

BottomLine



THE VOICE OF INDEPENDENT RETAILERS // VOL. 28, NO. 12 // DECEMBER 2017

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Niche is the Key
to Success for
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THE VOICE OF INDEPENDENT RETAILERS
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features



AFPD EVENT RECAP // ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HIGH FIVE TURKEY DRIVE FOR AFDP

AFPD, in partnership with several independent retailers and suppliers, distributed thousands of turkeys to local families



WHAT DOES TAX REFORM MEAN TO INDEPENDENT RETAILERS?

Large national chains and small independent retailers alike serve not only the American people but the U.S. economy. Although the food industry plays an integral role in the country, many industry experts believe they are at a disadvantage because of the U.S. Tax Code.



COVER STORY // CHOOSING A NICHE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS FOR INDEPENDENT RETAILERS

As changes continue to occur throughout the food and beverage industry, independent retailers are finding that in today's climate finding a niche is imperative to the livelihood of their businesses. Opting to specialize is proving to be efficient and effective.



chairman's message

PHIL KASSA // AFPD CHAIRMAN

End of the year

As the year comes to an end I always seem to ask myself where did the time go? As a third-generation grocer, Spartan store, I'm reminded of growing up in the stores watching my dad and uncle at work. Those are comforting thoughts when times seem tough, but they always made the most of it and so should we.

People all over talk about more competition and the shrinking bottom line and it seems like the doomsday prediction which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. For instance, this November I was really worried about our numbers, but we turned it up a notch and when the dust settled, we did better than last year. So many people, myself included, worry too much about things outside our control, but it does take more discipline to focus on what is in front of us and block out all the noise. You read the news or watch TV and it is all about Amazon this and Whole Foods that and watch out for Aldi and delivery here, etc. At the end of the day, we need to go back to basics and the KISS principle (Keep It Simple Stupid). Customer service, quality, variety, and defining and sustaining your own niche and then price. As independents, it is very hard, if not impossible, to win on price constantly.

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I have so many things to be thankful for, especially thankful for being a new grandfather, for my family, for my health, for businesses, my employees, and my customers. I am also very thankful that during my first year as AFPD Chairman, we were able to accomplish my number one priority for my term, and that is making sure we signed our President, Auday Arabo to another five-year contract as AFPD President & CEO. What Auday and his team have done at AFPD over the past seven to eight years is nothing less than remarkable. We have people who would never consider becoming an AFPD member, who now sing our praises. The work Auday and his staff do on a day in and day out basis makes me dizzy. They are running four companies under the AFPD umbrella and their expansion is amazing.

I know a number of people have approached Auday to consider partnering with them to run their companies, but I can honestly tell you this is not my dad's AFPD. My family had been a member of AFD for years, and when I served on the board I was always asking myself is this worth my time. Since Auday has come in, I can candidly say he has changed how I look at AFPD and how many retailers and suppliers view AFPD and it has been extremely positive. This is not because he puckers up to suppliers, but he legitimately challenges them in order to create WIN-WIN programs and possibilities for our members. In addition to his positive attitude, he is a tireless worker, advocate who does not shy away from the spotlight, but does not seek it.

Right now, Auday is probably wondering why I am writing all this stuff about him, well it's because I agree with fellow board member Bobby Hesano in that he, along with AFPD, does not do a good job of touting their own horn. So, this one time, I will do it for him! We are thankful for our President, Auday Arabo, his staff and the AFPD Board of Governors who unanimously voted to lock up Auday for another five years. My father always told me, people lie, but numbers do not and AFPD numbers have been speaking loud and clear since this man took over some seven years ago.

On a final note, we want to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Happy New Year! ■

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Chiefs Cooked to Raise Money for Local Kids

AFPD partnered with The Youth Connection for the 5th Annual Chiefs Cooking for Kids event

Some of Metro-Detroit's finest top brass cooked for kids last month. The AFPD Foundation teamed up with The Youth Connection for their 5th Annual Chiefs Cooking for Kids Event. Dearborn Chief Ron Haddad defended his title and once again was crowned Chief Chef at the event for his ability to raise the most money. He baked his famous Carrot Cake which was his mother's recipe that he tweaked. "I am involved in Cooking for Kids because I believe in the Youth Connection and the partnerships here. I believe we mentor our kids and make them healthy adults. I could not be prouder of the efforts and the involvement of the police and fire chiefs. There are no real losers because the kids win tonight."

Chief Haddad was neck and neck with Chief Anthony Holt from Wayne State University all night who made Black Jack BBQ chicken. He plans to be number one next year, but was still happy to participate. "I am a big supporter of anything for the youth and this even touches me because a lot of these kids end up at Wayne State," he said. "I think that youth seeing the support of law enforcement is important."

THE COMPLETE LIST OF WINNERS INCLUDE:

- Chief Ron Haddad, Dearborn Police Department – **CHIEF CHEF**
- Chief Mike Evans, Detroit Metropolitan Fire Department – **CHEF'S CHOICE**
- Chief Curtis Caid, Livonia Police Department – **BEST APPETIZER**
- Chief Anthony Holt, Wayne State University Police Department – **BEST ENTRÉE**
- Assistant Chief James White, Detroit Police Department – **BEST DESSERT**

The Youth Connection shares the same goals with the AFPD Foundation and the partnership seemed like a natural one. "I am really excited about the event. We have more than 60 Chief partnerships,"

said Grenae Dudley, Ph.D., President and CEO of the Youth Connection. "It has been an amazing opportunity for The Youth Connection and the AFPD Foundation to support our kids. Our programs and their scholarship programs align very well, and it makes sense to partner on this annual event."

Metropolitan Detroit Chiefs of Police, Fire and other public safety agencies donned chef aprons and hats last month at the Max Fisher Music Theater in Detroit. The Chiefs Cook-off competition supports area youth.

"This event is a perfect fit for the foundation and the work we do with the scholarship program," said Auday Arabo, Chairman of the AFPD Foundation. "We were so happy to name a college scholarship after the winning Chef, which was once again Chief Haddad. We will give the scholarship out at our June event in 2018."

Dave Heavener from the Livonia Fire Department was one of the chefs. "It is all about supporting family and children to give them opportunities that they would not normally have.

He made a Firehouse Queso Dip as an appetizer. "It has enough heat that entices people to want more, but not too much to scare them away."

Many corporations sponsored the event including Faygo. "I think that one of things the AFPD Foundation has done over the last 5 to 10 years is sponsor unique projects, and what they do this is important," said Orlando Hodges, Vice President of Direct Store Delivery for Faygo Beverage. "I love this event. This venue is beautiful. The food is awesome."

His recipe may not have been a winner, but Captain David Daniels from the Macomb County Sheriff's department made a hummus with goat cheese that was a big hit.

"It is very important to be part of this outreach," he said. "We support our borders – all of us from Macomb, Oakland and Wayne. I am happy to be part of this, to have been invited and to support our youth." ■





Another Successful High Five Turkey Drive for AFPD

AFPD, in partnership with several independent retailers and suppliers, distributed thousands of turkeys to local families

■ BY ASHOURINA SLEWO // DENHA MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

Several major corporations and local businesses showed up November 14th at Motown Snack Foods to aid in the distribution of thousands of turkeys.

These turkeys will go to families in need throughout Metro Detroit this holiday season as a part of AFPD's Annual High Five Turkey Drive.

Each year AFPD pledges to distribute at least 6,000 turkeys to families throughout Michigan, Ohio and Illinois, that are selected on a need basis. This year was no different as AFPD was able to distribute thousands of turkeys in Michigan and several hundred turkeys in both Ohio and Illinois.

"The best part of the program is that 100% of the money each store raises goes to purchasing turkeys for their charity of choice," said Auday Arabo, AFPD President and CEO. "We are always looking for new ways to raise funds because it is such an important program. Thanksgiving is a time to reflect, give thanks and help others."

AFPD retailers work to raise money each year to contribute to the Turkey Drive through the Paper

Turkey Hands Program. The Paper Turkey Hands Program started in September and ended in mid-November, just in time to distribute the turkeys a week prior to Thanksgiving.

