

# BOTTOM LINE



**MIRF ANNUAL  
HIGH FIVE TURKEY DRIVE  
DELIVERS**



SCAN FOR MIRA  
MEMBER EXCLUSIVE  
PROGRAM DETAILS:



Health insurance  
**YOU CAN FEEL GOOD ABOUT.**

**READY  
TO HELP**



With the largest network of doctors and hospitals, coverage for mental health, an easy-to-use mobile app, a 24-hour nurse line and the MIBlue virtual assistant, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are ready to help you feel your best – without the stress.



**Ranked #1 in  
Member Satisfaction**  
among Commercial Health  
Plans in Michigan

Learn more at  
**[MIBluesPerspectives.com/ReadyToHelp](https://MIBluesPerspectives.com/ReadyToHelp)**

For J.D. Power 2022 award information, visit [jdpower.com/awards](https://jdpower.com/awards)

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

W009003

# CONTENTS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024



## 26

### **MIRF puts turkeys on Thanksgiving tables of 3500 Michigan and Ohio families**

The 43rd Annual Turkey Drive was in full swing as MIRA President & CEO Bill Wild went on the road to pitch in on turkey distributions in Michigan and Ohio.

## FEATURES

## 16

### **Are You a Business Owner Who Can't Grow Your Business Because You're Buried Within it?**

MIRA launches major new business partnership with Resourcing Edge to ease the burdens that drains a business owners productivity.

## 20

### **Michigan Bottle Bill has Gone Flat**

After 50 years, MIRA contends that the Michigan Beverage Container Act is outdated and bad for business.

## 38

### **One-on-One with MIRA's CEO**

It's been a year since Bill Wild was named President & CEO of MIRA. Wild reflects on his first year and what he is focused on heading into 2024.



***Let's stay connected!***

Scan now to connect with  
MIRA on social media.



[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MIRAMWONLINE](https://www.facebook.com/MIRAMWONLINE)



[WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/MIDWESTINDEPENDENTRETAILASSOC](https://www.instagram.com/MIDWESTINDEPENDENTRETAILASSOC)



[WWW.X.COM/MIRA\\_MIRF](https://www.x.com/MIRA_MIRF)



# CONTENTS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

# 30

**New MIRA Member  
Makes Redefining  
Waste Management  
a Priority**



## DEPARTMENTS

---

### **04 President's Message**

New Year, New Look & New Events!

### **06 Chairman's Message**

There is Strength in Numbers and MIRA is primed for growth in 2024

### **08 Government Relations Report**

Electric Vehicle Charging Station Federal Grants are Beginning to Flow into Michigan; A New Source of Revenue for Retailers?

### **10 Michigan Lobbyist Report**

That's a Wrap! 2023 Proves to be a Busy Year for Michigan Legislature

### **12 Ohio Lobbyist Report**

A Christmas Carol

### **14 Communicate It, Market it**

How You Communicate Determines How You Lead; 10 Questions to Answer Before You Create Your Marketing Strategy

### **18 Distribution News & Views**

Seizing Success in 2024: The Power of a Solid Business Plan

### **22 Michigan Lottery**

Lottery Continues to Bet on Independent Retailers as Valued Michigan Partners

### **34 Michigan Liquor Control Commission**

MLCC Commissioner Focused on Creating a Partnership with MIRA Members

### **36 Member Spotlight**

Property Tax Appeals: Free Analysis for MIRA Members

### **42 MIRA Corner**

Ringing in a New Look for Bottom Line this New Year

### **44 Ask The Member**

What is Your Favorite MIRA Memory?

### **48 Membership**

Welcome These New and Recently Renewed MIRA Members!

### **50 Supplier Directory**

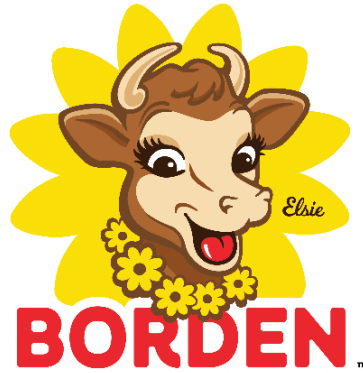
Your Resource for Products and Services

### **52 MIRA Calendar**

Upcoming Association Events



SCAN FOR MIRA  
MEMBER EXCLUSIVE  
PROGRAM DETAILS:



**24 Case minimum order is required.  
New price is \$1.79/gallon.**

Thank you for being a Borden customer!





**BILL WILD**

MIRA PRESIDENT & CEO

# New Year, New Look & New Events!

**A**s the calendar closes on 2023, MIRA is charging into the new year and launching many exciting new changes for our membership.

First, MIRA's communications team is excited to deliver a fresh new look to the association's official magazine, *Bottom Line*. With this edition you will find many enhancements throughout the magazine designed to give the reader a better experience. Moving forward, our bi-monthly magazine will have more timely industry news and a greater focus on our membership. Starting with the March/April edition, every cover of *Bottom Line* will feature a MIRA member and you will find many additional spotlights of members and the great programs that bring additional value to your membership, throughout the magazine. There will be plenty of new ways to advertise inside and outside the magazine to help promote your business or products to the industry.

MIRA members can also expect to

see a new modern, interactive website launched in early 2024. With the goal of creating an online platform for members and visitors to easily conduct business 24/7 with MIRA, you will find that you will now be able to join or renew membership, purchase event tickets, sponsorships, swag and much more on the new website. Members will now be able to manage their profiles, programs, request additional copies of publications and review their individual rebate history with just a few clicks. The site will be compatible with all mobile devices as well.

The MIRA events team has been working to create an amazing lineup of events for 2024 and you won't be disappointed! We kick off the year off with our 106th Annual Gala on February 3rd at the amazing Shenandoah Country Club in West Bloomfield, Michigan. The event will be a black-tie event with a special "Casino Royale" theme. Please RSVP early as this event will sell out quickly. Following the Gala, all MIRA's most popular events will be back including the Chairman's Dinner, the

MIRF Scholarship Luncheon (apply now! Deadline is April 1st)), the Michigan and Ohio Golf Classics and the much-anticipated Holiday Food & Beverage Innovation Show. Something new will be the addition of new MIRA Roadshows, with the first scheduled March 20th in Cleveland. These events are geared for retailers and will be an enjoyable evening of networking and learning more about MIRA's endorsed programs and how they can improve the profitability of your company. Check out page 45 for more information. There will also be events scheduled to raise funds for MIRA's legislative efforts as we enter the next Presidential election cycle.

The entire MIRA staff and I remain dedicated to working with members to ensure that you are utilizing all the benefits of your membership and are always here to serve you. Please remember, there is strength in numbers! If you know of another retailer that could benefit from MIRA membership, please don't hesitate to contact me at [bwild@miramw.org](mailto:bwild@miramw.org). ■





SCAN FOR  
SPONSORSHIP  
OPPORTUNITY  
DETAILS!



*MIRA cordially invites you to our 106th Annual*

# **GALA** *Casino Royale*

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3**

*from 6PM to MIDNIGHT*

*Enjoy fine cuisine, dancing, photo booths, entertaining games,  
wine & martinis, top shelf spirits, cigars and more,  
with leaders from the food, beverage & petroleum industries.*

To purchase tickets or sponsorships, contact Kelli Petty,  
MIRA Director of Events at (248) 671-9600 or [kpetty@miramw.org](mailto:kpetty@miramw.org).

**Kindly RSVP by January 22nd**

BLACK TIE SUGGESTED  
COMPLIMENTARY VALET PARKING

SHENANDOAH COUNTRY CLUB  
WEST BLOOMFIELD, MI



**BOBBY HESANO**  
MIRA CHAIRMAN

# There is Strength in Numbers and MIRA is Primed for Growth in 2024

It's been a year of transition for MIRA, and I am honored to work closely with our President Bill Wild, in my role as the Chairman of the Board of Governors, as the association makes necessary changes for the benefit of the members to ensure future success and stability.

We drafted a strategic plan last year and successfully executed it. Our new plan will be heavily focused on attracting new members while maintaining our existing membership base through continued engagement.

As Bill made some important additions and changes in 2023, 2024 is a year to focus on growth. We will expand our footprint in the independent retailer industry, showing our value to retailers outside the food and beverage industry. There are independent retailers in different product spaces that could greatly benefit from what MIRA has to offer.

Bill has put a strong team in place and has reorganized the organization which has positioned MIRA well for growth. We are kicking off 2024 with a new look for our popular magazine, *Bottom Line*. Part of our 2023 strategy was to polish up the MIRA brand and improve our publications and marketing. Members should be on the lookout for a new MIRA website in the new year and a refreshed logo as well.

This New Year is very much about branding our association and targeting potential members through our communication platforms and marketing efforts. It will also take a grassroots effort to grow the association and that is where our existing members come into play. They are instrumental as ambassadors of MIRA. Our members know best the value of the association and can give many examples of how MIRA has helped their business succeed and positively impacted their bottom line.

Just as important as it is for you to know your value and the value of your business to your customer, knowing the value of MIRA is also important, and sharing that with other independent retailers will go a long way in growing our association. Remember, there is strength in numbers!

If you don't know everything MIRA has to offer, I suggest you contact Bill or any of the MIRA staff to learn how to maximize the value of your membership and how it can help your business grow. ■



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bobby Hesano	Chairman, D&B Grocers Wholesale
Orlando Woods	Treasurer, Faygo Beverages, Inc.
John Denha	Secretary, 8 Mile Foodland/Huron Foods
Paul Elhindi	Retail Vice Chair, Corner Market
Conrad Haremza	Supplier Vice Chair, Proximo Spirits

## RETAIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Najib Atisha	Indian Village Market
Frank Ayar	Walter's Shopping Place
Jim Garmo	Kuzana Enterprises
Ryan Haddad	BP Dunkin' Donuts
Marvin Jarbo	Eastern Market of Canton
Phil Kassa	Heartland Marketplace
Joe Shina	Imperial Supermarket

## SUPPLIER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike Cavin	RND of Michigan
Jim Evans	Borden Dairy
Ken Hebert	Reyes Coca-Cola
Jason Howard	Great Lakes Wine & Spirits
Bryan Morrow	Pepsi Co.
Dave Orlando	Prairie Farms Dairy Co.
Marissa Smoyer	Lipari Foods

## EMERITUS DIRECTOR

Clifton Denha	Wine Palace
---------------	-------------

## MIR FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bill Wild	Chairman, MIRA
Clifton Denha	Treasurer, Wine Palace
Vanessa Denha Garmo	Secretary, Epiphany Communications: Coaching & Consulting
John Denha	8 Mile Foodland/Huron Foods
Paul Elhindi	Corner Market
Khalil Rahal	DTE
Nabby Yono	Arab-American Chaldean Council

## STAFF & CONSULTANTS

Bill Wild	President & CEO
Jerry Griffin	Vice President of Government Affairs
Terry Packer	Director of Marketing & Business Development
Kelli Petty	Director of Events & Membership Engagement
Lisa Honorowski	Comptroller
Mary Ann Yono	Business Development
Catherine Denha	Administrative Assistant
Burt Kassab	Corporate Counsel, Kassab Law Group P.C.
Matt Miner	Michigan Lobbyist, Capitol Strategies Group
Terry Fleming	Ohio Lobbyist, TC Fleming & Associates
Tamar Lutz	Graphic Designer, Tamar Designs, LLC
Vanessa Denha Garmo	Magazine Writer, Epiphany Communications: Coaching & Consulting
UHY-MI	Certified Public Accountant





# \$1,500 SCHOLARSHIPS

## ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Available to Midwest Independent Retailers Association members, their employees, children and customers!

### Eligibility:

*A high school senior, college freshman, sophomore or junior who is:*

- A student employed by a Midwest Independent Retailers Association member company for at least six months as of January 1st OR
- An applicant whose parent is a full or part-time employee of a Midwest Independent Retailers Association member company, for at least one year as of January 1st OR
- A Midwest Independent Retailers Association member company customer and their children.

SCAN TO  
APPLY!



Apply online at [aim.applyists.net/MIRF](http://aim.applyists.net/MIRF) or visit [www.MIRAmw.org](http://www.MIRAmw.org) for complete eligibility requirements and full program information.

QUESTIONS? CALL THE MIR FOUNDATION AT (800) 666-6233.

**DEADLINE TO APPLY IS MARCH 31ST!**

## 16TH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

JUNE 18, 2024 • DETROIT ATHLETIC CLUB, DETROIT, MI

Every year the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation awards academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 each to extraordinary and deserving students who will be attending, or are already attending an accredited public college, private college, university or trade school. Scholarship recipients have an opportunity to meet and network with donors and contributors during the Annual Scholarship Luncheon.

Since its inception, generous contributions have permitted the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation to distribute over \$1 million in scholarship funds to the employees and family members of member businesses, their customers, and financially disadvantaged youth.

*Sponsoring this event will truly make a difference in the lives of these students, and together we work to enhance our next generation of leaders.*



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPORT

JERRY GRIFFIN

MIRA VICE PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

# Electric Vehicle Charging Station Federal Grants are Beginning to Flow into Michigan; A New Source of Revenue for Retailers?

As part of the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program passed by Congress in 2021, the state of Michigan is set to receive about \$110 million in federal funds as part of the goal of establishing a nationwide network of electric vehicle charging stations. The funding will be doled out in grants to fund the acquisition, installation, and operation of publicly accessible charging stations throughout Michigan.

In 2021, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which included \$5 billion in funding to be made available to states to create a nationwide network for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and, just as importantly, set national standards for EV charging stations. At the time, there were no national standards for charging stations. EV's also have different charging modules that fit the vehicle (think Apple charger plug-in versus Android plug-in). There are differences in charging power, voltage, and payment methods. Issues of reliability have also plagued the emerging market. The new standards set in NEVI attempt to address these issues.

There are a variety of EV charger plugs that fit different models of EVs.

Under NEVI, all chargers will have what is referred to as Level 2 or CCS Type 1 Level 3 ports to be eligible for grant funding. Level 3 ports allow for high voltage connection and faster charging times. Tesla has a different port, and these may be eligible as well, as long as a CCS Type 1 Level 3 port is included at the station. (Tesla created a proprietary system for use on their vehicles alone. Adapters are now available that will allow Tesla vehicles to use a CCS Type 1 charger.)

Additional requirements necessary to access funding include accepting credit card payments that do not include a membership with service provider; each charging station must display charging costs in kilowatt hours and any additional fees; if located on major highways like interstates, they must operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; and stations must have at least four level 2 ports or a combination of level 2 or level 3 ports.

Several utilities, including Consumers Energy and DTE, have established programs to do the necessary site assessments to determine if power upgrades would be necessary at a particular location. These assessments are a required part of the application process.

So where does this fit with MIRA's

members? With the goal of establishing an electric vehicle charging network to resemble gas fueling stations, grants are being made available to cover the vast majority of the cost of acquisition and installation of vehicle charging stations. With the majority of the physical infrastructure covered, and with the number increasing and technology improving with EV's, these charging stations could become a new source of revenue that also provides another incentive for customers to use our members locations. Understandably, EV's do not charge as fast as a gas vehicle fuels up, but the new Type CCS Level 3 chargers can fully charge a vehicle in 30 minutes. For a grocery store or small retail outlet, customers can charge their vehicle while picking up a full load of groceries or stop in for a few items and charge for 5-10 minutes, which is long enough to add roughly 30 miles of range for the typical EV.

As this market expands and improvements are made, the potential for continued revenue growth is there. And these grant dollars won't exist for long. If you have any interest in or questions about the program, please visit the Michigan Department of Transportation's website at [www.michigan.gov/mdot/travel/initiatives/nevi](http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/travel/initiatives/nevi). ■





# MIRA'S BUSINESS INSURANCE PARTNER

SCAN FOR MIRA  
MEMBER EXCLUSIVE  
PROGRAM DETAILS:



PROUD TO SERVE ALL MIRA MEMBERS AS THE  
**EXCLUSIVE** ENDORSED INSURANCE PROGRAM



LIQUOR LIABILITY



GENERAL LIABILITY



COMMERCIAL PROPERTY



WORKERS' COMPENSATION



MIRA MEMBERS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE  
UP TO A **10% DISCOUNT!**\*



\*10% discount is subject to minimum premium requirements



Conifer  
Insurance  
Company

SCAN TO REQUEST A QUOTE!



