ends enclosed by closure walls. The container is preferably configured to be capable of withstanding significant stacking loads without undue deformation, and to facilitate automated or manual handling during operations such as shipping, loading in display cases, refrigerators, freezers, kiosks, or vending machines, automated handling in vending machines, and other operations. The volume of the primary cavity may be larger than the volume of the secondary cavity. The top panel may include a tearable opening defined by lines of weakness and may have a tab projected outwardly to facilitate opening.

[0007] In one embodiment, the foldable blank further includes a first flap dimensioned to substantially cover one of the opposite ends of the secondary cavity in a closed

position, a second flap attached to the first flap and foldable at a crease line to be inserted at least partially into the secondary cavity in the closed position, and at least two side flaps inserted into the secondary cavity at opposite sides of the first flap in the closed position. The first flap is attached at a crease line to either the top panel and/or the intermediate panel according to an embodiment. According to another embodiment, the first flap substantially covers one of the opposite ends of the secondary cavity at an incline between the top panel and the intermediate panel.

[0008] According to an embodiment, the primary cavity has inclined end edges between the top panel and the intermediate panel, and the secondary cavity has inclined end edges between the top panel and the intermediate panel. According to one embodiment, the bottom panel of the container includes a first side wall panel attached to the top panel on one side of the bottom panel and a second side wall panel attached to the intermediate panel on an opposite side of the bottom panel. The top panel further includes a third side wall panel attached at least partially to the second side wall panel, and the intermediate panel includes a fourth side wall panel attached at least partially to the first side wall panel, wherein the attachment of the third side wall panel to the second side wall panel and the attachment of the fourth side wall panel to the first side wall panel define a volume of the primary and secondary cavity.

[0009] According to various embodiments, a container is provided with a primary cavity having an intermediate panel dimensioned according to a predefined length, a bottom panel, and a plurality of side wall panels, and opposite open ends exposed to pass a product through the primary cavity without obstruction. The container also includes a secondary cavity defined by a top panel, the intermediate panel, and at least some of the plurality of side wall panels, and opposite ends. A closure wall that is configured to facilitate transport through a magazine in a vending machine includes a first movable flap attached to the intermediate panel at a fold line to substantially enclose one of the opposite ends of the second cavity at an inclined closed position between the intermediate panel and the top panel.

[0010] The various embodiments also provide for a food container in combination with a food product contained in the container that includes a top panel, a bottom panel substantially parallel to the top panel, a plurality of side wall panels attached between the top panel and the bottom panel, and an intermediate panel dimensioned according to a predefined length and attached between the top panel and the bottom panel to provide a primary cavity having opposite open ends exposed to pass the food product through the primary cavity without obstruction and a secondary cavity having opposite ends and dimensioned substantially according to the same predefined length of the intermediate panel. The food container further includes a microwaveable food tray for holding the food product to be passed through the primary cavity and a plurality of closure walls configured for transportation with at least one magazine panel in a food vending machine, wherein the closure wall substantially encloses the opposite ends of the secondary cavity.

[0011] According to an embodiment, the closure walls further include a first flap configured to substantially cover one of the opposite ends of the secondary cavity in a closed position, a second flap attached to the first flap and foldable

at a crease line to be inserted partially into the secondary cavity in the closed position, and at least two side flaps inserted at opposite sides of the first flap in the closed position to provide secure closure of the secondary cavity. According to various embodiments, the primary cavity has inclined end edges between the intermediate panel and the bottom panel, and the secondary cavity has inclined end edges between the top panel and the intermediate panel. The top panel further includes a tearable opening defined by lines of weakness on the top panel and having a tab projected outwardly enabling access to the tearable opening according to one embodiment.