Since 1980, AFPD has been able to give out more than 85,000 turkeys to families during the holiday season who might have not otherwise been able to enjoy the tradition. "AFPD's Turkey Drive is the largest turkey distribution in the State of Michigan," said Arabo. "We are always striving to break our own record."

In addition to the hard efforts made by hundreds of AFPD retailers, the annual Turkey Drive was sponsored by Faygo Beverages, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Lipari Foods, DTE Energy, Pepsi, Coke, 7-Up, Sherwood, Value Wholesale, D&B Grocers Wholesale and Distributors, as well as Hereen Brothers Produce.

"DTE is very involved in the community and out to help their customers any way we can," said Sharon Lux in Public Affairs. "This is such a worthwhile organization and this even helps so many people during the holiday and we just want to be a part of it."

The efforts and generosity of AFPD retailers and sponsors is what allows for the annual Turkey Drive to continue in its success. "Many retailers and other local businesses have given generously to this program," said Arabo. "This is one way our local independent retailers work together with the community to provide needy families with a holiday meal."





“One of the first things we make as a priority is a social mission,” said Cathy Brock, Senior Account Manager with BCBSM. “This AFPD Turkey drive enables many people from our sales team to volunteer and we appreciate the opportunity to take this morning and give back.”

“This is very important on two fronts,” said Sam Alshawish, Business Development Manager for the mid-American region for Frito-Lay. “Partnering with AFPD is a pleasure for us. They have been in the community for so long and it is an honor to work with them. We are, also, elated to be part of this event during the time of charitable giving. So many families are unable to put a Turkey dinner on their tables and we are happy to be part of making that happen.”

This year, more than 60 non-profits throughout Metro- Detroit received turkeys.

“With a church and community center in the heart of Detroit, and as a congregation that supplies food to the surrounding communities twice a month, we know and see first-hand how working families and the working poor struggles to make ends meet and often go hungry,” said Rev. Horace L. Sheffield, III, Pastor New Destiny Christian Fellowship. “To be able to, every year through the donations of AFPD, coupled with our purchases of additional turkeys and food baskets to go with them, we are able to bring some relief to this need and some joy in a season that should be characterized by the same”

Organizations like the Arab American and Chaldean Council (ACC), who have received turkeys previously, look to AFPD’s Annual Turkey Drive especially during the holidays. “ACC has participated in giving for years,” said Nabby Yono, Vice President of Community Relations. “And, the best time of the year is Thanksgiving because everyone is in giving the mood and need in our community and the community at large. This is year especially important because we opened a new food pantry on 7 mile and John R. AFPD has been a tremendous partner as we connect to the local communities.”

AFPD has been giving turkeys to St. Fabian Catholic School and Church in Farmington



Hills, as well. “This Turkey Drive is important to remember that not everyone has the means for a good meal on Thanksgiving or any other day,” Nancy Pawlukiewicz with religious formation at St. Fabian. “These turkeys help in St. Fabian’s efforts to feed as many as these families as we can. We are called to take care of our brothers and sisters and our parish and school are always so generous in this regard.”

Since 1980, AFPD has been able to give out more than 85,000 turkeys to families during the holiday season, making it one of the largest turkey drives in the country. ■





petroleum news & views

EDWARD WEGLARZ // AFPD DIRECTOR, PETROLEUM

Training Can Save You Money and Customers

In addition to all the other hats you wear, employee training needs to be on your list. Furthermore, you can't neglect your own personal training obligations.

There are more inspections being conducted than ever before. Alcohol, tobacco, food safety, and underground storage tank inspectors are going to visit your business. It's not IF, but rather WHEN they will visit! Having your employees trained can be an affirmative defense if you receive a violation notice, but usually only if the train was completed before the violation.

I'm sure you use a plan to train your new employees addressing such issues as safety and customer service. Updating your present employees regarding changes in your operation deserve attention also.

One of the eight (8) "Pillars of Service" provided by AFPD is "Compliance". The members of AFPD, proud of their profession, want to be responsible members of their community, and comply with all the rules and regulations that apply to their business.

We want you to know that AFPD offers training in many different areas:

UST TRAINING

Underground Storage Tank (UST) Class "A" & "B" Certification training in Michigan and Ohio is offered by AFPD. The UST inspectors in both states are beginning to "close the noose" on non-compliant UST owner/operators. If you are a Class "A" or "B" certified owner/operator you can train your Class "C" employees. But, you need to be a Class "A" and "B" or have hired a company to perform those quarterly inspections.

TIPS TRAINING

AFPD offers TiPS training for both ON-Premises and OFF-Premises alcohol licensees. Responsible selling of alcohol is taught in each of the On and Off Premises

classes, with emphasis on the appropriate responses to challenging situations by the clerk or server in the retail establishment. A section on checking ID's is also taught. TiPS training can help prevent you from getting a violation notice for selling to "underage" or "over-served" customers.

FOOD SAFETY TRAINING

ServSafe "food safety" training is also made available through AFPD. As more and more retail businesses expand their food service offerings, food safety and compliance becomes an addressable issue. You don't want your customer to get sick from food purchased at your store, and you surely don't want to get a notice of violation that pinpoints your store as a food safety scofflaw. That kind of reputation is hard to reverse. Consider signing up managers and employees for a food safety course. AFPD offers Food Safety Managers courses (16 hours); and, Food Handlers safety training (4 hours) which provides basic knowledge addressing food safety for employees.

GHS TRAINING

A newly designed package of regulations that is being enforced by OSHA is called the "Globally Harmonized System of Labelling" which applies to chemicals produced, packaged, sold, or used by any business. Labelling of chemicals is being standardized worldwide, and you and your employees need to be informed and trained regarding the interpretation of these revised symbols and language.

Classes are conducted at our West Bloomfield, Michigan headquarters training facility. In addition, we will come to you to do the training if you gather together 10 or more people to be trained! In those cases we can be very flexible on the days and times for the training. Ten (10) business days' notice is required when registering for any of these classes, and pre-payment is required.

Always feel free to call Ed Weglarz at (800) 666-6233 at AFPD to discuss your training needs, requirements and regulations. ■





What Does Tax Reform Mean to Independent Retailers?



Large national chains and small independent retailers alike serve not only the American people but the U.S. economy. Although the food industry plays an integral role in the country, many industry experts believe they are at a disadvantage because of the U.S. Tax Code.

According to data from the Food Marketing Institute, the food retail industry pays more than \$153 billion in total federal and state taxes each year. The question becomes: does the industry need tax reform?

“I don’t know if the industry itself needs tax reform, since there are many provisions in the Internal Revenue Code that have an affect on food and beverage retailers,” said Patrick Gregory from UHY Advisors. “One of the issues that causes complexity with the code

is identifying provisions, which are specific to industry, such as the food and beverage retailers.”

Perhaps the word reform is not the correct lingo. “If I can use the word enhancement to the tax code that would help the industry, it would be certain specific depreciation law changes and also provisions that affect the increasing cost of wages. Also, health insurance benefits that could be used as credits to effectively reduce the cost in these two or three areas to benefit the retailers,” said Gregory.

In November, the House Ways and Means Committee released their long-awaited tax reform proposal. The current seven individual tax brackets condensed into four, along with doubling of the standard deductions, the corporate tax rate dropped from

35% to 20% with a new small business tax rate for pass through entities capped at 25%. What does this mean to the convenience retail industry?

“There has been a lot of discussion around rate structure, however the devil is always in the detail,” said Gregory. “While it is proposed a change to the number of brackets, for example the lowest bracket which now begins at 10% would increase to 12%, there are a number of deductions that would be eliminated or reduced substantially affecting many members of AFPD.”

He continued to explain that even though the top bracket of 39.6% isn’t proposed to start until income is more than \$1 million, there are a number of calculations as result of the interaction with the brackets and elimination or limitation of deductions that may cause certain taxpayers to actually pay more and tax than they do currently. The 25% proposed tax rate on flow-through entities has a number of restrictions and limitations which will give some relief, but maybe not as much as some might think when interacted with the other tax brackets.