**OPEN** the camera on your phone



**AIM** it at the QR code ➡



**TAP** the banner that appears



[www.coniferinsurance.com](http://www.coniferinsurance.com)



## MICHIGAN LOBBYIST REPORT

MATT MINER

CAPITOL STRATEGIES GROUP

# That's a Wrap! 2023 Proves to be a Busy Year for Michigan Legislature

Since September, Lansing has been bustling with activity from the legislature before they went on break. From energy to health policy, elections to higher education, Democrats have executed a lengthy agenda in the past few months. In early November, Democrats concluded the legislative session with an earlier-than-average break to allow for the 90-day adjourning period required for the new Presidential Primary date of February 27th, let's take a moment to look back at the highlights.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer outlined two clear policy goals in her "What's Next" address for the fall's legislative session: requiring utilities to generate 100% of their power from renewable sources and putting the Public Service Commission in charge of siting authority for large-scale solar and wind facilities. Dubbed the "Green New Deal" by many, Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids) and Speaker of the House Joe Tate (D-Detroit) also championed similar messaging, that climate and energy were going to be some of the

key focuses for the legislature during the fall session.

Although the eventual final bill package was revised, not without debate and its fair share of drama, the now signed Clean Energy and Climate Action Package sets out to make Michigan a national leader with a 100% clean energy standard, strong labor provisions to build clean energy and streamlining construction of energy projects. Senate Bill 271 sponsored by Senator Erika Geiss (D-Taylor) establishes that, by 2040, Michigan will produce all its energy from clean sources. By 2030, Michigan will produce 50% of its energy from renewable sources and 60% from renewables by 2035. It remains to be seen what economic effect these bills will have on electricity costs, but ratepayers will likely see a large spike in costs for this bold legislative endeavor.

Another landmark package that Dems were hoping to pass was surrounding Reproductive Rights. In its original language, the package would have codified reproductive rights into law in Michigan, allowed

access to abortions through Medicaid, and repealed the decades-old abortion ban still on the books for the state. However, when the package made its way to a packed House Committee on Health Policy, Representative Karen Whitsett (D-Detroit) shocked party leadership and voted in opposition to the entire package. Whitsett, who voted in opposition because of the allowed access to abortions through Medicaid, ultimately wound up being the deciding factor in the vote. While the Reproductive Rights Package passed with eight bills in total, it did not include the Medicaid provision as some groups, such as Planned Parenthood Michigan, had hoped for. Governor Whitmer said that the package was a vital step forward, citing amendments Michigan voters' strong support of Proposition 3 last election cycle.

2024 will hopefully bring more bipartisanship and cooperation with the house evenly divided, but many pundits speculate that it could bring even more division to the legislative session as this is a big election year for Michigan and America. Stay Tuned! ■



SCAN FOR MIRA  
MEMBER EXCLUSIVE  
PROGRAM DETAILS:



*Delivering More Than Great Food*



**24,000+ ITEMS**  
REGULAR STOCK, EVERYDAY



**3,000+ BRANDS**  
NATIONAL & EXCLUSIVE



**10+ CATEGORIES**

DELI • DAIRY • BAKERY • CONFECTIONS  
PACKAGING • SPECIALTY GROCERY  
FROZEN • FOODSERVICE  
MEAT & SEAFOOD • CONVENIENCE FOOD &  
BEVERAGE • INTERNATIONAL SPECIALTY



**1 DISTRIBUTOR**



For more information visit [liparifoods.com](http://liparifoods.com)

New customers contact Matt Montgomery at  
[Matt\\_Montgomery@liparifoods.com](mailto:Matt_Montgomery@liparifoods.com)



## OHIO LOBBYIST REPORT

TERRY FLEMING

TC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES

# A Christmas Carol

With apologies to Charles Dickens, some members of the Ohio House of Representatives are acting a little like Uncle Scrooge. To explain, we need to go back to June 2023 when the state's two-year budget bill was passed, and it included language that would give the State of Ohio full regulation of tobacco and vapor products. This was needed because Ohio is a Home Rule State which means cities can pass bills that give them authority to address any issue that the state doesn't already have authority over like tobacco and vapors.

Some cities have already banned the sale of vapors and raised taxes on these products. Left unchecked, Ohio would be subject to a plethora of regulations throughout the state, not to mention adjoining cities to those who have passed the banning bills will still be selling the products, giving vendors in those cities an advantage over those who are prohibited from selling vapors.

MIRA is a member of a tobacco coalition that does what it can to prevent cities from banning or regulating tobacco and vapors but working city councils all over a big state like Ohio is very difficult, which brings us back to the budget; the state legislature can override home

that was vetoed. The Senate had the votes to override the Governor's veto, but the House of Representatives did not, so the coalition spent the last four months working to get 60 votes to override the Governor's veto. At the end of last year, it appeared as

“Some cities have already banned the sale of vapors and raised taxes on these products.”

rule by justifying language that says it's good for the state and that's what the language in the budget bill does, but Governor DeWine a staunch opponent of tobacco, vetoed the language and there weren't enough votes to override his veto.

Then there was HB 66, which would relieve wholesalers of paying taxes on stolen property and, as this dealt with tobacco, the coalition group wanted to amend the bill with the same language

if we had the votes, but then the *Cincinnati Enquirer* did a negative story on this, and suddenly eight to 10 votes disappeared. It was like some members said humbug. Stay tuned as we have until December of 2024, to pass language that would give the State back authority.

Let's hope 2024 brings good news for the Christmas future. MIRA would like to wish all Ohio members a Happy New Year! ■





# WHEEL of FORTUNE

## MEGA MONEY MAKER



PLAY TODAY TO  
WIN UP TO  
**\$100,000**  
OR ENTER TO  
WIN A TRIP  
AND  
MEGA  
MONEY!



**OH!**  
LOTTERY®

*Keep it Fun* [ohio.com](https://ohio.com)

Play Responsibly. Need Help? 1.800.589.9966





## COMMUNICATE IT, MARKET IT

VANESSA DENHA GARMO

FOUNDER, EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS: COACHING & CONSULTING

# How You Communicate Determines How You Lead

**H**ow you communicate often determines how you lead. As a communications coach who is focused on leadership, there are valuable tips and insights for food retailers looking to enhance communication skills and leadership effectiveness in the industry that ultimately improve the bottom line and increase employee retention. When you own a business, you are leading even if you are the only employee.

### CLEAR COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Develop clear and concise communication strategies that align with the company's goals and values. You will want to ensure that messages are tailored to different stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, and regulators.

### EFFECTIVE TEAM COMMUNICATION

Leaders could benefit from emphasizing the importance of open and transparent communication within teams. Also, encourage active listening and provide training on how to give and receive constructive feedback.

### CRISIS COMMUNICATION TRAINING

Prepare for potential crises by developing a crisis communication plan.

Leaders could benefit from training to communicate effectively during challenging times to maintain trust and reputation.

### CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Store owners lead by teaching staff how to engage with customers through various

channels, including social media, to build a positive brand image. Emphasize the importance of customer feedback and how to respond to it.

### EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Foster a culture of engagement and collaboration within the organization.

Provide strategies for department managers to communicate effectively with employees at all levels and create a positive work environment.

### STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES

Train leaders to use storytelling techniques to make messages more compelling and memorable. Help them connect with employees and customers on a personal and emotional level.

### ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Emphasize the need for leaders to be adaptable and flexible in their communication styles, considering the diverse nature of the workforce and customer base.

### TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Stay updated on communication technologies relevant to the food retail industry.

Guide team members on how to leverage technology for effective internal and external communication.

### CROSS-FUNCTIONAL COLLABORATION

Promote collaboration and communication between different departments within the organization. Help team leaders understand the importance of cross-functional communication for overall business success.

### BRAND MESSAGING CONSISTENCY

Ensure consistency in brand messaging across all communication channels.

Provide guidelines on how leaders can reinforce the brand message in their interactions.

### ETHICAL COMMUNICATION

Emphasize the importance of ethical communication practices, especially in a sensitive industry like food retail. Leaders can guide how to handle communication challenges with integrity.

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Encourage staff to seek feedback on their communication style and continuously work on improving it. Business owners can take a coach approach to the way they communicate and train employees by having question-guided conversations. These team-building sessions can be designed to address evolving communication needs. By focusing on these areas, as a communications leadership coach I can say that business owners in the food retailer business can enhance their communication strategies, strengthen leadership skills, and build lasting relationships with employees and customers alike to increase the bottom line and improve services. ■

*Vanessa Denha Garmo brings nearly 30 years of experience in communications and professional writing to MIRA. As a coach, she focuses on leadership, management, career development, and team building; as a communications strategist and writer, she focuses on creating content for various platforms.*



## COMMUNICATE IT, MARKET IT

TERRY PACKER

MIRA DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



# 10 Questions to Answer Before You Create Your Marketing Strategy

**W**hen developing a long-term marketing strategy, you must communicate clear and concise goals within your marketing plans. Everyone wants to gain new customers and increase awareness, but I recommend you nail down a more concise marketing objective to create an effective marketing strategy.

For example, maybe the focus is on communicating a new offer or creating marketing material that is directly targeting your competition. Once you spend the time defining and communicating your goals, it will make it much easier to create marketing campaigns that address your goals and more importantly, track your progress.

So, this year, take the extra effort and time and define your goals. It will go a long way in helping you achieve the objectives that will make an impact on your business. ■

*Terry Packer brings more than 24 years of marketing experience to the MIRA Team. Terry's background includes media planning and campaign execution for small and medium-sized businesses. Terry also has an extensive background in event management.*

### HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU WILL NEED TO ANSWER AS YOU CREATE YOUR MARKETING PLANS FOR 2024:

01

What is your main objective?

02

How would you define your brand?

03

Who are your target audiences?

04

What do you know about each target audience?

05

Who are your top three competitors?

06

What do you know about each competitor?

07

What makes you different from each competitor?

08

What platforms will you use to share your marketing message?

09

How do your marketing plans fit into your company vision and mission?

10

What do you want to accomplish through your marketing plan at the end of 2024?



**BOB THOMAS**  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
RESOURCING EDGE

# Are You a Business Owner Who Can't Grow Your Business Because You're Buried Within it? We Need to Talk!

I am excited to announce an exciting new partnership between Resourcing Edge, a Professional Employer Organization (PEO), and MIRA. Unfortunately, most business owners have never heard of the term "PEO" and do not understand why they would need one or maybe unsure if they should partner with one.

Before diving into what a PEO is and the strategic benefits it provides, I want to make note of the conversations I have been having with many MIRA members. I am deeply impressed with the owner's passion and the rich history of their businesses. In each case, there is a clear devotion and drive to leave the business better than they found it. The only things I don't hear are, "I can't wait to pay taxes" or "I love firing people." That's where Resourcing Edge comes into play. A PEO is designed to help alleviate these types of tasks so you can focus on what's most important to you - running your business. We understand how valuable your time is and how stressful it can be when trying to juggle all the different components of a business!

Therefore, what does a PEO do and how can it help you? A PEO brings talent to the business to help with taxes, compliance, best practices, and human resources. Rather than spending your extra time and money to retain a lawyer or bring expensive operational support, PEO's can help. PEO's provide technology that combines payroll, training, benefit administration and many other HR functions all into one technology platform. This saves time and provides a more seamless experience. The PEO negotiates benefits on behalf of all their clients and their employees. They generally get access to better rates, better plan designs, and can offer them to a small business. PEO's also help a business stay compliant with hundreds of laws while taking the liability for that compliance. Give the burden of dealing with these administrative tasks to Resourcing Edge - that's exactly what we're here for.

Furthermore, how did PEO's come about? The concept of PEO first came into existence in the 1970s. The rationale for a PEO was to leverage HR and compliance services for small businesses and deliver them at an affordable cost.

Fast forward to today, the industry has evolved to combine technology, HR expertise, benefits, and workers' compensation to holistically serve the needs of small to mid-sized businesses. There are almost 500 PEO's in the country, covering over 4 million workers. Additionally, the United States Small Business Administration has reported that companies utilizing a PEO have a 50% greater likelihood of success and grow 9% more than those not utilizing a PEO.

As a member of MIRA, you can expect a negotiated rate that's competitive in the market and beneficial to you as a member. You will also have a dedicated team to support you and help ease the burden of some of the pain points of being an employer. Please look for details on the MIRA website and reach out to us to learn more. We would love to help you! ■



SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE ►









# Freedom to Work on Your Business

You didn't get into business to handle administrative burdens, but *we did*.

MIRA is proud to announce a new partnership with Resourcing Edge, Inc. — a top PEO that understands your business needs.

**Our PEO solution can relieve you of a number of tasks, including:**

-  **Human Resources:** Don't enjoy attending unemployment hearings? We can handle that and many other HR tasks.
-  **Employee Benefits:** Tired of annual renewals that are 7%, 15% or higher? We average about 4% on our medical renewal and our United Healthcare plans are usually less expensive to begin with.
-  **Workers' Compensation:** We handle workers' compensation claims and audits, and we might also be able to save you money on your policy.
-  **Payroll:** Have you ever received a note from the IRS regarding your payroll taxes? If anything happens when we run payroll through the PEO, they'll send those to us instead.



## Ready to Get Started?

Scan the QR code or connect with Ryan O'Dea to schedule a call.

### Ryan O'Dea

Vice President | Employee Benefits Consulting  
216.392.6296

[Ryan.ODea@CBIZ.com](mailto:Ryan.ODea@CBIZ.com)



## If I schedule a call, what will we cover?

The call takes about 30 minutes, and we will review what a PEO is and what services would be a good fit for your business. About a week after the call, we will have a custom proposal ready for your review.



## DISTRIBUTION NEWS & VIEWS

LOUIS MOSCA

COO & EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, AMERICAN MANAGEMENT SERVICES

# Seizing Success in 2024: The Power of a Solid Business Plan

**A**s we gear up for 2024, it's crucial for business owners to remember that success doesn't happen by accident. It requires a well-crafted plan.

This year, Midwest Independent Retail Association has allowed us to share insights that resonate across various sectors – from grocery stores to distributors.

While each business has its unique set of challenges, addressing universal concerns can set a robust foundation for tackling industry-specific nuances.

### THE BLUEPRINT OF SUCCESS: YOUR 12-MONTH GAME PLAN

The first step towards a successful 2024 is establishing a comprehensive plan. It's not just about setting sales targets; it's about crafting a strategy that encompasses growth, margin maximization, cost control, and talent acquisition and retention.

This plan should be more than a

mere document; it should serve as a 'working bible' for you and your key staff members.

### THE PULSE OF YOUR BUSINESS: TIMELY AND ACCURATE FINANCIAL REPORTING

Knowledge is power, especially when it comes to your finances. Are you getting weekly reports to gauge your performance against monthly plans?

Ensure your financials are not just timely – within ten days of month-end – but also used for a monthly postmortem. Analyzing what worked, what didn't, and what steps must be taken is pivotal for continual growth.

### CULTIVATING EXCELLENCE: TRAINING AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

Investing in your people is investing in your business's future. Formal training and mentoring programs are essential for creating opportunities and fostering a culture of growth and excellence. As a business owner, your

involvement in these programs is beneficial and necessary.

By focusing on these fundamental aspects, you can better manage the specific challenges of your industry, maximize margins, and position your business for stronger results in 2024. Remember, addressing the fundamentals is the first step in making the complex workable and the challenging manageable.

I encourage you to watch our detailed webinar to delve deeper into these challenges and explore comprehensive strategies.

Simply scan the QR code in our advertisement on page 19 for valuable insights and actionable advice tailored for C-stores, grocers, and suppliers navigating the complexities of the current economic environment. ■

*Since 1986, American Management Services has been the leading consulting firm in the United States, exclusively assisting independent small business owners with improving sales, operations, and performance. Contact Louis at [Imosca@amserv.com](mailto:Imosca@amserv.com).*





# Was 2023 messy for you?

From supply chain hiccups to economic uncertainties, 2023 was a rollercoaster year for suppliers, grocers, and convenience store owners like you.

*But what if 2024 could be different?*

American Management Services is here to turn that possibility into a reality.