[0012] The various embodiments further provide a vending system that includes a vending machine having at least one pair of paddles and a stack of containers supported on the paddles, wherein each of the containers includes an open-ended lower portion and a closed-ended upper portion that includes a top panel, an intermediate panel, and at least one end flap having a bottom edge joined to the intermediate panel by a hinge. In some embodiments, the end flap is pivotable about the hinge between an open position and a closed position and is securely connected to the intermediate panel along the hinge so that engagement by the paddles will not result in jamming due to outward pivoting of the bottom edge of the end flap. In various embodiments, each of the containers is of varying length and of maximum length at least adjacent the intermediate panel of the upper portion and formed of a single, one-piece blank of paperboard material such that the hinge includes a perforated fold line in the paperboard material. Each of the containers may be formed of a single, one-piece blank of coated paperboard material. The lower portion may support a first food item and the upper portion may contain at least one of a second food item, a condiment, an eating utensil, or a napkin.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a food kiosk in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

[0014] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view of a container according to a first embodiment;

[0015] **FIG. 4** is a top plan view of a blank from which the container of **FIGS. 1 and 2** may be constructed;

[0016] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of a container according to a second embodiment;

[0017] **FIG. 6** is a top plan view of a blank from which the container of **FIG. 5** may be constructed;

[0018] **FIG. 7** is a perspective view of a container according to a third embodiment; and

[0019] **FIG. 8** is a front top plan view of the blank from which the container of **FIG. 7** is constructed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] The invention is preferably embodied in a dual compartment container and a system for use of such containers. The container may be used for food products or other products, and preferably has a larger primary compartment containing a primary product and a smaller secondary compartment for related items. The primary product may comprise a single food item or a plurality of discrete portions. Where the container is used for food products such as frozen

pizza, pasta or other Italian food, the secondary compartment may be used for condiment packets, napkins, eating utensils such as a plastic knife, fork or spoon, or other items. Condiment packets may contain, e.g. a topping such as a grated cheese product comprising Parmesan or Romano cheese or the like, a seasoning product such as garlic, oregano or crushed red pepper, a sauce such as tomato sauce or pesto sauce, or combinations of these or other products. Where the container is used for a frozen brownie, the secondary compartment may be used for a topping for the brownie such as a frosting or sprinkle packet, a powdered sugar packet, a whipped topping, or a serving of ice cream. Each of the illustrated containers has an open-ended lower compartment or sleeve and a closed-ended upper compartment as described in more detail below.

[0021] The container may be used as part of a system comprising one or more display cases, refrigerators, freezers, kiosks, or vending machines. **FIG. 1** illustrates a system **10** comprising a food kiosk **12** that includes a refrigeration unit **14** containing plurality of containers **200** in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention, arranged in a plurality of stacks. The refrigeration unit may comprise a refrigerator and/or a freezer. The illustrated kiosk also includes a microwave oven **16** and a surface **18** for supporting one or more containers **200** after they have been removed from the refrigeration unit.

[0022] Referring now to **FIG. 2**, the container **200** is preferably made of paperboard material or another material having sufficient strength, stiffness, and durability to withstand handling in a vending machine and loads associated with commercial shipping, handling, etc. The container **200** is also preferably formed of a single, one-piece blank of the paperboard material. The container **200** includes dual compartment portions, specifically an open-ended lower portion **202** and a closed-ended upper portion **204**. The open-ended lower portion **202** and the closed-ended upper portion **204** define a primary cavity or compartment **206** and a secondary cavity or compartment **208**. The primary and secondary cavities are preferably of the same length and width. The volume of the primary cavity **206** is preferably larger than the volume of the secondary cavity **208**, because the primary cavity and the secondary cavity are preferably configured to respectively store a product **210** (e.g., a relatively large food product, such as a single serving frozen pizza or brownie) contained in a tray **212** and smaller items related to the product (e.g., condiments, eating utensils, and/or napkins). The tray **212** is preferably microwavable.