There are a number of proposed provisions in the house bill which would have huge beneficial consequences to the industry. “For example, the immediate expensing of the cost of certain capital expenditures which would have the effect of reducing overall income and



thereby reducing taxes,” said Gregory. “Also in the proposal is the benefit of allowing taxpayers with less than \$25 million in revenue to be on a cash basis rather than an accrual basis and also eliminate the requirement for the booking of inventory, which overall create huge benefits within the industry.”

Consequently, it is provisions similar to these which are contained in the proposal that have benefit within the industry that haven't been discussed much in public, because of the complex nature of putting these kinds of changes into the press.

Food retailers employ more than 4.8 million workers and produce more than \$363 billion in direct economic activity to their local economies. They pay nearly \$168 billion in wages to their associates. In a quote in the Washington Examiner, Leslie G. Sarasin, President and CEO of the Food Marketing Institute said, “the \$153 billion tax burden makes it exceedingly difficult for food retailers to hire new employees, raise wages for current workers, and meet the demands of the changing consumer and new marketplace. For each person food retailers employ, they pay nearly \$32,000 in taxes.”

Abro & Company, CPA localized the tax issue narrowing down on a few issues that affect primarily Michigan and possibly other Midwest states. Consumers are paying sales taxes on top of the excise taxes and the other profits that the state charges.

“The food and beverage industry are heavily taxed in terms of products sold,” said Abro. “The tobacco tax is \$2 on top of the wholesale price in the state of Michigan, for example”

The tax on all the tobacco even with the ‘roll your own’ on top of wholesale costs drives up the costs, which negatively affects inventory costs for owners. “It is dead money sitting in the store” said Abro. “Instead of investing it in an IRA, 401K or back in the business, the costs are taxes sitting in the store.”

Liquor also has a high tax as a regulated product in Michigan. It is a controlled state where the government controls all sales. Products can be subject to ad valorem mark-up as well as excise taxes. Michigan is ranked the 9th highest state in the U.S. in terms of the amount of wholesale/excise taxes collected on spirits—this is before the sales tax. When you add that fact, it's like a tax on top of a tax. “Ohio is regulated as well and liquor stores are run by state,” said Abro. “Each state has its own tax laws.”

Liquor and tobacco are heavily taxed while there is a much lower tax on beer. “The tax really hurts the owner who wants to offer a variety of products and just can't invest that much money,” said Abro. “Some have a line of credit and pay a high interest on it. The competition is huge and the profit margins are small.”

There are both state and federal tax challenges for the food and beverage industry. “Both create

a hinderance and stores on the verge cannot compete, because they cannot carry variety. It's grass roots and ground up issue. Just think about the fact that half cost of cigarettes is the tax,” said Abro.

A tax reform or enhancement could affect AFPD members.

“When you start to get into ‘carveouts’ that affect or benefit a certain group of businesses, there becomes pushback within the political system, as then other industries begin to look for items that can benefit only them,” said Gregory. “I think the way to go about changes, enhancements, or reform is to look at items that cannot only benefit the food and beverage retailer, but at the same time have the benefit to the broader group of small business. In doing something like this, it benefits AFPD members, and also benefits other industries, but by doing this, it increases the chances for the changes which would benefit the numbers.”

The food and beverage industry face many cost challenges that deter success. “While it's not in the realm of tax provisions, one of the things that bothers me tremendously of some of the changes affecting the industry over the last 40 some years I've been in practice is the increased and increasing regulatory requirements which are extremely burdensome to the industry,” said Gregory. “These would include certain packaging, labeling and similar regulatory items that create hidden costs to the retailer in addition to the tax consequences of the income.” ■



michigan food safety report

KEVIN BESEY // MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Food Establishments Play a Key Role in Preventing the Spread of Hepatitis A in Michigan

Public health officials and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) continue to see an elevated number of hepatitis A (HAV) cases in our state, and we need your help to stop the spread and prevent additional illnesses or possible outbreaks in your food establishment. Since the beginning of the outbreak in August 2016, public health response has included increased healthcare awareness efforts, public notification and education, and outreach with vaccination clinics for high-risk populations. No common sources of food, beverages, or drugs have been identified as a potential source of infection.

HAV is highly contagious and usually transmitted when infected persons do not wash their hands properly after going to the bathroom and then touch other objects or food items, or having close contact with other people. Those with history of injection and non-injection drug use, homelessness or transient housing, and incarceration are thought to be at greater risk in this outbreak setting. Notably, this outbreak has had a high hospitalization rate of around 85% of confirmed cases.

People infected with HAV are most contagious from two weeks before onset of symptoms to one week afterward. Symptoms usually start within 28 days of exposure to the virus with a range of 15-50 days. These symptoms can include jaundice (yellowing skin and whites of eyes), fever, diarrhea, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, stomach pain, dark-colored urine and pale or clay colored stool. Not everyone who is infected will have all the symptoms.

In response to the outbreak, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has provided guidance documents to all licensed food and dairy facilities in Michigan, including a poster with important information for employees. These were distributed by mail and electronically when email addresses were available. MDARD food inspectors and local health department sanitarians are also distributing printed materials to their licensees and providing additional resources as requested.

Food establishment managers and employees can play a big role in preventing HAV transmission in their facilities. The primary

concerns with HAV infections in food workers are not only the risk of contaminating food and transmitting the virus to customers/consumers, but also spreading the virus to other food workers in the establishment. Food workers who are exposed to ill co-workers during the infectious stage of HAV are at significantly increased risk of contracting the virus.

Here are a few steps every food establishment should take:

ENCOURAGE VACCINATION

HAV is a vaccine preventable disease. If your employees have private health insurance coverage, encourage them to see their doctor or pharmacist and get vaccinated. If your food establishment is located within the outbreak area, free or low-cost vaccination options may be available through your local health department.

A LITTLE PREVENTION GOES A LONG WAY

Follow safe food handling guidelines, including thorough, frequent handwashing. Wear gloves when handling food, and clean and sanitize often with an approved sanitizing solution. Focus on areas that are frequently handled or touched, including kitchen surfaces, ice machines, door knobs and light switch plates. In general, cleaning and sanitizing methods effective against norovirus will also be effective against HAV. For guidance on cleaning and sanitizing following an HAV outbreak or to use to prevent an outbreak in your food establishment, visit www.michigan.gov/foodsafety.

EDUCATE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Talk with your employees about the current HAV outbreak and make sure they know the symptoms. Emphasize the importance of good hygiene, especially hand washing. Hang the poster provided by MDARD in a place where your employees can easily read it. Remind your employees to stay home if they are sick and to immediately report to you if they (or a household member or a close personal contact) have symptoms or have been diagnosed with HAV.

REPORT HAV IN YOUR ESTABLISHMENT

If you find out about an infected food worker or have a worker with HAV symptoms, immediately notify your local health department and ask what to do next. Send the worker home immediately and ask your regulatory authority (MDARD or your local health department) for guidance on when the employee can return to work. Implement an immediate cleaning and sanitation regimen for your entire facility.

With your assistance, we can stop the spread of hepatitis A and help keep your employees and customers healthy. For more information on hepatitis A, including information about the current outbreak area and copies of guidance documents, visit www.michigan.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak. ■



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michigan lottery report

ARIC NESBITT // MICHIGAN LOTTERY COMMISSIONER

Preliminary Results Show Record 2017 Fiscal Year for Michigan Lottery; Retailers Receive Record Commissions

The preliminary results for the Lottery's 2017 fiscal year bring very good news for retailers, the Lottery, and most importantly, public education in Michigan.

Preliminary numbers show that Lottery sales broke the \$3 billion mark for the second straight year. This impressive record is the result of teamwork between the Lottery and its 11,000 retailers across the state. The 2017 figures show a record \$3.3 billion in Lottery sales, topping the previous record set in 2016 by about

\$200 million. Retailers also enjoyed a record year in 2017, with commissions hitting a record \$248.4 million, up more than 7% from the previous record of \$231.8 million set last year.