With nearly four decades of experience guiding business owners, we've developed transformative strategies for enhancing operations, retaining superstar employees, and refining management – essentials for driving maximum profit.

We're excited to share these insights with you through our exclusive, free 30-minute webinar.

This isn't just another presentation; it's a roadmap to success, showcasing the very strategies that helped our clients triumph over the trials of 2023.

Take the first step towards a thriving 2024. Scan the QR code now and unlock the secrets to transforming your business challenges into opportunities.

It's time to leave the turbulence of 2023 behind and step into a year of prosperity and growth!



**amserv:**  
American Management Services

# The Bottle Bill has Gone Flat and is Bad for Business

*MIRA believes its time to take the bottle returns out of the hands of the retailer and create a true statewide recycling plan in Michigan.*

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS: COACHING & CONSULTING

It's been around for nearly 50 years and Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA) contends that the Michigan Beverage Container Act mostly known as the "Bottle Bill" is outdated and needs to change, not expand.

It was enacted in a statewide referendum on November 2, 1976, and was implemented on December 3, 1978. The stated purpose of the Bottle Bill was to reduce roadside litter, clean up the environment, and conserve energy and natural resources.

In July 2023, Michigan lawmakers introduced two bills to expand the state's bottle deposit law. The proposals, Senate Bill 453 and House Bill 4904, would extend the existing 10-cent deposit on carbonated beverage bottles to all non-carbonated beverage bottles, excluding milk containers.

"The bottle bill that is being proposed would expand the products for return to the water, liquor, wine, and any non-alcoholic carbonated or non-carbonated drink in liquid form that is not dairy based," said Jerry Griffin,

MIRA vice president of Government Affairs. "So everything except milk containers would now be returnable."

The proposed Bottle Bills also redefine what constitutes a beverage container as one that holds more than 0.1 liters and less than 3 liters or a metal, glass, or plastic container that, at the time of sale, contains 1 gallon or less of a nonalcoholic beverage.

The Bottle Bill was a key issue discussed in Lansing on MIRA's

"It's important that the legislature knows that what made sense 50 years ago does not apply today," said Bill Wild, MIRA president & CEO. "We have been explaining to the legislature that the Bottle Bill, in its current form, is antiquated and bad for business. It was originally a public response to address litter along the state's highways and local thoroughfares. I'd like to think we could all agree that it was successful in that regard, but this is a piece of public policy that is well overdue for a revisit."

“...Our MIRA members handle food, they should not be in the business of handling waste.”

Legislative Day last fall. While still in place today, much in the marketplace has changed and its status as a driver for recycling continues to diminish. The state reports that return rates are at an all-time low following the COVID-19 pandemic.

There have always been sanitation issues with the bottles, and the returnable assumes valuable square footage inside each business. "We must look at alternatives that focus more on recycling and get these contaminated containers away from



our fresh food," Marvin Jarbo noted while in Lansing. Jarbo is owner of Eastern Market in Canton Township.

MIRA Chairman, Bobby Hesano, has been in the food and beverage business for more than four decades and noted while in Lansing that there is an increasing level of public fatigue with bottle returns. "It is a hassle to clean these containers and return them and no store accepts every brand."

Language is proposed to be added that would allow retailers with a store footprint of less than 4,000 square feet to limit the dollar amount returnable from any person to \$10/day.

It also states a distributor that imports non-alcoholic products from out of state must establish a deposit on those products and keep a record of those deposits as part of its annual filing with the Treasury.

The bill proposes to change the distribution of the bottle bill enforcement fund and create the Bottle Handling Fund. The Bottle Handling Fund is created by depositing a portion of the redeemed deposits which will be distributed 80% to retailers and 20% to distributors. The other portions of the redeemed deposits go to enforcement, environmental cleanup,



and programs designed to incentivize recycling programs.

"Most importantly to note, as the Bottle Bill originated in 1976 by voter initiative, for the legislature to make these substantive changes to the act, they must be approved by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of the House and Senate," said Griffin. "The bottom line is this, we want to take this issue of bottle returns out of the hands of our retailers. Our MIRA members handle food, they should not be in the business of handling waste."

According to the Michigan.gov website Michigan does not collect statistics regarding beverage container return rates. Information is collected by the State of Michigan Treasury regarding the number of deposits collected and refunded by distributors and they

include a chart. They also indicate that the "numbers do not account for the impact of beverage containers purchased in another state or country and returned illegally for a deposit here in Michigan."

They elaborate on the fraud issue as well stating "The amount of fraud occurring is not currently known. As stated above, each container fraudulently returned in Michigan reduces the amount of money for community pollution prevention projects or cleanup and redevelopment of polluted sites. If you plan to bring in containers from out of state because you are concerned that containers may not be recycled, please deposit them in a recycling drop-off location in the state where you purchased them."

MIRA is closely working with the legislature in Lansing on the Bottle Bill issue to find other alternatives to the current bottle deposit system. "We do not want to expand a system that is already bad for business and the community," said Wild. "There are alternatives that make sense for both the business community, the community at large, and the environment. This is an issue our members will want to follow." ■

Expanding the Bottle Bill to include water bottles and other plastic containers is just adding more inconveniences for the consumer and the store owner. MIRA's focus will be on creating alternatives that benefit the environment while resulting in wins for the consumer, the state, and the retailer.



MICHIGAN

# Lottery Continues to Bet on Independent Retailers as Valued Michigan Partners

◀ MICHIGAN LOTTERY COMMISSIONER JESSICA KARBOWSKI WEARE

In many ways, retailers are the face of the Lottery. "Our retail partners provide exceptional customer service to Lottery players throughout the state," said Michigan Lottery Commissioner Jessica Karbowski Weare, who was appointed Acting Commissioner of the Michigan Lottery on July 31, 2023. "The hard work of retailers has led to commission payments nearly doubling over the last 10 years from \$178.4 million in 2012 to \$356.6 million in 2022."

Weare is focused on a continued productive relationship with MIRA and its membership. "The Lottery's long relationship with MIRA and its members in Michigan, Ohio, and the surrounding states, is incredibly important," said Weare. "Lottery retailers, many of whom are members of MIRA, are on the front lines when it comes to interacting with Lottery players. We value all the hard work retailers do to help make Lottery a success and to provide excellent point-of-sale service to our shared customers."

In 2023, Weare noted that the Michigan Lottery had a very successful year, "which would not have been possible without the hard work of retailers," she said. "While numbers for FY2023 are not final, it appears that Lottery will be able to contribute more than \$1 billion to the state's School Aid Fund for the fifth consecutive year. We look forward to continuing a strong relationship with our

retailers and continuing to support Michigan's schoolchildren in FY2024."

Over the same period, the Lottery's contribution to the School Aid Fund has increased by about 70%. "We are grateful to our retail partners, and organizations like MIRA for their role in this growth," she said.

"MIRA continues to familiarize itself with the Lottery's many new products and works to gain a better understanding of the organization's growth strategies, so that we can better educate our members on ways this important relationship can help to improve their individual bottom lines," remarked MIRA's President & CEO Bill Wild.

"Retailer's demand for the Lottery's popular new vending machines for instant win games exceeds supply, and there is currently a waiting list. Our retailers love them for many reasons, including reducing the lack of fraud and theft. Many of our members are interested in these but there is a supply and demand issue," stated Wild.

"Vending machines are intended to add a secondary selling option for customers to purchase lottery tickets. In addition to driving increases in sales and retailer commissions, vending machines also have other benefits, such as player convenience," noted Weare. "Because demand greatly outweighs the

supply of vending machines, Lottery has set requirements retailers must meet to be considered for a vending machine to be placed at their location. Lottery considers several factors in deciding where to place such machines, including current sales volume, optimal visibility, and potential sales increase."

One of MIRA's legislative priorities heading in 2024 is to work with the state to increase commissions received by independent retailers. "It takes an increasing amount of counter space, as well as higher utility and employee costs to deliver the entire Lottery experience for customers which now includes the exciting Power Ball and Mega Millions games," added Wild.

Commissioner Weare made note that the Michigan Lottery has one of the highest paying commission structures in the nation, and the Lottery's current base sales commission of 6% is tied with Indiana, as the highest among neighboring states. The current structure increases revenue to schools by incentivizing higher sales, and total commission and incentive payments to retailers have increased by 75% since Fiscal Year 2015, which was the first year retailers collected more than \$200 million in commissions.

LOTTERY continued on page 24



# Daily 3&4

# BONUS DRAWS™



For a limited time in September any Daily 3&4 draw can be a **BONUS DRAW**. Every time there is a **BONUS DRAW**, all eligible Daily 3&4 prizes for that drawing will be increased by 20%. When players cash in on a **BONUS DRAW**, you'll get a bonus too. Retailers earn higher redemption commissions on all valid **BONUS DRAW** prizes paid. Tell your customers to play Daily 3&4 today!

***Daily 3&4 BONUS DRAWS will be announced during the broadcast of the midday and evening winning numbers.***



**DAILY 4 STRAIGHT AND WHEELED BETS ARE EXCLUDED.**

Daily 3 odds: Straight: 1 in 1,000; 3-Way Box: 1 in 333; 6-Way Box: 1 in 167; 1-Off Straight: 1 in 1,000; 1-Off One Digit: 1 in 167.  
Daily 4 odds: Straight: 1 in 10,000; 4-Way Box: 1 in 2,500; 6-Way Box: 1 in 1,666; 12-Way Box: 1 in 833; 24-Way Box: 1 in 416; 1-Off Straight: 1 in 10,000; 1-Off One Digit: 1 in 1,250.  
Knowing your limits is always the best bet. Call the Michigan Problem Gambling Helpline for confidential help at 1-800-270-7117



"While the numbers aren't yet final, it appears that for the third straight year, Michigan Lottery retailers will have earned more than \$350 million in commissions in FY2023," said Weare. "The main benefit of being a Lottery Retailer has always been increased traffic/spending, not payouts from commissions. A recent Scientific Games study found 95% of lottery players purchase at least one other item while in-store and that lottery players on average spend 65% more in-store than non-players."

"Michigan Lottery continues to be focused on offering players fun and entertaining games of chance that provide the opportunity to win life-changing prizes," said Weare. "We are also committed to

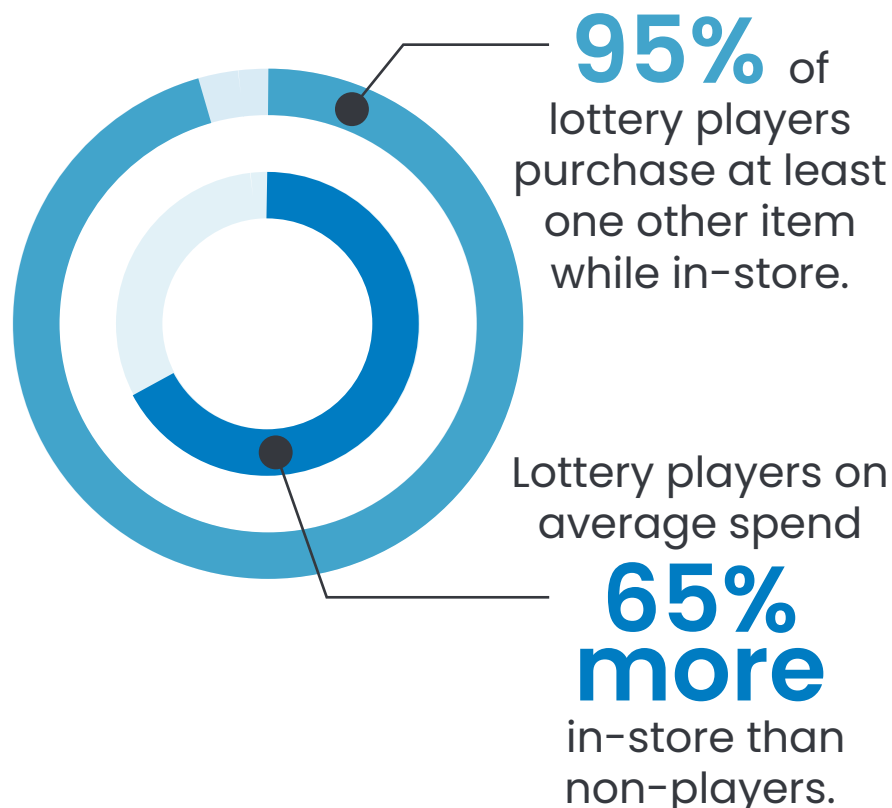
operating all our games with 100% integrity. As we continue to add new and exciting games to our portfolio, we expect sales to continue to be strong for our retailer partners."

The Michigan Lottery is facing more competition than ever before, most notably from online gambling, and is looking to increase its footprint throughout the state, including bars and other venues.

"While we recognize that this is a challenge, our team is taking this opportunity to work hard and deliver innovative games for players to enjoy," said Weare. "Lottery is unique amongst competitors, in that all of the Lottery's profits go to the School Aid Fund. This mission appeals to players and helps set our games apart from those offered on other platforms. It's also noteworthy that only Lottery offers games like Mega Millions and Powerball that give players a chance to win jackpots that reach hundreds of millions or billions of dollars."

What MIRA members may not know is that there are nearly 10,500 Lottery retailer locations throughout the state, and many of them are small, family-owned businesses. From 1986 (the first-year retailer commission data is available) to 2022, Lottery retailers have collected more than \$5.8 billion in commissions. In FY2022, retailer commissions totaled more than \$356 million, with 842 retailers selling more than \$1 million in Lottery products.

When she is not at work Weare remains busy. "Free time can be hard to come by in a household with two young children and an energetic rescue pup," she said. "Our family enjoys spending as much time as we can outdoors by hiking, camping, playing at the beach or in the snow, and taking every opportunity to explore the great state of Michigan. I also enjoy cooking, eating, reading, watching sports, chasing my children around while pretending to be a hungry monster, and texting friends my best Wordle results." ■







*FOR THE*  
**HUSTLE**







# Putting a Turkey on the Thanksgiving Dinner Tables of 3,500 Michigan and Ohio Families in Need

*The MIRF Annual "High Five" Turkey Drive was a huge success!*

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS: COACHING & CONSULTING



---

It was a month of charitable giving and gratitude in November leading up to Thanksgiving Day. The collaborative effort between Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA) and Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation (MIRF) resulted in another successful turkey drive.

---

**T**he 43rd Annual Turkey Drive was in full swing this past November as MIRA/MIRF President & CEO, Bill Wild, who oversaw the MIRA office distribution center and went on the road to pitch in with MIRF's turkey distributions in Detroit and Ohio.

The 2023 turkey drive was revamped a bit and executed differently this past year. However, the MIRF "High Five Turkey Drive" retail and community outreach "Paper Hands" promotion was the same.

"Like in previous years, MIRA members were asked to help raise money at the register to generate a significant donation for MIRF's Annual *"High Five Turkey Drive"* by participating in the paper turkey program," said Wild. "Our members know that the paper turkeys are a fun, simple way to raise funds while sending a message to their customers and the community that they care about feeding the hungry.

MIRF members were given a starter package that included a poster to place in the store to raise awareness as well

as turkey hand cut-outs for customers to purchase and write their names on.

Member retailers placed the paper turkeys at the register and instructed cashiers to encourage customers to buy a paper turkey for a suggested donation of \$1, \$5, or even \$10.

The purchaser signed the "High Five" paper turkey, and MIRA encouraged members to display it prominently in the store. Paper turkeys were displayed on walls, and windows, or hung from the ceiling to generate maximum awareness.







### AT A MIRA MEMBER STORE

MIRA President & CEO, Bill Wild, stopped by member store Heartland Marketplace, located in Farmington Hills Michigan to share with shoppers information about the annual drive, which this MIRA member has participated in for several years. Wild recorded a video from the store for MIRA's social media platforms and he caught up with co-owner and Board of Governors member Phil Kassa, who has been participating in the Turkey Drive since its inception.

### IN DETROIT

MIRF was proud to join efforts with the Capuchin Soup Kitchen (CSK), located in Detroit, to help supply families that "could use a little help" with everything they need for a nutritious Thanksgiving meal. CSK distributed 100 turkeys provided by MIRF.