[0023] The primary cavity **206** is defined by an intermediate panel **214**, a bottom panel **216**, and a plurality of side wall panels **218**, **220** (two shown) extending between a top panel **222** and the bottom panel. In this embodiment provided, the bottom panel **216** is preferably substantially parallel to the top panel **222**, and the intermediate panel **214** is attached between the top panel and the bottom panel and dimensioned according to a predefined length **224**. One of the panels that defines the primary cavity **206**, specifically the intermediate panel **214**, has a predefined length **224**. The primary cavity **206** includes opposite open ends **226**, **228** to facilitate insertion and removal of the product **210**. In this embodiment, the primary cavity **206** includes inclined end edges **230**, **232**, **234**, **236** at the opposite open ends **226**, **228** between the intermediate panel **214** and the bottom panel **216**. The container is also of varying length in that it is of

maximum length at least adjacent the intermediate panel 214, with the top panel and bottom panel being shorter than the intermediate panel.

[0024] In FIG. 2, the tray 212 and product 210 are partially removed from the primary cavity 206. The tray and product are normally contained within the primary cavity prior to sale of the product, and may also be contained within a wrapper such as a transparent plastic wrapper enclosing the entire container or only the tray and product.

[0025] The secondary cavity 208 is defined by the top panel 222, the intermediate panel 214, and upper portions of the side wall panels 218, 220. Since the intermediate panel 214 is a shared surface between the primary cavity 206 and the secondary cavity 208, the length of the secondary cavity is the predefined length 224 of the primary cavity. The secondary cavity 208, unlike the primary cavity, includes opposite ends 238, 240 enclosed by closure walls 242, 244. The secondary cavity 208 also includes inclined end edges 246, 248, 250, 252 between the top panel 222 and the intermediate panel 214. Specifically, a first pair of inclined end edges 246, 248 is provided at one end 238, and another pair of inclined end edges 250, 252 at the opposite end 240.

[0026] To secure items inside the secondary cavity 208, each closure wall 242, 244 is configured to include a first flap 254, 256 dimensioned to substantially cover one of the opposite ends of the secondary cavity in a closed position and a second flap 258, 260 attached to the first flap and foldable at a crease line to be inserted at least partially into the secondary cavity in the closed position. Two side flaps 262, 264 are also included with the closure wall 242, and the two side flaps are inserted into the secondary cavity at the opposite end 242 of the secondary cavity 208. On the opposite end 244, two side flaps 266, 268 are similarly included. As shown, the first flap 254, 256 substantially covers each of the opposite ends 242, 244 at an incline between the top panel 222 and the intermediate panel 214. Furthermore, in this specific embodiment, the first flap 254, 256 is attached at a crease line to the intermediate panel 214.

[0027] The first flap 254, 256 and the second flap 258, 260 are preferably combined as a single piece end flap 270, 272 having a bottom edge (e.g., the first flap 254, 256) being joined to the intermediate panel 214 by a hinge or a crease line 274, 276. According to this embodiment, the end flaps 270, 272 are each pivotable about the hinge between an open and a closed position and is securely connected to the intermediate panel 214 along the hinge. The container formed of a single, one-piece blank of paperboard material preferably includes a perforated fold line at the hinge in the paperboard material. In addition, for easy access to items stored in the secondary cavity 208, the top panel 222 preferably includes a tearable opening 278 defined by lines of weakness 280 with a tab 282 projected outwardly to enable access to the tearable opening.

[0028] Referring now to FIG. 3, the side wall panels 218, 220 include first, second, third, and fourth side wall panels 300, 302, 304, 306. The bottom panel 216 adjoins the first side wall panel 300 along one edge 308. The second side wall panel 302 adjoins the bottom panel along the opposite edge 310. The top panel 222 adjoins the third side wall panel 304 along one edge 312 that is attached at least partially to the second side wall 302, and on the other side 314, is attached to the first side wall panel 300. The intermediate

panel 214 adjoins the fourth side wall panel 306 that is attached at least partially to the first side wall panel 300 on one side 316, while being attached to the second side wall panel 302 at the other side 318. From the configuration of the attachment of the third side wall panel 304 to the second side wall panel 302 and the attachment of the fourth side wall panel 306 to the first side wall panel 300, the volume of the primary cavity and the secondary cavity are defined.