The Lottery's instant game portfolio once again was a major part of this success. Instant games remain a favorite for the most loyal Lottery players, as well as casual players and make up nearly 40% of overall sales. The Lottery's team puts a great deal of focus and effort into developing instant games that will attract players to retailers and boost sales. The Lottery's marketing team developed a number of advertising campaigns to support new instant games, helping to raise awareness of our games and boost sales for retailers. That work paid off in a big way in 2017, with total sales of instant games surpassing \$1 billion for the third straight year. Instant game sales increased an impressive 16% over 2016 to \$1.3 billion.

The hard work of retailers and the Lottery also led to a record contribution to the state's School Aid Fund. Preliminary figures indicate the Lottery's contribution to the School Aid Fund will total about \$920 million, marking 11 straight years of \$700 million-plus contributions to support public education from the Lottery. Since it began in 1972, the Lottery has provided more than \$21 billion to support public education in our state.

The record results in 2017 wouldn't have happened without each retailer's hard work and commitment to the Lottery's mission. We're excited about the opportunities that 2018 presents, and look forward to working with retailers to break even more records!

About 97 cents of every dollar spent on Lottery tickets benefits the state in the form of contributions to the state School Aid Fund, prizes to players and commissions to retailers and vendors. In 2016, the Lottery provided a record \$888.9 million to help support Michigan's public schools. Since it began in 1972, the Lottery has contributed more than \$20.5 billion to support public education. For additional information, follow the Michigan Lottery on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and online at www.michiganlottery.com. ■

INSTANT TICKETS // PULL TAB TICKETS

NEW INSTANT TICKETS:

On sale December 5th:

- IG 219–Bonus Cashword–\$3
- IG 220–White Ice 7's–\$5
- IG 245–25th Anniversary Wild Time–\$5
- IG 233–Diamond Dazzler–\$20

INSTANT GAMES SET TO EXPIRE:

Expiring December 4th:

- IG 738–Wild Time–\$2
- IG 751–Super Bingo–\$5
- IG 749–\$300 Grand Cashword–\$5
- IG 777–Ice Cold Cash–\$5
- IG 722–Mega Money Multiplier–\$20

Expiring January 8th:

- IG 737–Fantastic 5's–\$5

NEW PULL TAB TICKETS:

On sale December 5th:

- MI 516–Buck Buster–\$50
- MI 517–Polar Dough!–\$1
- MI 514–Triple Diamonds–\$2

PULL TABS SET TO EXPIRE:

Expiring December 12th:

- IT 863 – Pure Gold – \$1
- MI 566 – Pac-Man – \$1
- MI 567 – Double Cherry Slots – \$.50
- MI 568 – Gold Bar Bonanza – \$2
- MI 582 – All American Winners – \$1

Expiring January 16th:

- MI 575–Pinball–\$1
- Expiring January 17th:
- MI 564–Ultra 8's Multiplier–\$1

TICKET ACTIVATION: Retailers are reminded to activate all game tickets before putting them on sale to ensure winning tickets may be redeemed by players.

Great GO-TO GIFTS



THE HOLIDAY GIFT THAT HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Fun to give and great to get, it's easy to see why customers make Michigan Lottery holiday instants their go-to gift. Everyone likes the chance to win up to \$500,000, with more than \$61.8 million in total cash prizes.

There's plenty for you, too, with more than \$6.6 million in retailer commissions. So, stock up on the holiday gift that offers big winnings, big sales and is everyone's go-to: holiday instant tickets.



ohio liquor report

JIM V. CANEPA // OHIO DIVISION OF LIQUOR CONTROL

Agency Optimization Initiative

It's no secret that I've been looking at new and innovative ways to run the Liquor Enterprise since I've become Superintendent. You've heard my messages across many platforms about the many changes on how we do business. Recently, we kicked off the Agency Optimization Initiative, which is yet another piece of the innovation puzzle.

As you may know, six Agencies were strategically chosen across the state by the Spirits Innovation Project (SIP) team, a partnership between the Division of Liquor Control, spirits brokers/suppliers and Ohio's Contract Liquor Agencies, to test out marketing and category management techniques,

“Not only do we want to enhance the customer experience, we also want to drive sales.”

with the goal of improving customer experience and increasing sales. These six Agencies are representative of the different store layouts, sizes and locations, allowing the SIP team to analyze what works in different Agencies.

The initiative runs three months, October – December, and after that time, the SIP team will review all the data including Agency and customer feedback to determine future efforts. We will take what works and implement it in more Agencies, and then look at retooling what didn't work as well.

I tell you this for several reasons. First, this is an important initiative to me and my team. We want to keep Ohio's Liquor Enterprise in the forefront of the spirits industry, and not allow it to become stagnant.

I've said many times that we want to enhance the

customer experience, and by testing these methods, I think we're continuing to improve this process. Part of this project is working to demystify the shopping experience for customers. We're doing this by creating an overall look in the Agencies that is clean and consistent, while also adding informational shelf blades letting customers know about the styles of the product to help guide purchases.

Not only do we want to enhance the customer experience, we also want to drive sales. This initiative has economic roots, and we want to see how these changes affect sales. As we evaluate this program to determine future efforts, liquor sales will also be considered.

Products were placed by category, flavor or even region the spirit was produced. Slow moving inventory was replaced with those best sellers based off of demographics and sales data in each area.

We're also testing special sections which include Ohio-made products or seasonal recipes with all the ingredients in one area and creating shelf tags for new or sale items that will be the same in all stores. Each of these techniques was methodically chosen by the SIP team based on market research. We are excited to see how they test in Ohio.

Our hope is that doing all of this improves Contract Liquor Agencies all across the state. Which brings me to my second reason for talking about Agency Optimization. I want this to be an important initiative for you as well. At the end of the day, we know Agencies have a business to run and profit drives that business. So, increasing sales seems like a no-brainer. But to do that we also want Agencies to buy into enhancing the customer experience. Happy, informed customers are more likely to be repeat customers.

I hope you are as excited to see the results from this test run as I am. We will be sharing this information with you once the evaluation process is complete. It will take hard-work to make these necessary improvements across the state, but I believe we will be better off once we do. Finally, I would like to thank the six Agencies for their willingness to have their stores rearranged and revamped. We couldn't test these methods without you. ■

— REBATES —



AFPD MEMBER EXCLUSIVE

Members with questions call the AFPD office at 1-800-666-6233

DISTRIBUTOR PROGRAM

Eby-Brown

Delivering Solutions Daily

Take advantage of AFPD's group purchasing power!

DETAILS:

- **New Eby-Brown customers** will be eligible for 2% non-tobacco rebate if they agree to the distribution plant/AFPD pricing schedule.
- **Current Eby-Brown customers** will be eligible for 2% non-tobacco rebate only if they agree to the distribution plant/AFPD pricing schedule.
- **All AFPD customers** will be eligible for the Chain Buying Book.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Customers need to maintain good credit standing
- Must purchase weekly averaging \$3,500 in total purchases.
- Must be serviced by MI, OH or PA Eby-Brown distribution plants to qualify.

This program provides a customized marketing plan and competitive retail pricing that is sure to help you increase sales and build a better bottom line.

TOTAL VALUE TO YOU:

\$1,040	2% Rebate* (annual total paid quarterly)
\$850	Chain Buying Book average savings
\$2,500	Est. AFPD member program savings

\$4,390	Total Member Benefits <u>PER LOCATION</u>
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*Based on \$1,000 non-tobacco purchases weekly

TO SIGN UP FOR THIS PROGRAM, CALL THE AFPD OFFICE AT (800) 666-6233 OR EMAIL INFO@AFPDONLINE.ORG



ohio lobbyist report

TERRY FLEMING // TC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES

Wrapping up 2017

The Ohio General Assembly has been on a two-week vacation over the Thanksgiving Holiday and received nothing but bad news. We last reported that Republican Senator Cliff Hite resigned over sexual harassment issues. Since then House Member Wes Goodman has resigned for having improper relations in his statehouse office and for not reporting previous issues of sexual harassment. Two Cleveland area female members were exposed for job harassment of aides and the Chief of Staff of Senate Democrats resigned for harassment charges as well. New charges may yet be coming and investigations are being done by several news organizations.