"It was a pleasure to work with Brother Gary Wagner and Brother Rob Romer," said Wild. "We are truly grateful to MIRA member Harvest Sherwood, the official supplier of turkeys for the MIRF turkey drive, for their help with the supply and logistics."

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen is one

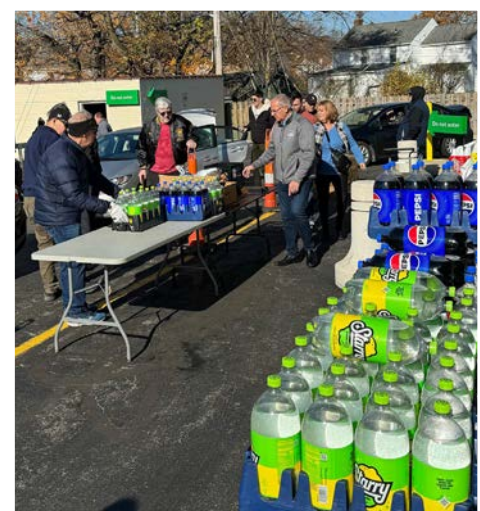
of Detroit's primary community support and outreach programs. The organization is run by Capuchin Franciscan Friars, a male order of the Roman Catholic Church dedicated to addressing the needs of poor and disenfranchised people in cities around the world.

The Capuchins run two soup kitchens and a drive-through service center in Detroit. The turkeys were part of a distribution at the service center, and it was very efficient and well-run. "This is an impressive organization that I think will make a great partner moving forward with our continued charitable work," said Wild.



▲ DETROIT

▼ OHIO







MIRA HEADQUARTERS



## IN OHIO

On the road in Ohio, Wild joined MIRA Board of Governors members Jim Evans (Borden Dairy) and Paul Elhindi at Elhindi's Corner Market BP, located in Lyndhurst Ohio. "Paul's team was well prepared and executed a very successful distribution of 400 turkeys to individuals and families from throughout the state that needed a little help this year," said Wild. The Mayor of Lyndhurst, Patrick Ward was on site the entire time pitching in.

Cleveland's FOX8 and popular anchorman Wayne Dawson were on site and MIRA received much-deserved publicity. Pepsi and Team Sledd also pitched in with products and hands to help. Harvest Sherwood General Manager Bill Kimura and the Sherwood

Cleveland team were instrumental in helping MIRA execute this year's turkey drive in Ohio, by handling the product delivery. This was the 13th year MIRA distributed turkeys at Corner Market BP in Lyndhurst Ohio.

## AT MIRA HEADQUARTERS

The final stop of the turkey drive was at MIRA's own headquarters. Just before Thanksgiving, charitable organizations from across Michigan came out to MIRA's offices in West Bloomfield, Michigan to pick up their donated turkeys.

Each year MIRA partners with other charitable organizations to help individuals or families that need a little help at Thanksgiving, which in turn, allows MIRA to expand its charitable

reach into more communities.

MIRA staff was joined by volunteers from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and DTE Energy to help with the logistics. While Mother Nature didn't necessarily help as the rain came down that day, Team MIRA refused to let the drizzle dampen their charitable spirit.

"A big thank you to all MIRA members who contributed to the efforts this year with donations and to the many who sold *"High Five Turkey Hands"* to raise funds for the annual event. A big shout out also goes to MIRA member, Detroit-based Harvest Sherwood Food Distributors who was the official supplier of turkeys for the 2023 Michigan and Ohio drives," added MIRA Director of Events and Member engagement, Kelli Petty. ■



■ SPOTLIGHT

# NEW MIRA MEMBER MAKES REDEFINING WASTE MANAGEMENT A PRIORITY

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS: COACHING & CONSULTING

**T**odd Stamper was just 8 years old when his entrepreneurial journey began. Local children on the beaches of Cancun selling chicklet gum during a family trip triggered Stamper's business mind. The following year, the family returned to Cancun and Stamper packed cassette players and cassette tapes of musicians on the top 40 charts like Michael Jackson and Madonna.

"I went to the beach and sold everything I brought with me," he said. "I was selling something they didn't have in Cancun."

That business growth mindset continued as Stamper grew older and eventually, he became the founder and CEO of Priority Waste, one of MIRA's newest members. The business was born out of a vision to redefine waste management, sustainability, and logistic practices.

In 2018, Stamper along with a group of passionate individuals with extensive industry experience came together, driven by a shared

goal to create a company that would define their vision. They went from a four-truck company and a handful of employees to 600 trucks and 750 employees in six years.

Looking for opportunities to expand his business and increase profits has always been part of Stamper's business mindset.

At 13 years old, he started to subcontract his paper route business to other kids in the neighborhood who were not old enough to have a paper route. "I was taking a 20% cut and I didn't even know that what I was doing was subcontracting or that I was taking a percentage as a business owner, hiring other kids to handle my route."

Barely in high school, he was earning \$1,000 a week from his paper route.

At 18 years old, Stamper had saved enough money to start a carpentry business which he named Quest. "A local inspector would stop by our construction sites and show us how to frame homes," he said. "We eventually got to the point we were able to frame a home within 48 hours."

He owned and operated Quest until 2008 when the market took a hit.

"As far as the garbage industry stands, it was so archaic when we got into it," said Stamper. "I was managing auto parts plants, and the local garbage company was not picking up the garbage on time. We had garbage sitting on the dock. We had auto plants all over the world. I originally got into the waste management company just to service our auto plants."

This year, Priority Waste is acquiring an existing waste management company which will expand the company's footprint into other states.

With advanced technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), Stamper has been able to create a company that offers true transparency. "We used to have a high turnover of employees and industry-wide, there were lots of angry employees and dissatisfied customers," he said. "We've changed that."

While most companies install cameras in service trucks to focus on employee theft, accountability of work hours, and accuracy at stops, Stamper expanded on the benefits of cameras and computers in cars. "Each driver

■ PRIORITY WASTE *continued on page 32*





**PRIORITY**  
INNOVATE ★ OPERATE



Priority Integrated Technologies Center:  
Home of our LDC program.

## Perks of choosing Priority:

### What makes us different?

- Logistics Driver Coordinator (LDC) Program
- **360°** Camera Technology
- Real-time GPS Routing Software
- Dumpsters of all sizes



## Safety, Efficiency, & Savings!



### What is a Logistic Driver Coordinator?

An LDC is a dedicated partner for our team on the road. They communicate live with the drivers & ensure they're operating efficiently. This position acts as a liaison for our customers and drivers. Overall, promoting safety, efficiency, and savings for the customer.







## PRIORITY WASTE *continued from page 30*

is assigned a logistic driver coordinator (LDC) who is in contact with drivers in real-time throughout the day," noted Stamper who created the software for his logistic system. Priority Integrated Technology (PIT) is the computer system that enables drivers to communicate with their point person back at the office. It's much like the video displays in Tesla cars.

Back at the corporate office in Clinton Township, Michigan, there is an impressive room with a digital display wall for all cameras running across 64 feet and standing at 9 feet high, watching every truck in every community that Priority Waste serves.

The system allows mechanics on site to fix problems while being consulted by a mechanic back in the office who with the cameras, can assess the situation. It's like using Facetime on an iPhone. "An LDC watching the city Taylor for instance can see everything the truck driver is doing," said Stamper. "AI tells our drivers if they missed a house or if a customer paid for bulk pick up. AI will even alert our drivers if there are too many bulk items. Our trucks will only pick up the allowed two bulk items and leave any extra bulk items behind."

A missed house costs the company \$135 for a driver to go back and pick up the garbage, "so our systems have made our drivers more efficient and our company more cost-effective," said Stamper.

The technology also assesses recycled garbage and non-recyclables and if they are being placed in the wrong bins. "We can show our clients how they can save money in the long term if they recycle properly. We are focused

on transparency at every level. The computers don't lie. They can see what was picked up, at what time, and from where. If a customer claims a driver missed a spot, our cameras will record it."

Stamper's technology has produced secondary benefits. "Our Cameras have picked up robberies, break-ins, drunk drivers, and accidents," said Stamper. "It's a passive relationship. We are not in the police business, but if the police ask for our footage, we will hand it over."

Stamper also understands the needs of MIRA members. As the founder and owner of Stamper Facility Management (SFM), he contracts with other industries such as HVAC and other vendors. "That experience has helped me become a better leader," he said. "I understand the needs of other businesses, especially MIRA members."

The AI cameras can show how much trash is being tossed into member dumpsters. "We know that MIRA members are working hard to turn a profit and to be efficient in their businesses. Our level of transparency helps them track their waste management and recycling end of their business."

Stamper and his wife have three adult children and are expecting their first grandchild. Their son is finishing medical school this year, specializing in orthopedics. His daughter is at Dartmouth University as a Division 1 hockey player and their youngest daughter is a senior at Cranbrook High School and plays hockey too. She will also most likely follow in her dad's entrepreneurial footsteps.

"When she was just 9 years old, my wife and I noticed she was buying squishy toys on Amazon and turning around and selling them for \$10. The only thing was she was using our money to

buy them, so she created a 100% profit!"

Now that they are no longer running around chasing kids, Stamper and his wife enjoy traveling, golf, pickle ball, and hanging out with the family. "We take a lot of weekend trips to the West Coast and Florida."

The couple is also very philanthropic. "While my wife is very passionate about working with seniors, I am more focused on kids, especially those overcoming an addiction," said Stamper. "Addicts are highly intelligent. If we can get them to transfer their skills from searching for drugs to something more productive, they could be successful."

Stamper credits his ambition and strong work ethic to both his grandfather and father and to his friends growing up whose families owned convenience stores. "I would work at their family businesses so I could hang out with my buddies. Their parents paid me to bag groceries or stock shelves, and I would get to see how hard my friends worked. They saw first-hand what it takes to pay bills and buy things the parents bought for their kids."

That work ethic has resulted in rapid growth, the creation of advanced technology, a 99.987% success rate in garbage pickup, and client satisfaction. "Our relationship with MIRA is such a natural fit," said Stamper. "I grew up in the retail industry working for my friends' families. Priority can offer an affordable waste management solution for all MIRA members, regardless of size. I am looking forward to building upon that history with MIRA members."

Priority Waste has a MIRA Endorsed Program that all members are eligible to participate in. To learn more about the program contact MIRA at (248)671-9600, visit [www.miramw.org](http://www.miramw.org), or check out [www.prioritywaste.com](http://www.prioritywaste.com). ■



# *You're Gonna Love Our Products!*

**SF SHERWOOD**  
FOOD DISTRIBUTORS  
A Harvest Sherwood Company

*Filling the center of your plate.  
Every holiday, every season, every day.*

*Beef, Pork, Poultry, Processed Meats, Lamb, Veal, Seafood,  
Deli, Full Line of Dairy and Eggs, Bakery, Frozen Foods,  
Ethnic Foods, Hispanic, Halal, Kosher*



**313-659-7300**

**[HarvestSherwood.com](http://HarvestSherwood.com)**

# MLCC COMMISSIONER FOCUSED ON CREATING A PARTNERSHIP WITH MIRA MEMBERS



BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS: COACHING & CONSULTING

**K**ristin Beltzer brings a wealth of executive management experience to her position as Chair of the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC), an experience she hopes will help move the industry forward.

“MLCC is focusing on being a good partner with all our licensees and those in the industry, with an emphasis on providing excellent customer service, fair competition, and product choice,” said Beltzer. “The MLCC is responsive to changes made through legislation, gubernatorial executive orders, and MLCC administrative orders.”

Beltzer recognizes the value independent retailers bring to the State of Michigan. “Business owners, both large and small, are vital contributors to Michigan’s hospitality and tourism industry, job growth and economy,” she said. “Building strong partnerships with independent retailers is vital toward growing the beverage alcohol business in Michigan. The MLCC looks forward to working

with MIRA in providing retailers with the knowledge and resources necessary for them to be successful and thrive.”

From Grand Rapids, Michigan, Beltzer is CEO and founder of KB Collaborative, a business and executive management consulting business. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Public Relations from Michigan State University and a Master of Public Administration from Western Michigan University.

23,199 total retailer licensees (9,120 on-premises retailers and 14,079 off-premises retailers) who are ordering products every day, which may explain times when some higher-demand products become unavailable, and licensees can’t always get the products they’re looking for,” Beltzer explained. In addition, “The MLCC must follow the statute for issuing licenses,” said Beltzer. “The types of licenses available and licensing requirements are set by

“We are keenly aware of how frustrating the out-of-stock situation can be and that it can adversely affect licensees’ businesses.”

Before her appointment to the MLCC as an Independent by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2022, she served as the director of gubernatorial appointments for Gov. Rick Snyder, and executive vice president and chief marketing officer for the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce where she had led the advocacy, events, and business development divisions.

One of the challenges MIRA members face today is acquiring product. There are

State law. The number of certain types of licenses is governed by population quota for that local governmental unit.”

In 2022, Michigan’s Liquor Control Commission was looking at ways to ease liquor supply shortages for small liquor shops, restaurants, and bars after the pandemic worsened problems that have left smaller retailers scrambling for products. “Current supply is good and pretty much back to pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels,”



said Beltzer. “We are keenly aware of how frustrating the out-of-stock situation can be and that it can adversely affect licensees’ businesses. However, the reality is, there is just not enough product produced or supplied to Michigan to cover every licensee request.”

According to the MLCC, Michigan ranks *first* among the 17 control states in having the largest selection of distilled spirits products available for retailers to sell to their customers. More than 12,500 distilled spirits products are available (almost double from eight years ago). This past year as the MLCC celebrated its 90th anniversary, it was noted that just 19 liquor brands were available in the State’s liquor warehouse in 1933. The growth in available products has been phenomenal.

“Current challenges for the MLCC include the continuing crackdown on illegal alcohol shippers, prohibiting the sale of alcohol to those who are underage, and working to help bring more products into Michigan”, added Beltzer.

The MLCC’s Enforcement team’s work with the Michigan Attorney General’s Office has resulted in more than \$100,000 in fines levied against illegal alcohol shippers, along with thwarting hundreds of these entities’ efforts to violate state liquor license laws. These unlicensed, out-of-state companies are illegally shipping wine and other excessively low-priced products directly to Michigan consumers. This illegal activity not only robs our state of tax revenue it also hurts retailers across Michigan.

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission, earlier in 2023, issued administrative order no. 2023-01,

which requires all wholesale beer and wine deliveries to retailers to be paid by electronic funds transfers (EFT). “This change created some confusion to MIRA members who questioned why this change was necessary and wondered how it might affect their businesses,” said Mary Ann Yono, MIRA Director of Business Relations.

“EFT for both the State and wholesalers

of licensees already using EFT. EFT for purchasing *spirits products* became effective in November 2021, so it made good business sense to transition to EFT for *beer, wine, and mixed spirit drink* purchases in March 2023.”

The MLCC remains committed to partnering with the association. “Our relationship with MIRA is very important. The MLCC and MIRA have a mutual customer base, thousands of retailers – the convenience stores, grocery stores and service stations, the wholesalers, manufacturers, and others,” said Beltzer. “We share mutual goals of helping our customers thrive and grow in a competitive marketplace. We both share a long history of service to our customers, MIRA since 1910 and the MLCC since 1933. The MLCC values its long-standing partnership with MIRA and looks forward to continuing our collective efforts that support retailers across the state for many years to come.”

According to Beltzer, MLCC’s goals for 2024 are to continuing to provide excellent customer service and proactively make innovative changes that make it easier for licensees to do business with us.

“We want to get the word out that the MLCC is a great resource for

licensees; any time they have a question or need help, just give us a call,” she said. “We have a wonderful team at the MLCC that is extremely knowledgeable and completely focused on customer service. We also want to grow the beverage alcohol industry in Michigan, and support entrepreneurs who want to start a business. Currently, Michigan ranks #7 in beverage alcohol sales, so there’s a lot of growth potential.” ■



has worked well. EFT was the MLCC’s latest modernization for convenience, safety, and security,” said Beltzer. “We were seeing an increase in delivery trucks being held up not only on the road but in parking lots. So, for the safety of all, EFT eliminated the cash available on the trucks or in a licensee store on delivery day. EFT also streamlined the process as well as wait times for drivers. Both the State and wholesalers had a good percentage

## SPOTLIGHT

# PROPERTY TAX APPEALS: FREE ANALYSIS FOR MIRA MEMBERS

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS: COACHING & CONSULTING



**S**teve Johnson recognized the stress in the retail market and realized that his service could be a great benefit to MIRA members. "Our membership with MIRA is a fruitful way for our company to reach over-assessed retail property owners," said Johnson, owner of Michigan Tax Appeal Services. "Our goal is to assist by representing a successful tax appeal ultimately increasing their bottom line."