[0029] Because the closure walls 242, 244 are attached to the intermediate panel 214, the first flap 254, 256 covers the secondary cavity 208 from the intermediate panel 214 to the top panel 222.

[0030] Turning now to FIG. 4, a foldable blank 400 that can be used to form the container 200 of FIGS. 1 and 2 is shown. The foldable blank 400 is illustrated as a sheet of material, such as paperboard, defining the top panel 222 set off by fold lines 402, 404 to form the first and third side wall panels 300, 304, respectively. The first side wall panel 300 further includes fold lines 406, 408 defining the side flaps 262, 266, and similarly, the third side wall panel 304 includes fold lines 410, 412 that define the side flaps 264, 268. The bottom panel 216 is joined to the first side wall panel 300 by fold line 414 at the one side 310 and the second side wall panel 302 by fold line 416 at the opposite side 308. Lastly, the intermediate panel 214 is joined respectively to the second side wall panel 302 and the fourth side wall panel 306 by fold lines 418, 420. At the intermediate panel 214, fold lines 422, 424 define the end flaps 270, 272. Specifically, at the end flaps 270, 272, the first flaps 254, 256 and the second flaps 258, 260 are defined by fold lines 426, 428. In constructing the container 200, adhesive or like material is disposed upon the second side wall panel 302 for attachment to the third side wall panel 304 and upon the fourth side wall panel 306 for attachment to the first side wall panel 300.

[0031] Referring now to FIG. 5, a container 200 according to a second embodiment is shown. The container 200 according to the second embodiment includes essentially all the same elements of the first embodiment, which will be referenced with the same numerical notation, with the exception that closure walls 500, 502 are configured differently in this embodiment. Unlike the first embodiment shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the closure walls 500, 502 are attached to the top panel 222. Specifically, the end flaps 504, 506 of closure walls 500, 502 are attached to the top panel 222, rather than on the intermediate panel 214. In particular, at the front and back end 242, 244 of the container 200, the end flap 504, 506 includes respectively a first flap 508, 510 folded at a crease line 512, 514 to form a second flap 516, 518. As a result of the configuration, the end flaps 504, 506 enclose the secondary cavity 208 downwardly at each side 242, 244, specifically with the second flap 516, 518 being inserted along the intermediate panel 214 into the secondary cavity.

[0032] Moreover, in this embodiment, side flaps 520, 522, 524, 526 at both ends 242, 244 of the container are shaped differently from the first embodiment to better fit the configuration of the end flaps 504, 506. Also, to accommodate easy opening of the end flaps 504, 506, the intermediate panel 214 includes cut openings 528, 530, specifically of a rounded shape shown as an example, at both ends 242, 244 of the container 200. This second embodiment may facilitate handling during production packaging.

[0033] Turning to **FIG. 6**, a foldable blank **400** used for forming the container **200** of **FIG. 5** is shown. Similar to the first embodiment, the top panel **222** is joined to the first and third side wall panel **300, 304** by fold lines **402, 404**, and the bottom panel **216** is joined to the first side wall panel **300** and the second side wall panel **302** by fold lines **414, 416**. The intermediate panel is also joined to the second side wall panel **302** and the fourth side wall panel **306** by fold lines **418, 420**. Unlike the first embodiment, however, the top panel **222** further includes closure walls **500, 502**, while the intermediate panel does not. In particular, fold lines **600, 602** of the top panel **222** define the end flaps **504, 506** of closure walls **500, 502**, and fold lines **604, 606** in turn define the first and second flaps **508, 510, 516, 518**. At the first side wall panel **300**, the side flaps **520, 524** are defined by fold lines **608, 610**, and similarly, the side flaps **522, 526** are defined at fold lines **612, 614** at the third side wall panel **304**. The construction of the blank similarly is formed by applying adhesive between the second and third side wall panels **302, 304** and the first and fourth side wall panels **300, 306**.