HB307

HB307, declaring the Month of September to be “We Card” month, in perpetuity, passed out of committee and is likely to be passed by full House sometime in December.

HB384 & SB194

If some of the AFPD members in the retail service station industry also provide towing service, bills HB384 & SB194, had recent hearings. These bills

would require only one certified mailing on vehicles valued at \$3,500 or less as opposed to current law requiring three mailings over a 60-day period. This bill, if passed, could save owners thousands of dollars.

OHIO'S GOVERNOR RACE

While legislative and regulatory activity has been quiet, the race to be Ohio's next Governor has intensified. On the Republican side, Congressman Jim Rennaci blasted Attorney General Mike DeWine's plan to sue Pharmaceutical Companies over the opioid problem; Rennaci said this would not solve the problem, but take years to resolve with attorneys being the only winners. A Conservative 527 PAC group established by supporters of Secretary of State Jon Husted also blasted Summit County Republican Party for not following the rules of the party in endorsing statewide candidates, this is a veiled reference to Mike DeWine seeking to get large county endorsements, but in a surprise move, one day after the statement on endorsement process, Secretary of State Jon Husted announced he would be leaving the race for Governor to run as Lt. Governor with Attorney General Mike DeWine. Meanwhile, Lt. Governor Mary Taylor is speaking all over Ohio in seeking a broad range of support for her run to be first Woman elected Governor in Ohio.

AFPD Ohio wants to wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! ■



HAPPY *Holidays*



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illinois lobbyist report

STEPHEN S. MORRILL // MORRILL & ASSOCIATES, PC

Pop Tax Repeal Effective December 2017 / 2018 State Legislative Session Begins January

COOK COUNTY UPDATE: COUNTY APPROVES 2018 BUDGET WITHOUT POP TAX REVENUES

At its October 12th board hearing, the Cook County Board voted 15-1 to repeal its Cook County Sugary Beverage Tax (or “pop tax”). The repeal takes effect on Friday, December 1 – the county fiscal year runs from December 1st to November 30th. Also at the October 12th hearing, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle warned that the commissioners must now work to replace the estimated \$200 million in revenue from the sugary beverage tax in the 2018 county budget. On November 21st, the Cook County Board unanimously approved its 2018 budget that included the full \$200 million in spending reductions – including 321 layoffs and a commitment to eliminate more than 1,000 vacant positions.

The outpouring of strong opposition to the pop tax – and its successful defeat – has ushered in a new, heightened scrutiny by taxpayers regarding the need for tax increases by governmental bodies throughout the Chicagoland area, and reflects an erosion of trust by voters in incumbent elected officials. This dynamic, and the continuing backlash to the pop tax, has produced an increased number of challengers filing to run against incumbent Cook County Commissioners and Cook County President Preckwinkle. The Illinois primary election is scheduled for March 20, 2018.

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: 2017 VETO SESSION CONCLUDES, BUT UNCERTAINTY REMAINS

The Illinois Legislature just concluded its 2017 veto session in early November. Consideration of legislation to prohibit local governments from imposing “pop taxes” has been delayed until the 2018 spring legislative



session, which will begin on January 23rd.

Increasing state revenues will again be a major legislative issue in Illinois. In its most recent revenue estimates, the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget (“GOMB”) stated that the recently enacted Illinois budget – with its income tax increase – will produce a deficit of between \$1.2 billion and \$1.7 billion. The primary cause of the deficit, according to GOMB, is the legislature’s oversight in including additional costs incurred by the Governor’s office due to a series of legislative mandates authorizing the issuance of \$6 billion in new bonded debt to pay down a portion of the \$16 billion in unpaid state bills. The continued financial uncertainty surrounding Illinois’ budget could indicate yet another legislative stalemate in Illinois (the prior stalemate lasted two years).

The Illinois General Assembly will receive an indication of how Governor Rauner plans to address the budget shortfall when he delivers his annual Budget Address on February 14, 2018. At least one 2017 budget proposal initiated by the Governor’s office included a statewide “pop tax.” AFPD and others were successful in removing the language in 2017, and will continue to work against such proposals in 2018. ■



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THE VOICE OF INDEPENDENT RETAILERS
AFPD MEMBER EXCLUSIVE



Choosing a **Niche** is the **Key to Success** for Independent Retailers

■ BY ASHOURINA SLEWO // DENHA MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

As changes continue to occur throughout the food and beverage industry, independent retailers are finding that in today's climate finding a niche is imperative to the livelihood of their businesses. Opting to specialize is proving to be efficient and effective.

This has proven true for Westborn Market as they continue to hone in on supplying the best produce and flowers in their market. "Our core business is providing fresh specialty food products," said Bryan Bandyk, CEO of Westborn Market. "Our area of specialization within our industry is providing the very best produce and flowers within the markets we serve."

While the mission of many business owners is to please the customer, and furnish all that they need, Bandyk states that attempting to be a master of everything is not always the best route. Instead, business owners should find their niche and stick with it.

"I think it is important for any business to have a niche," Bandyk said. "It's what your brand and business is built on. It allows you to say as a business, 'this is what we are great at'."

Finding a specialty is on par with having a signature. A niche helps define a retailer, even if other stores are operating similarly, there are still variations. As it is unique, many customers will come to associate the product or service specifically with one business or the other. This signature service or product will set one business apart from another.

"It's virtually impossible to be everything to everyone," said Bandyk. "A business owner needs to have the ability

to say this is what I know, this is what we are good at and this is how we are going to bring it to market. Without a clear vision, as far as who you are, you confuse your staff and your potential customers.”

Having a specialized market allows for a business to focus their efforts on one area as opposed to all. While providing good products and customer service in all areas is important, having one area of expertise can be beneficial to a business.

“Niche or what we like to refer to as “Our Hook” is beneficial to a business because it allows you to stay focused,” said Bandyk. “Our business is built around our secondary messages: “Eat Good Food” and “Give Fresh Flowers”. We try and measure every decision around those brand promises. If the food doesn’t look or taste good, we won’t carry it. If the flowers we are considering buying to sell are not fresh, we won’t carry them. Keep it simple, know your strengths and stay on point.”

This is also beneficial to customers. “We believe our approach benefits our customers because they know what they are getting when they decide to shop our stores,” said Bandyk. “They know they are getting the absolute freshest products that Mother Nature will allow. They know and appreciate the effort that we put into making sure we are giving them the very best products that we can find. If we aren’t proud of it, we won’t sell it.”

Finding and choosing a niche helps retailers avoid the mistake of going too broad with their products and services. Without a niche, retailers will end up doing what everyone else is doing. Without a novel product or service, one’s business will begin to resemble every other business. “You should always have several products that are made in-house exclusive to your business so customers have to come to you for those items,” said Johnny Karmo, owner of Market Square.

Market Square specializes in gourmet food to-go, adding a different element to

the prepared food trend that has taken the industry by storm and is helping set Market Square apart from their competitors. “Separating your identity from other retailers is critical, Karmo said. “We have always prioritized our personal service, high quality, and convenience so our customers can count on us for consistent value.”

When choosing a specialty, retailers should keep in mind a variety of things that can narrow down a customer’s interest. The products and services a retailer offers, along with their location and audience, are all factors that must be considered. “A successful niche need at least three things that will attract a customer to your store: convenience & location, quality & variety of product lines, and personal service,” said Karmo.

However, choosing a niche is only the first step. Maintaining the niche and the resulting benefits are just as important. Retailers must be prepared for the laborious task of maintaining their specialties in order to continue getting the results they desire.

As with anything in this industry, keeping up with trends is a must when it comes to maintaining the effectiveness of a niche. According to Bandyk, education is the key to continue reaping the benefits, “staying up with food and floral trends, researching our competition locally, regionally, nationally and globally. We can’t rest on our laurels and always need to try new things to enhance our brand and the guest experience.”