Michigan Tax Appeal Service (MTAS) identifies over-assessed commercial properties using innovative strategies to represent and successfully reduce property taxes. After 17 years acting as the senior account executive, Johnson acquired GSA Property Tax Consultants and renamed it. "The business has been successfully appealing commercial property taxes since 1981," he noted. "Having also been a licensed realtor since 2006, real estate has been a primary focus and passion that aids in my knowledge and expertise in understanding market trends."

Michigan Tax Appeal Services represents property owners with a single small corner store to Fortune 500 companies and everything in between. Property taxes are scheduled to increase by 5% in 2024.

Johnson's company MTAS is offering all MIRA members a free analysis of their retail properties to determine if they have a basis for a property tax reduction. "We are confident that we can put together the best case to realize the largest reduction possible," said Johnson. "We can put together a strong case to obtain the fair market value of your property."

Johnson and the team work on a contingency-only basis. "If we don't win, then you pay us nothing," he said. "Our firm sets itself apart by fighting hard for our clients, taking appeals to the necessary level to ensure you get the best possible results. We save our clients millions of tax dollars with our superior market knowledge and innovative strategies."

Property owners have the right to appeal their property taxes every year. When that time comes, Johnson and his team provide clients with significant tax savings on their property holdings.

"Our certified assessors, personal property examiners, and auditors work alongside property tax specialists well-versed in property tax law, municipal tax appeals, and all stages of Michigan Tax Tribunal and State Tax Commission procedures," said Johnson. "We take the stress out of lowering your tax burden by managing every aspect of your appeals process and keeping you informed of your case status every step of the way."

Johnson's team provides property tax savings for clients by implementing in-depth asset studies, market reviews, and planning strategies. "We bolster our superior knowledge of state and local tax laws with the good rapport we've established with assessing offices throughout Michigan," he said. "We take a comprehensive approach to your tax plan and strategy, ensuring that your property tax is aligned with your overall financial picture. Start the journey to increasing your bottom line with our strategic insights and solutions."

When Johnson is not assessing property taxes, he is usually catching a game. "I love all Detroit sports teams," he said. Married for 32 years, he and his wife Sheila have four grown children and two grandchildren. For more information call (248) 392-4342 or visit [www.mitaxappeal.com](http://www.mitaxappeal.com). ■

“

Over the last 40 years, we've won significant tax savings for property owners throughout Michigan, including...

### FREESTANDING RETAIL

Manistee  
\$15,000/year

### FREESTANDING RETAIL

Dearborn  
\$14,000/year

### GAS STATION

Southfield  
\$3,700/year

### INDUSTRIAL BUILDING

Romulus  
\$251,855.60/year

### OFFICE

Bloomfield Twp.  
\$21,000/year

### OFFICE

Grand Rapids  
\$36,000/year

### RETAIL CENTER

Kochville  
\$8,000/year

### RETAIL CENTER

Middleville  
\$22,000/year



STEVE JOHNSON





# HERE FOR YOURS.



## The Midwest's Most Beloved Private Label

With a legacy of over 118 years throughout our country's heartland, the Our Family brand is guaranteed to delight your shoppers and become a staple on their family table.

## CONNECT WITH US ONLINE



FOR MORE FAMILY-FOCUSED, QUALITY CONTENT

**SCAN HERE ▶ TO LEARN MORE**



Contact **Jim Gohsman** (1-616-878-8088) [jim.gohsman@spartannash.com](mailto:jim.gohsman@spartannash.com) or **Mary Brush** (1-989-798-2148) [mary.brush@spartannash.com](mailto:mary.brush@spartannash.com) for more information.

# One-on-One with MIRA's CEO



It's been a year since Bill Wild left his position as Mayor of the City of Westland, Michigan to become the President & CEO of MIRA and MIRF. He reflects with *Bottom Line* on his first year in his new position and what he is focused on heading into 2024.

MIRA's Communications Director and Content Writer, Vanessa Denha Garmo sat down with the CEO for a candid conversation on his first year. This interview can also be heard on *It's Your Community* which aired on WJR 760 AM, 96.3 FM, and 93.1 FM at [www.wjr.com/wjr-weekend-experts](http://www.wjr.com/wjr-weekend-experts).

**Q So, looking back at your year as the president and CEO of MIRA and MIRF, how would you describe 2023?**

**A** First, it went by fast! Transitioning from my previous position there was a lot to learn. I was very fortunate to transition with my predecessor Ed Weglarz and ease into taking over the day-to-day operations. Ed was amazing and continues to be extremely helpful whenever I call on him. Ed did a great job of managing the association during the COVID-19 pandemic and deserves a lot of credit for keeping our membership and

staff together during the economic chaos that it created. I made a lot of changes this past year including several staff, vendor, and system changes that I felt were needed and while change is never easy, I believe that we made a lot of progress. I'm enjoying the work. I've enjoyed getting to know the staff and Board of Directors better and meeting the membership has been a real pleasure. I'm looking forward to another great year in 2024.

**Q What are some of the successes that you can point to in the past year?**

**A** I think looking back at the past year, one of the things I am most proud of is our improved government relations department. We take pride in serving as the voice of independent retailers in the state capitals and that takes time and talent to deliver. Midyear I named Jerry Griffin as MIRA Vice President of Governmental Affairs. Jerry is a Lansing veteran with 20 years of experience and was able to step right in and manage the work of our lobbyists and political action committees. Jerry also works with state regulatory agencies daily on behalf of our members. He's just really brought a lot of stability to that department.

I think we've also made a conscious effort to try to improve all the events that MIRA puts on to take each of them to the next level. MIRA's communications team has applied the same principle to the several publications we produce, and I think we've come a long way. We jumped into the deep end on social media, and we're pleased with how all our platforms are showing growth and our improved *MIRA Insider* newsletter is starting to get traction.

We also brought in veteran marketer Terry Packer to head up our marketing and business development efforts and promoted Kelli Petty to the newly created Director of Events and a Member Engagement position. Longtime MIRA employee Mary Ann Yono, the voice you hear first when you call our office, was promoted to Director of Business Relations. It's been a very successful first year.

**Q Speaking of the government affairs side of the business and the work Jerry Griffin is doing, what are some of the legislative issues that members should be paying attention to as we move into 2024?**

**A** In both Michigan and Ohio our members should closely watch what the states are going to do with tobacco because a lot of our retailers are heavily dependent on sales of these products. As states and local municipalities work to curb smoking, our retailers must stay abreast of changes that would affect their sales. I would also encourage our members in Michigan to keep track of what's happening with liquor delivery, as several bills that are in the pipeline could be troublesome and we want to make sure that our members are not blindsided. Also, as we move into 2024, you're going to see MIRA take a leadership position in tackling the decades-old bottle bill in Michigan and will continue to work with state agencies to advocate for improved discounts to our retailers on liquor and improve commissions on lottery sales.





**Q** You mentioned that you have enjoyed working with MIRA's Board of Directors. What are some of the goals that the Board has set for 2024?

**A** The Board has been great and under the leadership of chairman Bobby Hesano, the board is focused on making strategic investments to improve our business model, doubling down on branding the association and attracting new members.

The Board will conduct a strategic planning session in early 2024 that will focus on, among other topics, the potential of moving beyond our current membership base, which has been independent retailers in the food, beverage, and petroleum industries for years. Expanding membership to additional independent retailers in other industries could give us the ability to continue growth more sustainably with the ongoing contraction of our core industries. The Board is also committed to continuing to build out our endorsed business programs. While our government affairs and policy work remain the top reason retailers should join MIRA, the board wants members to see the value of their membership add to the profitability of



their companies. We are currently working on adding more business programs to help our members improve their bottom line.

**Q** One of the things that I noticed in the way that you manage MIRA, is that you collaborate, connect, and communicate with other organizations and have joined other associations. Can you speak about that, the value of networking and meeting other members within the industry?

**A** Other state and national associations are doing great work and we can learn from their work as they can learn from ours as well. I enjoy collaborating with other organizations on interests that we may share and have always been open to sharing best practices. We continue to build on a long relationship with NACS, the National Association of Convenience Stores, and have recently joined the Detroit Regional Chamber and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, to raise the profile of the association and build our network of business partners.

**Q** You come to the association with a unique background because you have both private and public sector backgrounds. You owned your own business; you worked in government. So, you can share different perspectives with the members from your experience. Share with us how your experience has helped in your position with MIRA.

**A** I feel like every position that I've held before being the President & CEO of MIRA has helped prepare me for this position. I fall back a lot on the organizational skills and operational and promotional skills that I learned as a mayor but also those small businessman skills that I learned as a business owner. I see a lot of our members are in similar situations that I experienced in business and I'm able to relate and offer help. I was always involved with the state and national associations in the industry that my business was in so I had some comfort level with associations, and I understood the value.

**Q** Name one thing that surprised you, Bill, about the position and the association.

**A** One thing that surprised me was the amount of time our government affairs department has spent on liquor issues, which of late, has been a Michigan-centric topic. We don't spend nearly the same amount of time on liquor issues in other states.

**Q** How would you like to see the members more engaged with MIRA moving forward?

**A** I have spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to get our members to utilize all the benefits that come with their membership. There are many great benefits beyond government affairs. We offer a ton of great rebate and discount programs and many times, just by participating in one or two programs the savings would more than cover your annual membership fee. We spend a lot of time trying to educate our members on participating in these programs because a lot of the time they are leaving money on the table. Members don't utilize our programs that save them money on health care, payroll, HR, and other backroom services as much as they should because they could remove so much of the frustration that they deal with and save them money! I also encourage our retailers to come to our events. At our events members can meet the suppliers and vendors that they depend on. Typically, a retailer may only interact with a salesperson or order taker,



ONE-ON-ONE continued on page 41

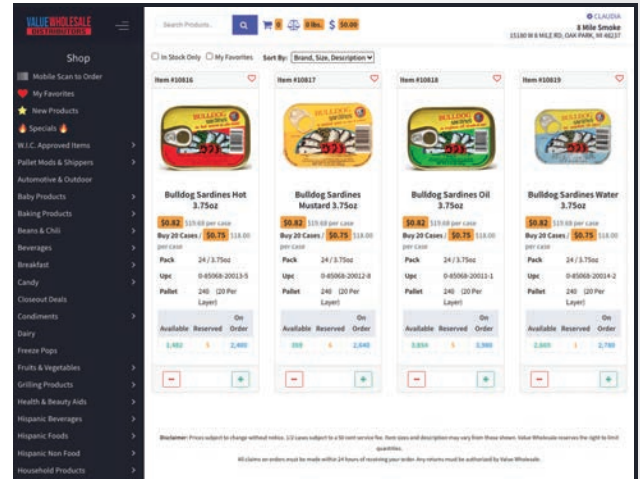
# VALUE WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS

WE SERVICE SUPERMARKETS, C-STORES,  
WHOLESALE, GAS STATIONS, MEAT MARKETS & MORE!

## ways to shop

- ✓ **Self Serve, Cash & Carry**  
Mon - Fri, 7am-4pm | Sat, 7am - 12pm
- ✓ **Order Online & Pick Up**  
Submit by 12pm & pick up the next day
- ✓ **Delivery Options**  
Call for details

## new site



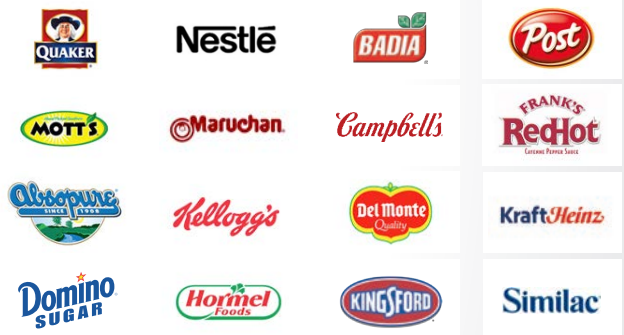
## order today



*scan code*

to sign up and  
view our  
items with prices

## featured brands



**save time  
by ordering  
online**



248-967-2900 | [www.valuwholesale.com](http://www.valuwholesale.com) | 15188 W 8 Mile Road | Oak Park MI 48237



at our events, they can meet and build personal relationships with the real decision-makers.

**Q** Bill, you touched upon your experience as mayor and your experience in the private and public sector, but what has helped you the most in your years of experience, both the public and private sector that you have been able to bring to the role as president, CEO of an association?

**A** Relationships for sure - the relationships that I made in both the business world and the political world have been and will continue to be an asset as we work to grow the association. MIRA is looked at as a leader in the industries of food, beverage, and petroleum in the retail sector, and has been for a long time. I'm working to make sure all the relationships that I brought to the table understand my role with MIRA, as well as the history of the association, the work we do, and the challenges we face. Relationships are crucial.

Those small business skills that I learned help me in the office as we make sure that we're being financially sound with our dues and making smart business decisions for the association and the foundation.

**Q** Any other exciting things that members can look forward to in 2024?

**A** February 3rd is going to be MIRA's 106th Annual Gala. It's a black-tie (suggested) event that's eagerly awaited every year. It'll be at the beautiful Shenandoah Country Club in West Bloomfield, Michigan. Our theme this year will be *Casino Royale*, and there will be dancing, lots of martinis and casino style games. We will be sending out invites to our members shortly and it will sell out fast.

MIRA members can look forward to a new fully interactive, membership-driven website that will come online in the first quarter of 2024. The new website will allow all our

members to do business with MIRA 24/7. The website will allow members to manage their membership, add or delete participation in programs and see the benefits of their membership with just a few quick clicks and order more liquor books!

We're going to continue to improve the *Bottom Line* magazine, but we're also going to continue to create programs that are going to allow our members to improve their bottom line.

Also, we're going to bring in some new events in 2024 that are going to be more membership-driven. We're going to add a fun afternoon at a Detroit Tigers baseball and we will be doing the same thing in Ohio at a Cleveland Guardians game.

Lastly, we will be adding some new events called MIRA Regional Roadshows. This will be an after-hours event. We're going to do the first one on March 20th in Cleveland. These events will be held in a local banquet hall or hotel, and members will be invited to attend, network, and learn more about all of MIRA's newest or most popular programs. These will be events where members can interact with MIRA staff and learn of new ways to improve their business efficiency and profitability. These events will also serve as membership drives and non-members will be encouraged to attend and join the association.

**Q** Tell us about the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation (MIRF) the scholarship programs and the foundation going forward.

**A** The MIRF Foundation was created as the philanthropic arm of the association. MIRF raises money every year for our annual College Scholarship Luncheon which is held at the Detroit Athletic Club (DAC) in Detroit. We award scholarships to students of MIRA members, their employees, and even their customers. It's a way that we can give back to the membership and community and show the value of continuing education. We also use this opportunity as a way that we can promote the food, beverage, and petroleum industry to the next generation.

MIRF also raises money for another very popular event, our annual Thanksgiving High



Five Turkey Drive which puts turkeys on the tables of families that need a little bit extra help at that time of the year, throughout Michigan and Ohio. It's something that we've been doing for years and it's something that we love to do.

We will be looking to expand the work of MIRF and our outreach efforts. We're already talking about doing a food drive to maybe help stock some of our local food pantries and we're always going to be looking to partner with other organizations that are doing philanthropic things because we believe in good partnerships that are beneficial to our mission.

**A** What else do you want to share with the readers?

**A** I want our members to know that we stand by our seven pillars of service; Business, Government Relations, Vendor Programs, Compliance, Networking, Community Outreach, and the MIRF Foundation, and work every day to bring value to our membership. ■



## MIRA CORNER

# Ringing in a New Look for *Bottom Line* this New Year

BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS: COACHING & CONSULTING

It is about being relevant, informative, and dynamic; just a few key reasons to revamp MIRA's popular bi-monthly magazine *Bottom Line*.