[0034] Referring now to **FIG. 7**, a container **200** according to a third embodiment is shown. The third embodiment includes essentially most of the features of the second embodiment, which will be referenced using the same numerical notations. The difference, however, is that in the third embodiment, closure walls **700, 702** are configured differently from the closure walls **500, 502** of the second embodiment. In particular, instead of having incline edges **246, 248, 250, 252** at the secondary cavity **208**, the closure walls **700, 702** include straight edges **704, 706** at the front end **238** of the secondary cavity **208** and straight edges **708, 710** of the opposite back end **240**. In the third embodiment, end flaps **712, 714** respectively include first flaps **716, 718** and second flaps **720, 722** divided by a crease line or hinge **724, 726**. Corresponding side flaps **728, 730, 732, 734** are included in this embodiment, but the shape and/or size are arranged differently to accommodate the straight edges **708, 710**. In this embodiment, the closure walls **700, 702** are attached to the top panel **222** and are folded downwardly to enclose the secondary cavity **208**. Moreover, in this particular embodiment, although the rounded openings **528, 530** are not included to more clearly show the end flaps **704, 706**, rounded openings can also be similarly included for easy access in this embodiment.

[0035] Turning now to **FIG. 8**, the foldable blank **400** used for forming the container **200** of **FIG. 7** is shown. The present foldable blank **400** includes similar features to the blank shown in **FIG. 6** with the exception of a different configuration of the closure wall **700, 702**. Specifically, each end flap **508, 510** is joined to the top panel **222** by fold lines **800, 802**, respectively. The end flaps **508, 510** are in turn divided by fold lines **804, 806** to create the first flaps **508, 510** and second flaps **516, 518**. One of the differences lays here with these fold lines. To give the configuration the straight edges **704, 706, 708, 710**, the fold lines are placed such that the first flaps **508, 510** are smaller in length than the second flaps **516, 518**. Accordingly, in order to accommodate the configuration of the straight edge arrangement, the side flaps **728, 732, 730, and 734** are divided by fold lines **808, 810, 812, 814** and arranged with the different sizes and/or shapes shown. Moreover, at the intermediate panel **214**, the rounded openings **528, 520** have been optionally omitted in this embodiment.

[0036] The invention is not limited to the preferred embodiments described hereinabove, or to any particular embodiments.

1. A foldable blank capable of forming a container comprising:

- a top panel;
- a bottom panel substantially parallel to the top panel;
- a plurality of side wall panels extending between the top panel and the bottom panel;
- an intermediate panel attached between the top panel and the bottom panel and dimensioned according to a predefined length to provide a primary cavity having opposite open ends exposed to pass a product through the primary cavity without obstruction and a secondary cavity having substantially the same length as the primary cavity and having opposite ends enclosed by closure walls.

2. The blank of claim 1, wherein the container is configured to be stackable.

3. The blank of claim 1, wherein a volume of the primary cavity is larger than a volume of the secondary cavity.

4. The blank of claim 1, wherein the top panel comprises a tearable opening defined by lines of weakness and having a tab projected outwardly enabling access to the tearable opening.

5. The blank of claim 1, wherein the primary cavity has inclined end edges between the intermediate panel and the bottom panel.

6. The blank of claim 1, wherein the secondary cavity has inclined end edges between the top panel and the intermediate panel.

7. The blank of claim 1, wherein the container is made of a paperboard material.

8. The blank of claim 1, wherein the bottom panel comprises a first side wall panel attached to the top panel on one side of the bottom panel and a second side wall panel attached to the intermediate panel on an opposite side of the bottom panel.

9. The blank of claim 8, wherein the top panel comprises a third side wall panel attached at least partially to the second side wall panel.