Additionally, retailers are bound to come across competition in their niche and should be prepared to set themselves apart from those retailers as well. “Our game plan to respond to competition and changes is to always be looking for new opportunities to provide great tasting, unique, hard to find items while offering them at a competitive price,” said Bandyk. “Our other approach is to kill our guests with kindness. We strive to educate our staff which will help in turn educate our guests making shopping at one of our stores a very unique experience.” ■



WESTBORN MARKET PRODUCE



WESTBORN MARKET FLOWERS



GOURMET FOOD TO-GO FROM MARKET SQUARE



Neighborhood Market Shines in Ferndale

They opened their doors in 1983 and since then have been striving to become the best neighborhood market in Metro Detroit. “We’re more than just a neighborhood market,” said Tony Selvaggio. “We strive to cater to the ever-changing needs of our clientele.”

Western Market is an independently-owned and operated grocery and specialty food shop located in downtown Ferndale. Their mission is to serve and educate the community by providing an enthusiastically curated set of foods and goods. They seek out and showcase products that are ethically sourced and authentically produced. They support local food systems and culinary traditions, while aiming for sustainable growth and profitability in a way which supports their employees, customers and community partners.

“At Western Market, we specialize in carefully curated, ethically-sourced foods and goods that range from fresh and organic produce, to natural food and wine, locally-crafted artisan products and exceptional baked goods,” said Selvaggio.

“Western Market serves a wide array of customers. They come from across the area - north Detroit, here in Ferndale, Oak Park, Hazel Park, Pleasant Ridge and beyond. Our customers are also our neighbors. They shop regularly to find the freshest produce and meat, a well-curated selection of wine or cheese, specialty foods, hand-picked flowers, pastries and more. They aim to eat and live well. And we’re proud to play a part in helping our community do that.”

Over the three decades in business, Western Market has grown with the community. Their current 12,500-square-foot building previously housed a grocery store, “we knew when we found it, that it would be a perfect fit for our plans.”

They also have 3,600 square-feet of exterior, merchandised space.

Tony and brother Steve Selvaggio always knew they would own their own market. It wasn’t until this space became available that they decided to go into business.

“We come from a family that has specialized in the food and



STEVE AND TONY SELVAGGIO

beverage industry for many years and are proud to carry on that tradition here in Ferndale,” said Selvaggio. “Being part of the community for so many years is one of the best aspects of being in business. We’ve watched our customers grow and change, and built lasting relationships with them. We treat our customers as we do our family.”

Western Market has always aimed to provide its customers with the items they seek, and those that support a healthy lifestyle. “Our customers rely on us to carry a high-quality array of fresh food and goods.”

Co-founder and President Steve Selvaggio said he finds AFPD to be valuable to Western Market because, as a business owner he works to ‘stay current alongside trend-setters, taste-makers, and to keep up with industry happenings.’ This helps the evolution of Western Market, like others, because of the many changes in the industry over the years. “AFPD provides excellent opportunities for businesses through rebate programs, a curated list of industry providers, philanthropic opportunities, strong representation in Lansing as well as informative and interesting news,” he said.

“As larger stores began to open in the area, Western Market’s selection of specialty foods has become even more customized for our shoppers,” said Tony. “That means pantry staples coexist alongside rare wines, craft beer, gluten-free and vegan products. It means our house made dishes and fresh soups can be counted on, when you’re on-the-go. Customers stop in for eggs and milk, but also locally-made products like Srodek Pierogi and McClure’s Pickles.”

The family runs the business -- Steve, Tony, and Virginia.

They regularly support community projects and have opened a small outpost in Rustbelt Market to cater to shoppers seeking a quick lunch or refreshments. “We’re in the process of developing and growing our catering services,” said Selvaggio.

Western Market is evolving to suit the needs of the community. “About four years ago, we made a conscious effort to recruit and develop a more progressive management model and team,” said Selvaggio. “This included hiring staff with extensive experience in their respective fields, whether that may be bakery management, meat, seafood or deli, or business management. We’re fostering an environment where our staff can develop their skills and bring fresh ideas to the table.” ■

RETAILER: WESTERN MARKET

Location: Ferndale, Michigan

Founded: 1983

Employees: 100

AFPD Member Since: 2002

Slogan: “We are an independent grocer committed to serving and educating our community by providing an enthusiastically curated set of foods and goods.”





Wishing you
Merry
Christmas

HAPPY *New Year*
from



Made in Michigan since 1984



Detroit Pistons to Bring Plum Market to Detroit



Plum Market will open a 5,000 square-foot café and retail store inside the new Henry Ford Detroit Pistons Performance Center servicing the Detroit Pistons and the New Center area community. In addition, Zingerman's will provide artisan products and brewed coffee at the new Plum Market location. This new alliance will support each Michigan-based company's first Venture into Downtown Detroit.

The Michigan-based grocer will become the official food service provider for the Pistons organization. Plum Market, a privately-owned company operating six full-service grocery stores and 10 food service operations in Southeast Michigan and Chicago, will manage food service for the Detroit Pistons and operate the new Plum Market café and eatery open to the public.

This new quick service food and beverage concept in downtown Detroit will feature a coffee shop, grab-and-go marketplace, a casual dining

experience offering a diverse and healthy menu with an incredible wine and beer selection, and more, all under one roof. It is slated for completion at the same time the Henry Ford Detroit Pistons Performance Center becomes operational.

"We are proud to partner with Plum Market and Zingerman's on their ventures in downtown Detroit," said Pistons owner Tom Gores. "They are both Michigan-based companies that share our desire to contribute to the continued revitalization of our city. This partnership will be great for our team, our employees and for the community, making New Center even more attractive to additional investment."

Plum Market Co-founders Matt and Marc Jonna have expressed their excitement for the partnership noting its multi-dimensional focus on providing quality food service for the Detroit Pistons team and the retail growth potential benefitting those who live, work

and visit the New Center area of Detroit. The two companies will join forces to provide catering services for local businesses and other private events throughout the city of Detroit.

"We are pleased to partner with the Detroit Pistons on this unique collaboration that provides food services for the basketball team and engages Detroit and the New Center area community with a new premium food and beverage location," said Plum Market's CEO, Matt Jonna. "We are highly selective and we have to be partners with companies that share our same goals. Tom Gores and the Detroit Pistons share our vision for providing a high-quality product with service that goes above and beyond."

Paul Saginaw, Zingerman's co-owner and founding partner, views the collaboration with the Detroit Pistons and Plum Market as a natural union of like-minded companies.

"We seek out businesses that share our values and are



committed to leaving a positive mark on the community,” said Mr. Saginaw. “We want to make our food accessible to as many people as possible and we see this collaboration as a great opportunity for growth. We look forward to working with the Detroit Pistons and Plum Market to share our products and build a mutually rewarding long-term relationship with the New Center area community.”

NOURISHING THE DETROIT PISTONS

As the official food provider for the Detroit Pistons, Plum Market will deploy a team of chefs that will be dedicated to the team; serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Working in conjunction with team athletic training staff and nutritionists from Henry Ford Health System, Plum Market chefs will have the ability to personalize food options for each player from a stockpile of legacy recipes. This type of customization caters to specific wants and nutritional needs of each player while also allowing the ability to adjust for food allergies, varying degrees of caloric intake, low-carb, high-protein based diets as well as those that are gluten free, vegetarian, dairy free or vegan.

Plum Market specializes in using only the freshest ingredients with an emphasis on organic produce and all-natural meats, and locally-made products sourced through their Miles to Market program – an initiative focused on supplying local products that have traveled less than 350 miles from source to market.

“We want to create a comfortable home environment at the Henry Ford Detroit Pistons Performance Center where our

players look forward to spending time working, training and bonding,” said Arn Tellem, Vice Chairman for the Detroit Pistons. “Utilizing Plum Market chefs and food service expertise will optimize performance for our team and enhance our ability to attract and retain top talent by delivering a level of innovation and service unique to other NBA training facilities.”

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The Plum Market café and eatery inside the Henry Ford Detroit Pistons Performance Center is a 5,000-square foot space with indoor and outdoor seating that showcases a neighborhood boutique feel stocked with healthy, attractive food options for purchase. In addition to grab-and-go items and snacks, Plum Market chefs deploy creative freedom in crafting a variety of prepared dishes each day.