"*Bottom Line* was due for a refresh. It has been almost a decade since MIRA redesigned the magazine, and this planned update is part of a larger strategy to rebrand the association," said MIRA President & CEO Bill Wild.

The association has changed its publication design numerous times over its storied history; but has carried its current format, since 2013. "As times and consumer tastes change and the association evolves, so should its look. The new format will be easier on the eyes of the reader and will incorporate the look, feel and graphic design features of today's popular magazines" added Wild.



When the association was named "Associated Food Dealers of Greater Detroit" the magazine carried the moniker, *The Food Dealer*.

In 1990, when the association was named "Associated Food Dealers (AFD)" the magazine's name was changed to *The Food & Beverage Report*, and it was printed tabloid style on newsprint and went through three different design iterations.

In June 2006 when the association was named "Associated Food Dealers & Petroleum Dealers (AFPD)", the magazine was renamed *The Food & Petroleum Report* which was still a tabloid style with three design iterations with the last one going from newsprint to glossy paper: however, still a tabloid size paper.

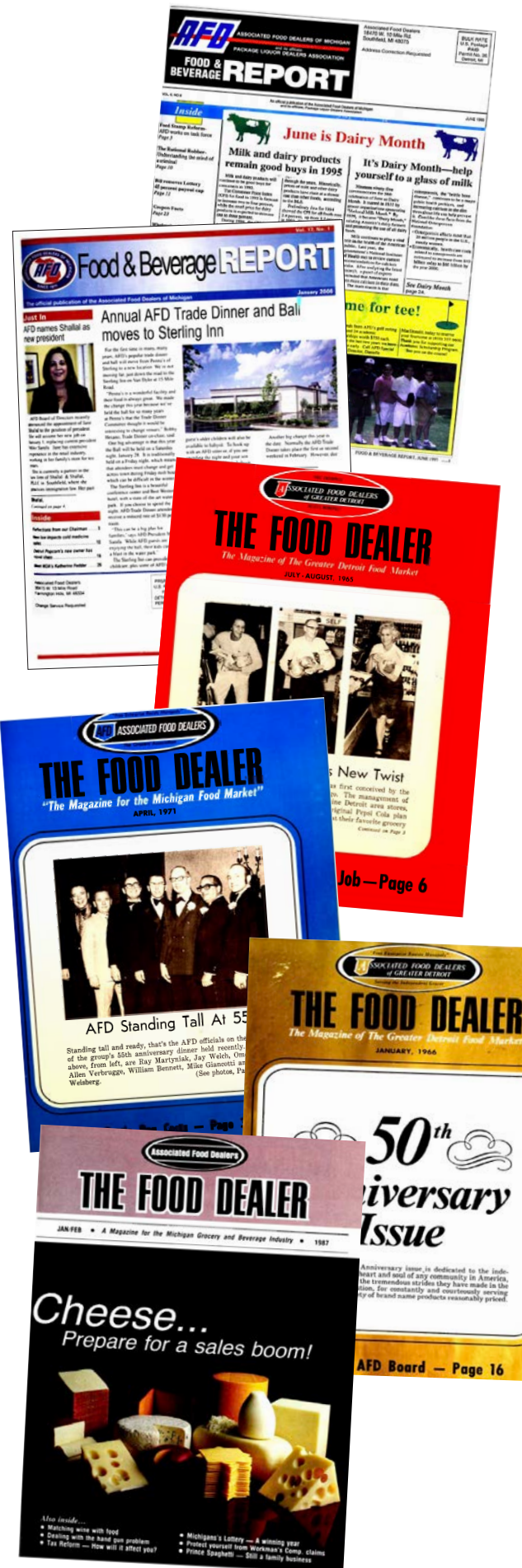
In April 2010 while the association was still named AFPD and even after the most recent name change to The Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA), the magazine was rebranded to *Bottom Line* and it became a glossy magazine once again.

MIRA uses its digital and print publications as a communication channel to its members. "With the new eye-catching design, we hope to grab the attention of our members, attract new advertisers, and increase our readership," said Wild.

Design plays a significant role in attracting advertisers and engaging readers. "Members can expect several new features and sections which will spotlight more of our members, an improved supplier member directory, and dedicated sections for the latest industry news, resources, and best practices," said Wild. "Also, readers should appreciate the addition of QR codes on several of the ads which will take them directly to the affiliated MIRA-endorsed program with just a few quick clicks."

Periodic revamping is essential for all magazines to adapt to changing times, cater to evolving audience preferences, and remain competitive in a media landscape that continues to evolve with technological advancements and shifts in consumer behavior. "MIRA prides itself on having our pulse on industry news and keeping our members up to date on trends within the marketplace and new opportunities to improve their own Bottom Lines said Wild. ■

*Bottom Line is the Official Publication of the Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA) and is published bi-monthly and mailed free to members, suppliers, vendors, legislators, industry leaders, and partner affiliations. To advertise or be added to the mailing list please contact [bwild@miramw.org](mailto:bwild@miramw.org).*



# What is Your Favorite MIRA Memory?

*Bottom Line asked the MIRA staff members for this special edition of "Ask the Member".*

The 2023 MIRA Chairman's Dinner was such an incredible event. Hosted by current MIRA Board of Governors Chairman Bobby Hesano, this event honored an impressive gathering of past MIRA Chairman and their families that was truly remarkable. For one evening, it was an honor to join our members in the presence of so many industry giants, that not only helped shape the food, beverage, and petroleum industries but also steered our association through decades of economic, political, and social changes within our nation. I look forward to making this an annual event as I believe it's important that we always remember where we came from as MIRA continues to grow and evolve into the promising future.

**- BILL WILD // MIRA PRESIDENT & CEO**

On my second day, a warm and humid July day, I spent the day loading and transporting vendor-donated products for the MIRA golf outing. It made me quickly realize I was not as young as I once was. Then, once the outing was completed, we loaded the unused products back on the truck to bring back to the office and arrived at a location to offload coolers just as the skies opened and a deluge of rain began to fall. I thought I might not make it to the second week, but then a silver lining – I bought a couple of raffle tickets for the prizes at the golf outing and won a MacBook Air... just when I was thinking I needed to replace my aged and worn-out laptop. My back has recovered, the MacBook works great and the memory of meeting so many of our members for the first time at such a great event made it all worth it!

**- JERRY GRIFFIN // MIRA VP OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**



One of the memories that stands out to me was at one of our annual Holiday Food and Beverage Shows. We had Isiah Thomas who was a former Detroit Piston and now has his own line of Champagne. It is called Cheurlin Champagne. A Catholic priest from France with the last name Cheurlin first began making the champagne that would become the heritage of his family. It has become one of the largest first presses of grape champagne in the world. So, the NBA hall-of-famer Isiah Thomas is now the owner. It was great to see the interaction with all our members and Isiah. It was probably one of the busiest shows we had since some of the other Piston Players came by. We also had Tommy Hearn (Hit Man Hearn) there as well. Tommy has won world titles in five weight divisions. He was at the White House in 1987. Everyone was taking pictures with him as well. This was an exciting event for MIRA.

**- MARY ANN YONO // MIRA DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS RELATIONS**

As the MIRA Marketing Director, getting to know our clients is priority number one. At the recent MIRA Holiday Food and Beverage show, I was able to meet a vendor who was trying to grow their business and get in front of more MIRA members. After a short discussion, I was able to introduce them to a handful of members during the event who were interested in learning more about their services. It's always great to bring our members together and see relationships grow into long-term partnerships! If I can help with your business, give me a call.

**- TERRY PACKER // MIRA DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

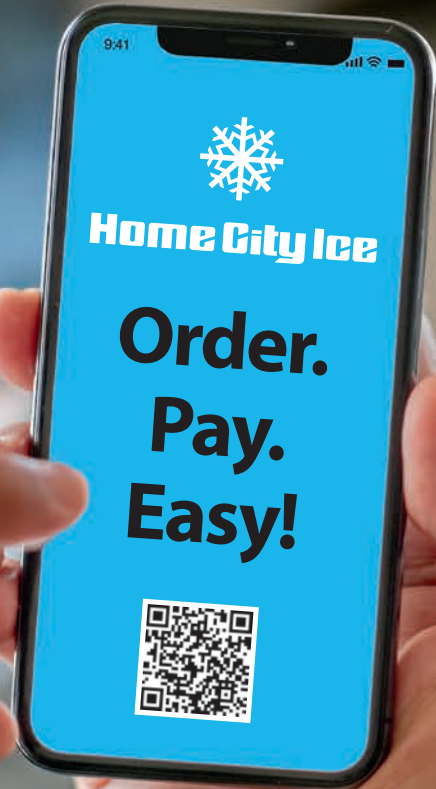
In the year 2006, the then Speaker of the Ohio House wanted to lower the state income tax, but he needed a revenue replacement, so he created the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) a value-added tax and he included gasoline. At the time, I was working for the Ohio Petroleum Council, and I argued that the Ohio Constitution states that any monies raised from taxing gasoline must be used for roads and bridges. The oil companies took the issue to the Ohio Supreme Court and almost seven years later, the court ruled that CAT could not be applied to gasoline.

MIRA's former president, Ed Weglarz, came up with a solution that I presented to a powerful state senator who agreed to carry a bill. The senator wanted the Ohio Grocers Association, the Ohio Convenience Store Association, the Ohio Petroleum Council, and the Ohio Petroleum Marketers and





**MIRA**  
Members get  
\$25 credit if you  
register on the APP  
that will double to  
\$50.00 if you  
proceed with on line  
payments.



# Manage your ice program from the palm of your hand.

Our customer app simplifies placing your order, takes  
the guess work out of receiving a delivery and is  
efficient and easy to use.

Download the app on your device today to:

- Place Ice Orders
- View Your Past Orders
- Check Your Order Status
- Make Your Payments



**Scan this code for more information  
and to register for online payments.**

For service needs please call 1-844-443-8423  
[customerservice@homecityice.com](mailto:customerservice@homecityice.com)

Convenience Store Association all informed of the bill. At the meeting where the bill was discussed, all these groups were against MIRA's proposal. The senator listened and then told them they had one week to come back with suggested changes, and he further stated that he was going to move the bill forward; the look on all the faces was priceless. A week later, the senator accepted a few small changes and moved the bill forward. The groups all had reasons why he shouldn't, but he said they were just trying to defeat the bill. After numerous hearings in both the House and Senate, the bill passed with very few changes from Ed's original proposal, it is now called Petroleum Activity Tax (PAT).

All these powerful groups went to the governor's office trying to get him to veto the bill. The governor's staff told the group he was going to sign the bill and one of them said is this for the guy who lives in Upper Arlington? Upper Arlington is where I live. The Governor's staff said it's because it's a good bill. So, Ed Weglarz and I took on one of the most powerful groups of people in Ohio and prevailed and boy, did that not only feel good but it saved MIRA members a lot of money.

**- TERRY FLEMING // OHIO LOBBYIST TC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES**

I remember having the opportunity to meet Jennifer Granholm when she was Michigan's governor at the MIRA annual gala in February 2004. I was quite young at the time, so meeting a local politician was rather exciting for me. The gala was "Casablanca" themed and Granholm was the keynote speaker. A group of swing dancers performed that evening and we all danced the night away.

**- TAMAR LUTZ // GRAPHIC DESIGNER, TAMAR DESIGNS, LLC**

My favorite memory as a lobbyist for MIRA took place in the wee hours of the Lame Duck session a few years back. Sometimes in the life of a lobbyist killing a bad bill can be as rewarding as advancing good legislation through the process. MIRA had been fighting legislation over a two-year period that would have altered the liquor code to put retailers at a disadvantage with certain discounts on liquor. The bill was sponsored by the Chairman of the House Regulatory Reform Committee, so there was a lot of power and influence behind the passage of this bill. The bill made it through the House of Representatives and narrowly out of the Senate Committee on Regulatory Reform. There was just one last hurdle for the bill to clear before it was sent to the Governor, a vote on the Senate floor. It was December 21st, the last day of the session. The bill had come out of committee a week earlier, so I spent every day at the capitol monitoring the session schedule for when the Senate would call a vote on this bill. For several days prior it was posted for a vote, so I worked furiously to get leadership to reconsider, which they did. When the 21st arrived, it was back on the list. Knowing this was the last day of the session, I knew it would be do or die for this bill. As the clock ticked away and the issues dwindled, so did the audience of lobbyists at the capital. At 2:33 a.m. there were only a few lobbyists left, including me and the opposing lobbyists on this bill. As we watched each other pull members off the floor to plead our case, one thing was imminently clear. Time was running out. The list of issues was down to only a few. Finally, I heard the word "Mr. President, I move that the Senate do now adjourn." It was over. The bill was dead. It was an incredible adrenaline rush.

**- MATTHEW D. MINER // MICHIGAN LOBBYIST CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CAPITOL STRATEGIES GROUP**

My favorite MIRA memory (which luckily reoccurs annually) is the MIRA Michigan golf outing. I attend a fair amount of golf outings every summer, and often they will have the beer cart come around to offer drinks, but never have I attended an outing where there is tasty liquor to sample at every tee box. It makes for an extra fun golf outing. I look forward to it every year.

**- BURT KASSAB // MIRA COUNSEL**



One of my favorite memories was when former Detroit Piston Isiah Thomas was scheduled to speak at the annual scholarship luncheon but there was a miscommunication. He thought he was there for a meet and greet and wasn't aware he was delivering a 40-minute keynote address. I happened to get to the luncheon early and was asked to start writing an outline for him. I met him in a room for about 30 minutes before the luncheon to go over a theme and talking points but after listening to him address the college students, I quickly realized he didn't need me at all. It was a slam dunk. It was a moving, inspiring, and thought-provoking talk and I was grateful to have heard it.

**- VANESSA DENHA GARMO // COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA WITH EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS: COACHING & CONSULTING**

My favorite MIRA memory would be the first Turkey Drive I attended at Motown Snack Foods in Detroit. It was my second foundation event and such a rewarding event and experience. It was also the first foundation event I organized by myself in my new role. I handled it from start to finish, making the phone calls to organizations that were getting free turkeys and products to organize the actual drive, the turkey pick-up day. There was so much gratitude and happiness. Making an impact on the families was a blessing and I loved experiencing it. People I didn't even know hugged me and thanked me. We handed out flowers donated by one of our members; just to see how happy a simple bouquet made people and the appreciation made me so happy. A lot of people struggle, and I feel blessed to be a part of the MIRA family that prioritizes giving back to the community.

**- KELLY PETTI // MIRA DIRECTOR OF EVENTS AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT**





..... SAVE THE DATE



# OHIO REGIONAL ROADSHOW

An exciting opportunity to learn more about MIRA's latest and most popular programs through networking and breakout sessions. If you want to MAXIMIZE your MIRA membership, get a jump on the competition, and learn how you can IMPROVE your bottom line, this is an event you won't want to miss.

**MARCH 20, 2024**

**LA CENTRE, CLEVELAND** .....



## Advertise in *Bottom Line!*

Receive MAXIMUM EXPOSURE for your business, product, or services by getting in front of the top retailers and decision makers in the food, beverage and petroleum industries throughout the Midwest.



*Cover story  
advertorial and  
magazine-wrap  
advertising  
available too!*

As the "official publication" of MIRA "The Voice of Independent Retailers", members look to the Bottom Line to help them grow their market share and outpace the competition. This popular bi-monthly magazine features members on every cover, the latest business and marketing trends, legislative issues impacting the industry, plus updates on MIRA activities, member benefits and new opportunities for success.

To learn more, contact Bill Wild, MIRA President & CEO at (248) 671-9600 or [bwild@miramw.org](mailto:bwild@miramw.org).

# MEMBERSHIP – NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2023

Welcome these new and recently renewed MIRA members!