10. The blank of claim 9, wherein the intermediate panel comprises a fourth side wall panel attached at least partially to the first side wall panel.

11. The blank of claim 10, wherein the attachment of the third side wall panel to the second side wall panel and the attachment of the fourth side wall panel to the first side wall panel define a volume of the primary cavity and a volume of the secondary cavity.

12. The blank of claim 1, wherein at least one of the closure walls further comprises:

- a first flap dimensioned to substantially cover one of the opposite ends of the secondary cavity in a closed position;
- a second flap attached to the first flap and foldable at a crease line to be inserted at least partially into the secondary cavity in the closed position;

at least two side flaps inserted into the secondary cavity at opposite sides of the first flap in the closed position.

13. The blank of claim 12, wherein the first flap is attached at a crease line to any one selected from a group of the top panel and the intermediate panel.

14. The blank of claim 12, wherein the first flap substantially covers one of the opposite ends of the secondary cavity at an incline between the top panel and the intermediate panel.

15. A food container in combination with a food product comprising:

a top panel;

a bottom panel substantially parallel to the top panel;

a plurality of side wall panels attached between the top panel and the bottom panel;

an intermediate panel attached between the top panel and the bottom panel and dimensioned according to a predefined length to provide a primary cavity having opposite open ends and a secondary cavity having opposite ends, said primary and secondary cavities being of substantially the same maximum length;

a plurality of closure walls that substantially enclose the opposite ends of the secondary cavity;

a removable microwaveable food tray holding the food product.

16. The food container of claim 15, wherein the top panel comprises a tearable opening defined by lines of weakness on the top panel and having a tab projected outwardly enabling access to the tearable opening.

17. The food container of claim 15, wherein the primary cavity has inclined end edges between the intermediate panel and the bottom panel.

18. The food container of claim 15, wherein the secondary cavity has inclined end edges between the top panel and the intermediate panel.

19. The container of claim 15, wherein at least one of the plurality of closure walls further comprises:

a first flap configured to substantially cover one of the opposite ends of the secondary cavity in a closed position;

a second flap attached to the first flap and foldable at a crease line to be inserted partially into the secondary cavity in the closed position;

at least two side flaps inserted at opposite sides of the first flap in the closed position to provide secure closure of the secondary cavity.

20. A container comprising:

a primary cavity having an intermediate panel dimensioned according to a predefined length, a bottom

panel, and a plurality of side wall panels, wherein the primary cavity has opposite open ends exposed to pass a product through the primary cavity without obstruction;

a secondary cavity having opposite ends and defined by a top panel, the intermediate panel, and at least some of the plurality of side wall panels, wherein the secondary cavity is dimensioned substantially according to the same predefined length of the intermediate panel; and

a closure wall including a first flap attached to the intermediate panel that is foldable at a crease line to substantially enclose one of the opposite ends of the secondary cavity at an incline closed position between the top panel and the intermediate panel.

21. A method of packaging and preparing a food product comprising:

providing a food product in a tray in a dual compartment container comprising a lower primary compartment and a closed, upper secondary compartment;

providing in the closed secondary compartment one or more items useful in connection with consumption of the food product;

placing the container in a stack in a refrigeration unit in a kiosk for a storage period;

after the storage period, removing the container from the refrigeration unit;

removing the food product and tray from the container without opening the secondary compartment;

placing the tray and food product in an oven in said kiosk; and

heating the food product in the oven.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein providing a food product in a tray in a dual compartment container comprising a lower primary compartment and a closed, upper secondary compartment comprises forming the dual compartment container from a single, one-piece, blank of paper-board material.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein said upper compartment contains at least one of a second food item, a condiment, an eating utensil, or a napkin; said method further comprising providing a plurality of microwaveable food products of different types in substantially similarly shaped dual compartment containers, with labeling to differentiate the food products, in said refrigeration unit.

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