The mission is to recreate how people think about eating. With a growing attention on food quality and eating healthy, the Detroit Pistons/Plum Market/Zingerman’s collaboration will also focus on education and food choices. And, the level of engagement with customers and the community goes beyond those who visit the café to dine and shop. Utilizing the Detroit Pistons Programming Network (PPN) on Pistons.com, the club will team with Plum Market chefs and Henry Ford Health System nutritionists to distribute educational vignettes and information regarding healthy eating habits.

These programming goals align directly with the Detroit Pistons’ vision to bring business



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ARTISANS

PISTONS ★ PALACE
FOUNDATION

BUILDING CHAMPIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

and basketball together in a space that allows for community access and impact.

“We are focused on connecting our team to the community and we want our practice facility and team headquarters to be a destination that is inviting to the public,” said Mr. Tellem. “Plum Market and Zingerman’s Artisans will be an exciting new food destination for the city. It aligns perfectly with our vision for this world-class development – a center for fitness, health and basketball programming that provides opportunities for future growth and investment in Detroit.” ■



A Healthy Workplace in the Winter



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



It's not all in your head: It does get harder to keep employees healthy during the winter. Illness seems to spread overnight, you can't encourage your employees to hold walking meetings out in the sunshine and there's a definite lack of fresh local fruits and vegetables to buy for the kitchen. But all's not lost. Keep reading for tips on how to keep employees healthy (helping them focus on their work and be more productive) no matter how low the thermometer drops.

OFFER FLU SHOTS AT WORK

Protecting your employees from the flu will help keep everyone healthy and reduce the likelihood of illness spreading throughout the office. And a flu shot is the best defense. Make it easier for your employees to get one by bringing nurse practitioners to the office. Local pharmacies are often able to send a nurse to administer the vaccine for a reasonable cost. Smaller companies can organize an outing to the local pharmacy to receive shots together.

WATCH THE OFFICE TEMPERATURE

Colder temperatures actually weaken the body's natural defenses, so a chilly office can make it easier for employees to get sick with a cold or the flu. An extra benefit to turning up the heat: Research shows a temperature of 71.6 degrees will help your employees be the most productive. If your office is made up of more women than men, keep in mind that women require more heat to stay warm.

KEEP YOUR EMPLOYEES HAPPY

A study in the Journal of Psychiatry reports that six percent of the U.S. population suffers from seasonal depression. Do what you can to keep spirits bright at work. Have regular conversations about workloads, schedule fun social events and even try installing "happy lights" in the office.

Boost employees' immune systems

Encourage employees to stay hydrated at work, eat foods high in vitamin C and wash their hands throughout the day. You can also pass around antiseptic sprays for them to use on their keyboards and phones. And don't forget to encourage sick days! You'd rather one employee stay home than come in and spread germs to your entire team.

More information and additional links about a healthy workplace can be found at www.mibluesperspectives.com/2017/11/03/maintain-healthy-productive-office-winter ■

express lines



FDA is Moving Forward with Menu-Labeling

After numerous delays, Obama administration's menu-labeling rule will proceed

■ BY NACS ONLINE

On November 7th, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued guidance on the Obama administration's menu labeling rule, "all but ensuring that the oft-delayed rule will finally take effect, nearly eight years after Congress initially called for it," reports Politico.

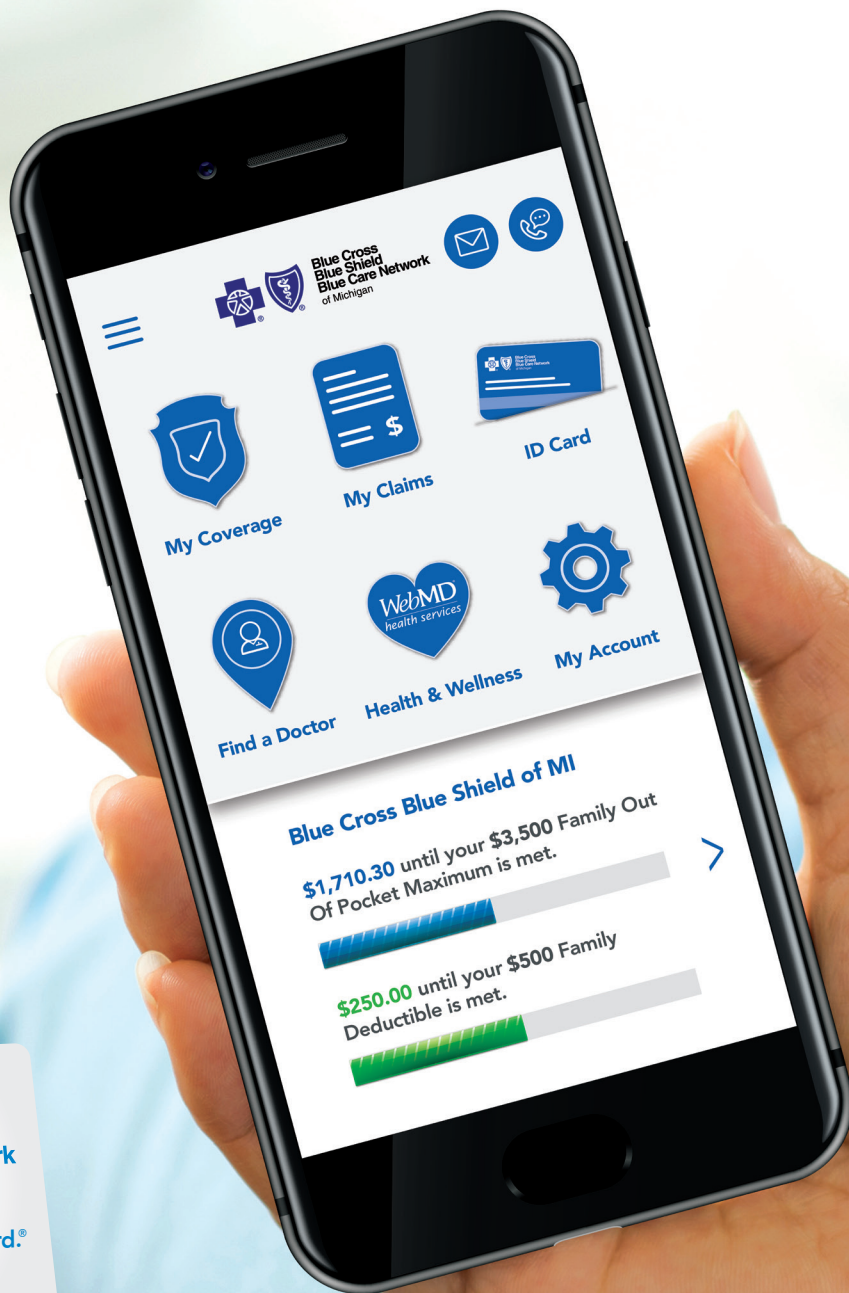
The news source says that FDA's draft guidance, which NACS is currently reviewing, is an effort by FDA to find middle ground in the contentious debate over the rule.

The news source suggests that the guidance is intended to provide more flexibility to restaurants, convenience retailers and pizza chains by offering more options for how to label calories on their menus, such as allowing a single placard to be placed at a buffet bar, instead of requiring that each item be labeled individually.

FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said in a statement that the draft guidance issued yesterday is in "direct response to the comments we got on our menu labeling regulation. ... "Supermarket and convenience store managers with self-service buffets or beverage stations asked whether they needed to have an individual sign next to each item with a calorie declaration. While this is one way to comply with the regulation, our draft guidance offers other practical ways to post calories for multiple items on a single sign."

Menu labeling was initially passed by Congress as part of the Affordable Care Act, and was delayed multiple times during the Obama administration. The Trump administration delayed it again, shortly before it was set to take effect in May of this year. The current compliance date is May 7, 2018. ■

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R069001



Republic National Distributing Company and Breakthru Beverage Group to Form \$12 Billion Company with North American Footprint

Proposed Merger to Allow Greater Focus on Innovation and Differentiation in Rapidly Changing and Competitive Marketplace

■ BY BUSINESS WIRE

Republic National Distributing Company, LLC (“RNDC”), a distributor and broker of premium wine and spirits, and Breakthru Beverage Group, LLC (“BBG”), a distributor and broker of beer, wine and spirits in the U.S. and Canada—both members of the Forbes list of “America’s Largest Private Companies”—today announced the execution of a Letter of Intent to combine their assets and operations.

“The merger of RNDC and Breakthru will create strategic opportunities that will benefit our associates and our business partners in a rapidly changing and highly competitive marketplace. Much more than a growth opportunity, we are entering this venture to create something that is different, sustainable and transformative,” said RNDC President & CEO Tom Cole. “Together, our deep bench of focused, diverse associates will bring great and unique advantages to our suppliers, our customers and the consumers who enjoy the products we represent.”

Breakthru Beverage Group President & CEO Greg Baird commented, “Breakthru looks forward to joining forces with RNDC to establish an even

stronger foundation of industry knowledge, talent, history and heritage. We see this as the launch pad to bring innovation to life and to usher in a new era for our business and industry.”

“Across North America, the combined company of RNDC and Breakthru will benefit from a broadly expanded footprint, a passionate and creative team, and an uncompromising commitment to providing innovation, value and service to all our stakeholders,” added Cole.

STRATEGIC RATIONALE: THE GAME HAS CHANGED

Beverage alcohol industry trends and the greater consumer and retail environment show that there are compelling reasons for RNDC and BBG to expand their footprints and to become more responsive to the marketplace by recognizing the best practices and efficiencies of each business. Continuous innovation and agility are keys to wholesaler success as retail customers grow, and beverage alcohol suppliers seek to be increasingly nimble, efficient and responsive to evolving consumer demands.

Even beyond the beverage alcohol industry, the retail marketplace is changing quickly and significantly. The merger of RNDC and BBG will also

facilitate investments in technology that will enhance all aspects of their business, from supply chain management, customer and supplier connectivity, e-commerce, predictive analytics, digital marketing, data transparency, consumer experience and operational efficiency.

Strengthened by their diverse experience and perspectives, best-in-class talent, and an unwavering commitment to innovation, the combination of RNDC and BBG will address key areas to provide a more agile service model for customers and suppliers across the United States and Canada.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Under the terms of the Letter of Intent, Tom Cole will serve as Chief Executive Officer; Bob Hendrickson as Chief Operating Officer; Danny Wirtz as Chief Growth and Strategy Officer; and Greg Baird as Chief Integration Officer. E. Lloyd Sobel’s role will be announced along with other key senior management appointments prior to the close of the transaction.

TIMEFRAME TO COMPLETION

The transaction is expected to close late in the second calendar quarter of 2018 subject to regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions. ■



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Walmart, Visa Strike Deal on \$7.25b Swipe Settlement

Dueling lawsuits stemmed from the failed \$7.25 billion antitrust settlement in the interchange fee litigation

■ BY NACS ONLINE

Law360 reported that Walmart and Visa “have struck an accord in multidistrict antitrust litigation over card-swiping fees, according to a pair of stipulations filed in New York federal court.”

The news source notes that Visa and Walmart each lodged a filing saying they’ve settled their claims against one another in dueling lawsuits that came up after Walmart rejected the \$7.25 billion antitrust settlement in the interchange fee litigation and struck a separate agreement with Visa.

The interchange “swipe” fee settlement reached in 2012, attempted to resolve claims that Visa and MasterCard had maintained a series of network rules that enabled the companies to charge merchants higher transaction fees than the retailers would have tolerated in a competitive market, according to Law360. The U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals struck down that settlement because retailers had been inadequately represented in agreeing to the deal. ■

A Quarter of American Jobs Are Linked to Food and Agriculture, Study Finds

■ BY HELENA BOTTEMILLER EVICH // POLITICO

More than a fifth of the U.S. economy and a quarter of American jobs are either directly or indirectly tied to the food and agriculture sectors, according to a new study commissioned by industry groups.

The study estimates that more than 43 million jobs and \$1.9 trillion in total wages are linked to the two sectors, which contribute some \$894 billion in taxes. The food and agriculture sectors together account for \$146 billion in exports, the study found.

In all, the study, which was released today, pegs the two sectors’ total economic impact at \$6.7 trillion.

“As policymakers consider tax reform and other means to expand economic activity, I hope they will have a better understanding of how the food and agriculture sector not only feeds Americans, but also feeds the U.S. economy,” said Leslie Sarasin, president and CEO of the Food Marketing Institute.

The study was commissioned by 22 food and agriculture groups, including the Corn Refiners Association, the American Bakers Association and the United Fresh Produce Association. The groups posted the results on a site that allows individuals to search industry impact by state and congressional district. ■

PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi: Changing Corporate Culture Is Not a ‘Feel-Good’ Project

■ BY SISSI CAO // THE OBSERVER

“You cannot [only] be involved with the charity on weekends and run the business during the week,” Michael Milken, chairman of Milken Institute, summarized PepsiCo’s “performance with purpose” mantra during his interview with PepsiCo’s CEO Indra Nooyi at Milken Institute’s Future of Health Summit in October.

Nooyi joined PepsiCo in 2001 as CFO and was promoted to CEO in 2006. She is known for drastically reconstructing PepsiCo’s strategy in the last decade and overturning the brand’s image from a “last-generation” sugar-laden beverage that gives you diabetes to a cool, environmentally responsible company that attracts millennial workers.

“When I took over as CEO in 2006, I realized that things had to change,” Nooyi said at the summit. Sensing that millennials want to both eat healthy and work for socially responsible employers, Nooyi tied the two needs precisely to the ends of PepsiCo’s business: product line and employees.

Nooyi reworked the company’s product portfolio, moving focus away from what she called the “fun-for-you products,” such as soda drinks, Cheeto and Fritos, and raising stakes in the “good-for-you” products, mainly through acquisitions. PepsiCo acquired Tropicana in 1998 and Quaker Oats in 2001, the two flagship “good-for-you” products Nooyi highlighted in the talk.

Recently, PepsiCo’s namesake Pepsi soda accounts for less than one-fifth of the company’s product mix.

However, corporate culture, in essence, is the culture of its people. And that is more challenging than rewriting a menu.

“Millennials want to work for a company that has a purpose and is making a difference to the world. To attract and retain the best and the brightest to our company, we had to create an environment that allows people to bring their whole selves to work. That was a daunting task,” she said.

She continues, “You can’t get rid of people who performed well in the old model,” Nooyi said. “But we gave them time. I said, ‘If you don’t get on to the new agenda in the next 12, 24 months, there are going to be a lot of retirement parties.’”

And there were quite a few, she said.

PepsiCo is a rare survivor in the “legacy company” league, the likes of Nestlé, Kroger and Walmart, many of which are struggling to stay profitable, let alone make social impacts.

During Nooyi’s time at PepsiCo, the company’s net profit rose from \$2.7 billion in 2001 to \$6.3 billion in 2016. ■



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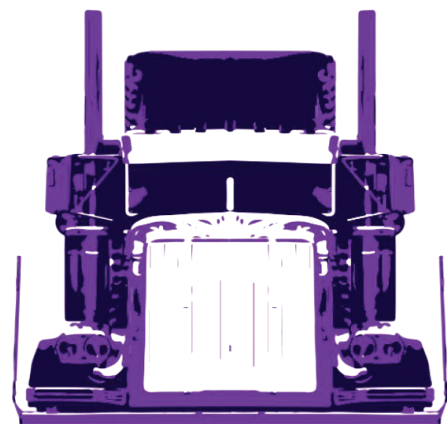
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

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Date & Location TBA // Michigan

JUNE 20, 2018

AFPD FOUNDATION'S 10TH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

Every year, the AFPD Foundation awards academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 each to extraordinary and deserving students in Michigan and Ohio. Help the AFPD Foundation invest in the leaders of tomorrow. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities available.
Detroit Athletic Club // Detroit, MI

JULY 18, 2018

AFPD'S 42ND ANNUAL MICHIGAN GOLF OPEN

A day on the course includes breakfast, lunch, 18 holes of golf and samples at every hole! Last year we sold out! Sponsorship opportunities are available.
Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center // Plymouth, MI

publishers statement

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