20960 Gas Inc. ....	Rocky River, OH	Food Pride Super Market. ....	Detroit, MI	Main Street Pet Supply, LLC. ....	Livonia, MI	Seaway Gas & Petroleum. ....	Cleveland, OH
7-Tel Party Store. ....	Detroit, MI	Frank's Food Mart. ....	Pottersville, MI	Mangol Inc. ....	Independence, OH	Seaway Market Place. ....	Detroit, MI
A & L Market. ....	Detroit, MI	Frank's Marathon. ....	Columbus, OH	Manny's 2 Go. ....	East Lansing, MI	Sheena's Marketplace. ....	Bruce Twp., MI
AAN Gas Inc - Marathon. ....	Maple Heights, OH	Fresh Choice Marketplace. ....	Eastpointe, MI	Maple Island Grocery. ....	Twin Lake, MI	Shoppers Valley. ....	Farmington Hills, MI
Al's Auto Service. ....	Cleveland, OH	Frito Lay Inc. ....	Plymouth, MI	Marathon on the Square. ....	Cleveland, OH	Shoppers Valley Market. ....	Wyandotte, MI
Amori's Market Inc. ....	Madison Heights, MI	Fulton Beverage. ....	Cleveland, OH	Market Fresh. ....	Beverly Hills, MI	Sims Marathon. ....	Lancaster, OH
Amsterdam Country Corner. ....	Bergholz, OH	Gas Mart. ....	Euclid, OH	Market Square of Bloomfield, West Bloomfield, MI		Sinai Grace Hospital. ....	West Bloomfield, MI
Andy's Auto Wash. ....	North Olmsted, OH	Gas Way. ....	Bedford, OH	Marketplace Meats & Deli. ....	Waterford, MI	Singer Sunoco, Inc. ....	Caldwell, OH
Angelos Pizza Deli & Party Store. ....	Howell, MI	Gingrich Tire Center Inc. ....	Remus, MI	Marshall Shell. ....	Columbus, OH	Sleepy Hollow Market. ....	Brunswick, OH
Annie's Party Store. ....	Commerce Twp, MI	Glory SuperMarket. ....	Oak Park, MI	Martha's Quik Stop 21. ....	Flushing, MI	Smoke House. ....	Columbus Twp., MI
Ashton General Store. ....	Reed City, MI	Glory Supermarket Detroit. ....	Detroit, MI	Martinsburg Marathon. ....	Martinsburg, OH	Sockman's Automotive, Inc. ....	Bowling Green, OH
Automotive Technicians. ....	Reynoldsburg, OH	Gold Star Market. ....	Dearborn, MI	Mazen Foods. ....	Detroit, MI	South Side Market. ....	Bay City, MI
Babylon Fruit Market. ....	Sterling Heights, MI	Good Time Party Store Inc. ....	Northville, MI	Mega Bev - Portage. ....	Portage, MI	Spartan Foods #888. ....	Redford, MI
Barborton Mini Mart. ....	Barborton, OH	Grace Food Market. ....	Detroit, MI	Merrie's Market. ....	Central Lake, MI	SpartanNash. ....	Grand Rapids, MI
Be Bee2Food Center. ....	Detroit, MI	Grand Price Market. ....	Detroit, MI	Midway Markets. ....	Ostrander, OH	Spicer Automotive. ....	Solon, OH
Beck's Liquor. ....	Novi, MI	Gratiot Save-A-Lot. ....	Detroit, MI	Mini Mart Specialty Meats. ....	Detroit, MI	Stahl's Prime Meats & Deli. ....	Clinton Twp., MI
Beebe's Market. ....	Detroit, MI	Great Giant Supermarket. ....	Grand Rapids, MI	Mobil. ....	Strongsville, OH	Stan's Market. ....	Livonia, MI
Beechy's, Inc. ....	Winesburg, OH	Great Giant Supermarket. ....	Saginaw, MI	Mobil Crescent. ....	Waterford, MI	Star Market(Khalaf). ....	Cleveland, OH
Best Stop. ....	Twinsburg, OH	Great Giant Supermarket. ....	Flint, MI	Montego's Party Store. ....	Flint, MI	Steve DeYoung's Big Top Market. ....	Wyoming, MI
Better Made Snack Foods, Inc. ....	Detroit, MI	Great Giant Supermarket. ....	Lansing, MI	Mr. C's Deli & Pizza. ....	Clinton Township, MI	Steve's Country Market. ....	Harrison, MI
Blue Diamond Market. ....	Warren, MI	Great Lakes Coffee Beanery. ....	West Bloomfield, MI	New Quick Stop Market Inc. ....	Detroit, MI	Storer Food & Beverage. ....	Cleveland, OH
Bo's Village Peddler. ....	Millington, MI	Grumpy Grandpa's Get and Go. ....	Ashtabula, OH	New Wave Market. ....	Cleveland, OH	Stubb's Bar & Museum LLC. ....	Ontonagon, MI
Bombay Party Shoppe. ....	Madison Heights, MI	Hall Road Sunoco(J-One Liquor). ....	Utica, MI	Northfield Rd Sunoco. ....	Northfield, OH	Sugar Shack. ....	Gladwin, MI
BP Copley Rd Food Mart. ....	Akron, OH	Hansen Foods. ....	Hart, MI	Ohio Lottery Commission. ....	Cleveland, OH	Sunoco. ....	Euclid, OH
Brahamani Food LLC. ....	Cleveland, OH	Hartland Mobil Inc. ....	Fenton, MI	Orion Food Stop. ....	Lake Orion, MI	Sunrise Market. ....	AuGres, MI
Bridge Lake Market. ....	Clarkston, MI	Harvest Sherwood. ....	Detroit, MI	Pairs Food Store Inc. ....	Oak Park, MI	Super Fine Wine & Liquor. ....	Canton, MI
Broad & Hague Marathon. ....	Columbus, OH	Hatchery Market. ....	Waterford, MI	Pancho's Palace. ....	Detroit, MI	T.I. Spices, Inc./Amal Distributing. ....	Clinton Twp., MI
Broadway Foods. ....	Toledo, OH	Haylett's Save 4 Store. ....	Mantua, OH	Papa Joe's. ....	Beaumont Hospital, MI	Tailgaters Holt. ....	Holt, MI
Buscemis Market. ....	Livonia, MI	Hazim Market. ....	Flint, MI	Papa Joe's. ....	Rochester Hills, MI	Tailgaters LLC. ....	Lansing, MI
Campus Corner Inc. ....	Ann Arbor, MI	Heartland Marketplace. ....	Westland, MI	Papa Joe's. ....	Birmingham, MI	Taylor Ice Co. ....	Taylor, MI
Cantini's Village Market. ....	Rock Creek, OH	Heartland Marketplace. ....	Farmington Hills, MI	Papa Joe's. ....	Henry Ford Hospital, MI	Taylor Save-A-Lot. ....	Taylor, MI
Captain's Party Store. ....	Harrison Township, MI	Hickory Ridge Market. ....	Highland, MI	Papa Sam's Food & Liquor. ....	Detroit, MI	Tel Warren Convenience. ....	Dearborn Heights, MI
Carls of Perry, LLC. ....	Perry, MI	Holly Foods. ....	Holly, MI	Papaya Fruit & Grocery. ....	Dearborn, MI	The Woods Sunoco. ....	Canal Winchester, OH
CB Discount. ....	Bay City, MI	Hometown Convenience LLC. ....	Casnovia, MI	Papaya Supermarket. ....	Dearborn, MI	Tommy's Take Out. ....	Parma, OH
CBIZ Insurance. ....	Independence, OH	HomeTown Express. ....	Sand Lake, MI	Pardiac Shell/ Pardiac Group. ....	Howell, MI	Town Center Market 800. ....	Howard, OH
Cedar's Finest. ....	Cleveland, OH	Hutch's Food Center. ....	Spring Arbor, MI	Park Place Liquor. ....	Grosse Pointe, MI	Town Center Market 800 Drivethru. ....	Howard, OH
Center Square Oxford - Shell. ....	Oxford, MI	Industrial Park Party Store Inc. ....	Port Huron, MI	Park Place Wine Shop. ....	Southfield, MI	Trentwood Farm Market. ....	Woodhaven, MI
Cermak Produce #4. ....	Chicago, IL	J & S Liquor. ....	Detroit, MI	Parkway Foods. ....	Detroit, MI	U.S. Quality Food Center. ....	Detroit, MI
Clark Avenue Grocery. ....	Willoughby, OH	Jack's Service Center. ....	Grand Rapids, MI	Paul Schroyer Auto Service. ....	Toledo, OH	UHY Advisors - MI. ....	Farmington Hills, MI
Columbia Cook Sunoco. ....	Olmsted Falls, OH	Jay's Food Shoppe Inc. ....	Dearborn, MI	Perkins Deli. ....	Bedford Heights, OH	University Foods. ....	Detroit, MI
Commerce Wine & Liquor. ....	Commerce Twp, MI	Jerome Country Market. ....	Jerome, MI	Perrysville C-store. ....	Perrysville, OH	University Village Market. ....	Detroit, MI
Conner Save-A-Lot. ....	Detroit, MI	Jimmy's Liquor Store. ....	Dowagiac, MI	Pick N Pay Market. ....	Belleville, MI	Value Fresh Marketplace. ....	Warren, MI
Convenient Mart - Jaspreet, Inc. ....	Cleveland, OH	Joe's Produce. ....	Livonia, MI	Pine River Store. ....	Standish, MI	Van Dyke Liquor. ....	Bruce Twp., MI
Corner Market. ....	Lyndhurst, OH	John's Deli. ....	Bedford, OH	Platt Convenience Exxon. ....	Ann Arbor, MI	Village Fresh Market. ....	Carpentersville, IL
Crosswinds Fine Foods. ....	Royal Oak, MI	Jonna's Market. ....	Taylor, MI	Plum Hollow Market. ....	Southfield, MI	Village Market. ....	Elk Rapids, MI
Cypress Beverage & Deli. ....	Cleveland, OH	Jonna's Market #2. ....	Howell, MI	Primetime Liquor & Kitchen. ....	Pontiac, MI	Village Market. ....	Rapid City, MI
D-town Liquor. ....	Detroit, MI	Kaders Party Shoppe. ....	Bay City, MI	Quick Shop Mart. ....	Cleveland, OH	Vollick Bi-rite. ....	Sheffield, OH
D's Party Store. ....	Oakley, MI	Keg & Cask. ....	Madison Heights, MI	Railway Express. ....	Chillicothe, OH	Wagoner's. ....	Mattawan, MI
D&M Mart. ....	Elyria, OH	Kileys Market. ....	Fayetteville, OH	Raves Cooler Doors. ....	Highland, MI	Wally's Supermarket. ....	Marysville, MI
Dearborn Farm Market. ....	Dearborn, MI	King Liquor. ....	Essexville, MI	Red Wagon Shoppe. ....	Rochester Hills, MI	Walters Shopping Place. ....	Hamtramck, MI
Dearborn Fresh Supermarket. ....	Dearborn, MI	Kinsman Gulf. ....	Kinsman, OH	Ric's Food Center. ....	Ithaca, MI	Warner Food Market. ....	Cleveland, OH
Dearborn Fresh Supermarket, Dearborn Heights, MI		La Fiesta Supermarket. ....	Detroit, MI	Ric's Food Center. ....	Rockford, MI	Warren Wood Market. ....	Warren, MI
Dearborn Sausage Co. East Side. ....	Roseville, MI	Lahser Convenience Inc. ....	Southfield, MI	Ric's Food Center. ....	Mt. Pleasant, MI	Wayne Med Market. ....	Westland, MI
Dearborn Sausage Co. Retail Store. ....	Dearborn, MI	Lakeside Party Store. ....	Jackson, OH	Rich's Mini Mart, LLC. ....	Parma, OH	Webberville Party Store. ....	Webberville, MI
Detour Drive Thru LTD. ....	Windham, OH	Lakeside Plaza, LLC. ....	London, OH	Rite Shop Food Mart. ....	Cleveland, OH	West Pointe Party Shoppe. ....	Adrian, MI
Display Max. ....	Howell, MI	Lakeview Food Basket. ....	Clarkston, MI	Rittman Beverage. ....	Rittman, OH	Westborn Fruit Market Inc. ....	Livonia, MI
Dons Foodland. ....	Birch Run, MI	Lakeview Market. ....	White Lake, MI	Rushville Marathon. ....	Rushville, OH	Westland Food Store. ....	Westland, MI
Dream Market 3. ....	Sterling Heights, MI	Larry's Foodland. ....	Livonia, MI	Saad Trading, Inc. ....	Dearborn, MI	Whitehall Custom Car Wash. ....	Whitehall, OH
Duck Lake Mobil. ....	Highland, MI	Levan Wine Shoppe. ....	Livonia, MI	Saline Village Party Store. ....	Saline, MI	Whitehall Shell. ....	Columbus, OH
Eastland Shell. ....	Columbus, OH	Liberati's Italian Deli& Bakery. ....	Allen Park, MI	Sans Souci Market LLC. ....	Harsens Island, MI	Wilson Mills Marathon. ....	Highland Heights, OH
Elbels General Store. ....	Falmouth, MI	Little Bear. ....	Circleville, OH	Saturn Marketplace. ....	Dearborn Heights, MI	Wine & Liquor Depot. ....	Johnstown, OH
Ecorse Market. ....	Romulus, MI	Lost Nation Convenient. ....	Willoughby, OH	Saturn Super Foods. ....	Detroit, MI	Wine Basket Market. ....	Highland, MI
Elgin Fresh Market. ....	Elgin, IL	Lubana Inc DBA Lakeshore Liquor. ....	Muskegon, MI	Save-a-Lot Houston Whittier. ....	Detroit, MI	Wine Palace Inc. ....	Livonia, MI
Emily's Delicatessen. ....	St Clair Shores, MI	Lucas Auto Center. ....	Lakewood, OH	Save-On Market. ....	Lansing, MI	Wolverine Packing Company. ....	Detroit, MI
Exxon Gas. ....	Parma Heights, OH	Lucky's Quick Stop. ....	Cleveland, OH	Savon Foods Super Store. ....	Detroit, MI	World Mart Dollar Plus. ....	Detroit, MI
Family Fair Food Center. ....	Detroit, MI	Mac's Market Inc. ....	Newberry, MI	Sawyer Garden Center. ....	Sawyer, MI	Yorktown Service Plaza. ....	Parma Heights, OH
Family Foods Market. ....	Harper Woods, MI	Main & High Shortstop. ....	Frankfort, OH	Schmidty's Convenience Store. ....	Nashport, OH	Zackary Inc. ....	Cleveland, OH
Family Foods Super Store. ....	Detroit, MI	Main Party Store. ....	Ann Arbor, MI				





## MIRA GIVES BACK

*The Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation, established in 1999, provides college scholarships and promotes education for the families of MIRA members and staff. The Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation also participates in industry research and other projects related to the food, beverage, and petroleum retail industries.*

### ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation is known for its scholarship program, which is designed to reinforce the importance of education among its member companies and future generations. MIRA believes its support for educational growth will continue to strengthen the voice for independent food, beverage, and petroleum retailers in the Midwest.

Every year, a committee of educators evaluates applicants according to academic merit, participation in extracurricular activities, and community involvement. Over the years, the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation has distributed more than \$1 million in scholarship funds to the employees and family members of MIRA member businesses, their customers, and financially disadvantaged young adults.

For more information on eligibility criteria, visit [www.MIRAmw.org/foundation/scholarship-application](http://www.MIRAmw.org/foundation/scholarship-application).

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We encourage MIRA members to volunteer their time and resources to sponsor Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation programs as an extension of your involvement in our community. We are grateful for the donations made by MIRA members and friends. You can help with financial contributions, fundraising activities, and volunteering in any of the Foundation's education, charitable, and humanitarian projects.

MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS FOUNDATION  
EIN# 38-3457246 is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions to the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation are voluntary and tax deductible.

To make a contribution, please send to:  
Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation  
5779 West Maple Road, West Bloomfield, MI 48322.  
T: (248) 671-9600 • F: (866) 601-9610 • [www.MIRAmw.org](http://www.MIRAmw.org)



## Support the PAC to Advance MIRA'S Legislative Efforts

MIRA's Political Action Committees (PACs) are the voice of independent retailers in the political process in Michigan, Ohio and Illinois. Could you imagine opening up the newspaper and reading about how you, as a Michigan business owner, would no longer have to accept empty bottles and cans in your store? Or could you imagine if 40 years ago, the industry found out they are going to have to begin accepting these filthy items from their customers? What if instead of fuel retailers in Ohio reading about how they saved up to 94% on their Commercial Activity Tax bill, they read about their tax bill going up 94%?

These examples of government having an effect on your business could very much be a reality and are examples of an infinite number of possibilities. Government effects your business and bottom line more than you know. How do we protect ourselves from detrimental policies that cost us money, time and headaches? How do we promote positive reforms that could save us money, time and headaches? The answer is: We contribute to the MIRA PAC.

The MIRA PAC allows the association to financially support candidates that understand our industry and how different policies affect us. The MIRA PAC is our voice in Lansing, Columbus, and Springfield. We need your help in building our PAC. Please consider donating to the MIRA PAC today. Any amount helps. We face a lot of competing interests and need to show our strength. Think of a MIRA PAC contribution as an insurance payment. Government is much more likely to affect your business than a natural disaster or freak accident. Similar to property insurance, the MIRA PAC can help protect your business and bottom line.

*For more information on contributing to the MIRA PAC, please call the office at (248) 671-9600.*

# MEMBERSHIP

Please Support These MIRA Business Partners



Logo indicates an exclusive membership program that has been endorsed by MIRA!

- Supplier only available in MI
- Supplier only available in OH
- Supplier only available in IL

## BAKED GOODS DISTRIBUTORS

Kordas' Metropolitan Baking Co.  
(313) 875-7246

## BANKING SERVICES/ATM

Huntington Bank  
(810) 869-5074

Payment Gurus/ATM Machine  
(248) 755-1474

## BEER DISTRIBUTORS

Eastown Distributors  
(313) 867-6900

## BOOKKEEPING/ACCOUNTING CPA

UHY Advisors-MI  
(248) 355-1040

## BUSINESS & MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS/ PUBLIC RELATIONS/STREAMING

Citadel FM  
(647) 802-1852

Comcast Business  
(734) 277-9731

Tamar Designs, LLC  
(248) 760-7211

## C-STORE & TOBACCO DISTRIBUTORS

S. Abraham & Sons, Inc.  
(616) 453-6358

Team Sledd  
1-800-333-0374

Capital Sales Company  
(248) 542-4400

CC Mevape Reload LLC  
(214) 680-4102

H.T. Hackney-Grand Rapids  
1-800-874-5550

Seaway Cash-N-Carry  
(216) 361-5757

## C-STORE MISC. TAXABLE MERCHANDISE

Novelty, Inc  
1-800-968-7249

Lasting Impressions Promotions Inc.  
(734) 641-2800

Pure Mitt LLC  
(231) 330-2554

## CHECK CASHING

Check Casher Money Machine  
1-800-333-0374

Pre Paid Ventures  
(516) 455-2940

Secure Check Cashing, Inc.  
(248) 548-3020

## CHIPS, NUTS, CANDY & SNACKS

Lipari Foods, Inc.  
(586) 447-3500

Better Made Snack Foods  
(313) 925-4774

D&B Grocers Wholesale  
(734) 513-1715

Eden Snacks  
(248) 670-1766

Frito-Lay, Inc.  
1-800-359-5914

Motown Snack Foods  
(313) 931-3205

## COFFEE DISTRIBUTOR

New England Coffee  
(207) 252-0164

## COMPLIANCE TRAINING

Underground Storage Tank  
1-800-666-6233

## COUPON REDEMPTION/MONEY TRANSFER/BILL PAYMENT

MIRA Coupon Redemption  
1-800-666-6233 or (405) 525-9419

## CREDIT CARD PROCESSING

MIRA Credit Card Processing  
1-800-666-6233

Card Network  
(248) 546-6772

National Merchant Solutions  
1-888-864-3480

## CURBSIDE & DELIVERY

Mobile Food Menu  
(816) 305-6356

## DELI & MEAT MANUFACTURERS & DISTRIBUTORS

Lipari Foods, Inc.  
(586) 447-3500

Harvest Sherwood  
(313) 659-7300

Kowalski Sausage Co.  
(313) 873-8200

Wolverine Packing Company  
(313) 259-7500

## ENERGY, LIGHTING & UTILITIES

Running Right  
(248) 884-1704

DTE Energy  
1-800-477-4747

DTE Your Energy Savings  
1-855-234-7335

## ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

BLDI Environmental Engineers  
(734) 838-0008

Phoenix Environmental  
(734) 449-1266

## FOOD EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY & KIOSKS

Taylor Freezer/Broaster Chicken  
(734) 525-2535

## GAS STATION BRANDING & MAINTENANCE

OWL Services **M I**  
(248) 620-0070

BLDI Environmental Engineers  
(734)-838-0008

## GASOLINE WHOLESALE

CFX Management  
(937) 938-5156

Markham Oil Company, Inc.  
(517) 861-7366

Teer Management LLC  
(810) 584-7975

## GREETING CARDS

Leanin' Tree  
1-800-556-7819 ext. 4183

## GROCERY WHOLESALE & DISTRIBUTORS

T.I. Spices, Inc./Amal Distributing  
(586) 790-7100

D&B Grocers Wholesale  
(734) 513-1715

Denha Group Distribution  
(586) 464-7615

P&L Food Wholesalers  
(734) 451-2760

SpartanNash  
(616) 878-2248

UNFI West Region  
(262) 942-3387

Value Wholesale Distributors  
(248) 967-2900

## HOTELS, CONVENTION CENTERS & BANQUET HALLS

Suburban Collection Showplace  
(248) 348-5600

## ICE CREAM SUPPLIERS

Prairie Farms Ice Cream Program **M**  
1-800-399-6970 ext. 200

Velvet Ice Cream Co.  
(740) 892-3921

Blue Bunny Ice Cream  
(616) 453-6358

## ICE PRODUCTS

Arctic Glacier Premium Ice  
1-800-327-2920

Home City Ice  
1-844-443-8423

Taylor Ice Co.  
(313) 295-8576

## INSURANCE SERVICES: COMMERCIAL

CBIZ Insurance  
(216) 525-7163

Conifer Insurance Company  
(248) 559-0840 (Liquor Liability)

Canopy  
(313) 662-3522

Insurance Advisors, Inc.  
(248) 694-9006

## INSURANCE SERVICES: HEALTH & LIFE

BCBS of Michigan **M**  
(313) 448-2756

Blue Care Network  
(248) 799-6300

Ascension Michigan Foundation  
(313) 268-1642


Business Benefits Resource, LLC  
(248) 482-8282



## INSURANCE SERVICES: WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Conifer Insurance Company  
(248) 559-0840



Sedgwick   
1-800-837-3200 ext. 7188



## JANITORIAL PRODUCTS/CLEANING CHEMICALS

Detroit Chemical & Paper Supply  
(586) 558-8805



## LEGAL SERVICES

Cummings, McClorey, Davis & Acho, PLC  
(734) 261-2400

John J. Doyle, Attorney  
(517) 204-7721

Kassab Law Group, PC  
(248) 538-2200

Michigan Tax Appeal Service  
(248) 392-4342

## LIQUOR SHELF TAGS

Saxon, Inc.   
(248) 398-2000



## LOTTERY

All-Star Gaming  
(855) 772-4646

Michigan Lottery  
(517) 335-5648

Ohio Lottery  
1-800-589-6446

## MILK, DAIRY & CHEESE PRODUCTS

Borden Dairy   
(855) 226-7336



Lipari Foods, Inc.  
(586) 447-3500



Prairie Farms Dairy Co.   
(248) 399-6300



Harvest Sherwood  
(313) 659-7300

## MONEY ORDERS

Retailers Express Money Orders  
1-800-666-6233



## OFFICE SUPPLIES & PRODUCTS

Office Depot  
(855) 337-6811



## PAYROLL SERVICES

ConnectPay Payroll Services  
(248) 594-6900



## PET SUPPLIES MISC.

Cost Less, Inc.  
(810) 715-4500



## PIZZA SUPPLIERS

Omni Food Concepts    
1-888-367-7829



Hunt Brothers Pizza  
(615) 259-2629

## POINT OF SALE & RETAIL TECHNOLOGY

Great Lakes Data (LOC Software)  
(248) 356-4100 ext. 107



Petrosoft LLC  
(412) 306-0640




Success Systems/Smokin' Rebates  
1-800-653-3345



BMC-Business Machines Company  
(517) 485-1732

## PRINTING, PUBLISHING & SIGNAGE

Saxon, Inc.   
(248) 398-2000



Ahearn Signs, Inc.  
(734) 699-3777

Lasting Impressions  
(734) 641-2800

Pace Custom Printing  
(248) 563-7702

## PRODUCE DISTRIBUTORS

Anthony Marano Company  
(773) 321-7500

## PROPANE

Tank Traders Midwest  
(877) 429-5797



Planet Propane  
(248) 647-0000

## REAL ESTATE

Sell Your Business Program  
1-800-666-6233



Global Petro Advisors LLC / Elevate Next Home  
(614) 332-8762

## REFRIGERATION SOLUTIONS (COMMERCIAL)

American Refrigeration Manufacturer  
(248) 747-2045



Raves Cooler Doors  
(248) 887-0648

## RETAIL FIXTURES, DISPLAYS & FLOORING

Display Max  
(810) 494-0400



## RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

All American Restaurant Equipment  
(313) 368-5331

## REVERSE VENDING MACHINES & SERVICE

UBCR, LLC  
(248) 529-2605

## ROOFING: COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL

Technique Roofing Systems  
1-800-653-1631


## SECURITY, SURVEILLANCE & MORE

DensityUSA  
(314) 798-8747



Clearview  
(855) 903-7233

## SODA POP, WATER, JUICES & OTHER BEVERAGES

Faygo Beverages, Inc.   
(313) 925-1600



Reyes Coca-Cola  
Metro Detroit  (313) 868-2008  
Belleville  (734) 397-2700  
Flint  (810) 237-4000  
Cleveland  (216) 690-2653



Garden Food Distributors  
(313) 584-2800

Monster Energy Company  
(800) 426-7367

Pepsi Beverages  
Detroit 1-800-368-9945  
Howell 1-800-878-8239  
Pontiac (248) 334-3512  
Cleveland (216) 252-7377  
Twinsburg (330) 963-5300

## TREE & ARBORIST SERVICES

Horton's Tree Service  
(734) 422-1634

## TOBACCO ALTERNATIVES

JUUL Labs  
(810) 632-9900

Swisher International  
(904) 635-9477

## TOBACCO COMPANIES & PRODUCTS

Altria Client Services  
(513) 831-5510

PMI Global Services Inc.  
(810) 923-9732

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company  
(336) 741-0727

## UNIFORMS, LINENS & SUPPLIES

UniFirst Corporation  
(888) 256-5255 ext. 232



Socks Galore Wholesale  
(248) 545-7625

## WASTE/GARBAGE DISPOSAL

Priority Waste  
(586) 228-1200



## WEB DEVELOPMENT

KreativMedia  
(748) 721-9919

## WINE & SPIRITS COMPANIES

Benchmark Beverage Co.  
(734) 744-6132

Borg Vodka Water  
(614) 345-8074

Cornerstone Wine Distributor  
(586) 839-2552

Dos Toros LLC  
(419) 576-4500

Hard Truth Distilling Co.  
(812) 720-4840

Luxco  
(313) 333-4637

Proximo Spirits  
(810) 278-0599

Tito's Handmade Vodka  
(248) 885-3424

## WINE & SPIRITS DISTRIBUTORS

Great Lakes Wine & Spirits  
1-888-860-3805

RNDC of Michigan  
1-888-697-6424

# EVENTS

## 2024

### 106TH ANNUAL GALA

FEBRUARY 3, 2024

**SHENANDOAH COUNTRY CLUB, WEST BLOOMFIELD, MI**

Enjoy an exciting evening of fine dining, networking, dancing and casino games with the industries movers and shakers, influential politicians, local celebrities and sports figures. Dress to impress, black tie recommended. *Sponsorship opportunities available.*

### OHIO REGIONAL ROADSHOW

MARCH 20, 2024

**LA CENTRE, CLEVELAND, OH**

An exciting networking opportunity to learn more about MIRA's latest and most popular programs. If you want to MAXIMIZE your MIRA membership, get a jump on the competition, and learn how you can IMPROVE your bottom line, this is an event you won't want to miss. *Sponsorship opportunities available.*

### MICHIGAN PAC FUND FUNDRAISER

APRIL 5, 2024

**LITTLE CAESARS ARENA, DETROIT, MI**

Enjoy an exciting hockey game vs the New York Rangers and join other MIRA members and staff for pregame networking. The event is open to all ages and funds from this event supports MIRA's legislative efforts. *Sponsorship opportunities available.*



### ANNUAL CHAIRMAN'S DINNER

MAY 9, 2024

**SHENANDOAH COUNTRY CLUB, WEST BLOOMFIELD, MI**

An elegant evening of friendship, camaraderie and live entertainment while we recognize and honor MIRA's past chairmen. An opportunity to network and reconnect with your colleagues in the food, beverage and petroleum industries. This event is open to all MIRA members. *Sponsorship opportunities available.*

### MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS FOUNDATION'S 16TH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

JUNE 18, 2024

**DETROIT ATHLETIC CLUB, DETROIT, MI**

Every year, the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation awards academic scholarships to extraordinary and deserving students in Michigan, Ohio and Illinois. Help the MIR Foundation invest in the leaders of tomorrow. *Sponsorship opportunities available.*



**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF ALL MIRA EVENTS VISIT [WWW.MIRAMW.ORG](http://WWW.MIRAMW.ORG).**



### PUBLISHERS STATEMENT

MIRA Bottom Line (USPS #2331; ISSN 0894-3567) is published by Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA), at 5779 West Maple Road, West Bloomfield, MI 48322. Materials contained within MIRA Bottom Line may not be reproduced without permission from MIRA.

We want to share your stories and industry news. Email us news about your businesses, projects, marketing successes and whatever else you have in the works that others in the industry would find newsworthy. If you are on social media, follow MIRA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Also, please share with us your ideas, concerns, and questions that we can follow up on.

#### CONTACT:

T: (248) 671-7600

F: (866) 601-9610

E: [info@MIRAmw.org](mailto:info@MIRAmw.org)

Periodicals postage prices paid at Pontiac, MI and additional mailing offices.

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of MIRA, its board of directors, staff members, or consultants. Bylined articles reflect the opinions of the writer.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MIRA Bottom Line, 5779 West Maple Road, West Bloomfield, MI 48322.

*MIRA works closely with these associations:*

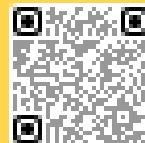




— REBATES —  
Available in KY, MD, OH, PA, VA & WV

**MIRA MEMBER EXCLUSIVE**

SCAN FOR MIRA  
MEMBER EXCLUSIVE  
PROGRAM DETAILS:



# INNOVATORS -- NOT -- IMITATORS

**Take Advantage Of MIRA'S Group Buying Power  
With The Region's Top Retail Convenience Distributor**



Special **MIRA**  
Program Available

**Team Sledd**  
CONVENIENCE DISTRIBUTOR

Your **Retail** Partner!

[www.TeamSledd.com](http://www.TeamSledd.com)



On time. Every time.  
All the time.

## Details:

**New & current customers are eligible for the following rebates:**

- 1% Non-Tobacco/Non-Cigarette
- Additional 2% on Energy Supplements (Total of 3%)
- Additional 2% on Foodservice products (Total of 3%)
- Additional 3% on Supplies (Total of 4%)

## Requirements:

Customer must purchase the following categories:

- Cigarettes
- OTP
- Energy Supplements
- Supplies
- Coffee (If offered by retail operator)

Customer needs to average \$3,500 in total weekly purchases

Customer needs to purchase 12 out of the 13 weeks per quarter

Customer must maintain good credit standing & 7 day EFT

## • TOTAL VALUE TO YOU •

**\$1,350**

Estimated Rebate\*  
(Annual Total Paid Quarterly)

**\$2,000**

Est. MIRA Member  
Program Savings

**\$3,350**

**Total Member Benefits  
PER LOCATION**

\* Based on \$1,000 non-tobacco purchases weekly

For more information on Team Sledd, call the office at **800.333.0374**  
or E-mail Sheila Reilly at [SReilly@TeamSledd.com](mailto:SReilly@TeamSledd.com)



SCAN FOR MIRA  
MEMBER EXCLUSIVE  
PROGRAM DETAILS:

