

BottomLine



THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS // VOL. 30, NO. 6 // JUNE 2019

A Taste for Celebrity

pg 18



■ Why Pennsylvania Convenience Store Can Be a Model For All Convenience Stores? // PAGE 10

■ MIRA Welcomes New Director of Government, Community Affairs // PAGE 26



16 Categories

Over 140 Items



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BottomLine



THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS
VOL. 30, NO. 6 // JUNE 2019

features



WHY PENNSYLVANIA CONVENIENCE STORE CAN BE A MODEL FOR ALL CONVENIENCE STORES?

If you look out across the industry, you don't have to look very far to see some of the very best convenience store retailers in the country when it comes to food service performance. Retailers like Sheetz, Getgo, Rutters, WAWA, Dandy Mini Mart and many others all have one thing in common. Their roots are in the state of Pennsylvania.



COVER STORY // A TASTE FOR CELEBRITY

From an NBA Champion to owning a champagne company, basketball legend Isiah Thomas discovered bubbly after winning the 1989 NBA Championship.



MIRA WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

As the industry evolves and grows, so does the Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA). The association mirrors the industry in an effort to best serve their members. As the membership's needs continue to grow, MIRA has risen to the occasion as they have brought on Juan Escareno to the growing team.



chairman's message

PAUL ELHINDI // MIRA CHAIRMAN

Your Business Extends Far Beyond Your Premises

Whether you are a retailer, wholesaler, supplier, or endorsed-provider member of the Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA) your business and your reputation reach far beyond the physical boundaries of your premises.

In addition to products and services, you provide community service whether you are aware of it or not. Hopefully your reputation in the community is positive. MIRA members belong to local and regional community service groups. MIRA provides thousands of turkeys each Fall with contributions provided by MIRA members. You can enhance the reputation of your business by joining and supporting local community service organizations.

One of the premier community service events is MIRA's annual Scholarship program; when \$1500 scholarships are awarded to MIRA members, children of MIRA members, employees of MIRA members, and customers of MIRA members! This is a regional effort supported by contributions of MIRA members.

Giving back to the community pays rewards in so many ways. Customers will realize you are an integral part of the community and deserve their business. You are proud of your business; promote your business and MIRA through community service!

MIRA wants you to welcome our new Director of Government and Community Relations, Juan Escareno. You can read more about Juan on page 26 in this issue of the MIRA Bottom Line magazine.

Speaking of service, I, along with MIRA staff just met with Ohio Attorney General, Dave Yost, to discuss the uncompetitive challenges facing our MIRA members. Initial indications are favorable that we'll have his support on issues affecting our members. This meeting was made possible through the efforts of our Ohio Lobbyist, Terry Fleming, and MIRA's PAC committee. Your donations to the MIRA PAC Fund help us access political leaders. Consider making a monthly contribution to the PAC fund. View it as a utility or insurance bill.

As always, we are here to help. Be proud and be professional. ■

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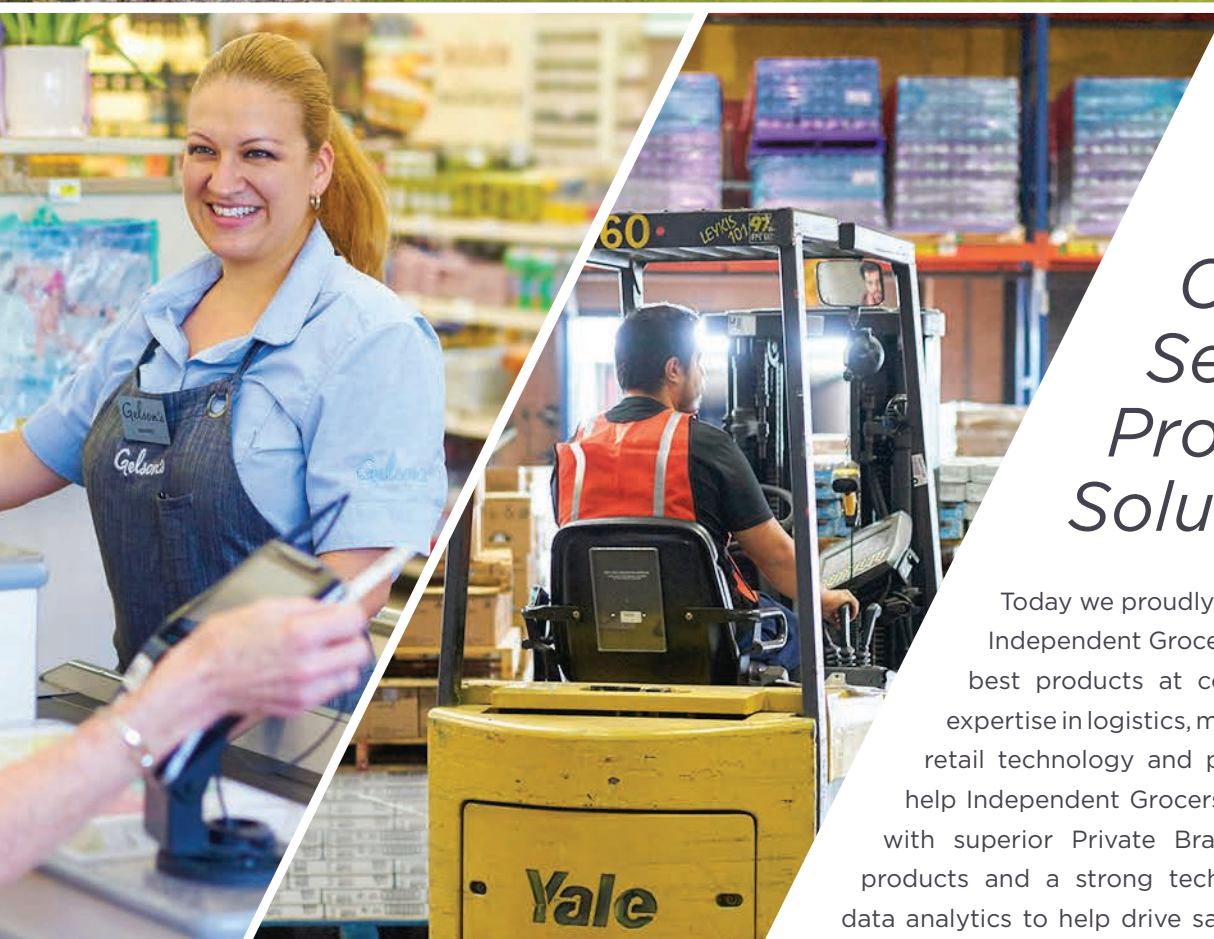
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Ohio Advisory Group Meets

On April 30th, a group of two dozen MIRA Ohio retail & supplier members and MIRA staff met to discuss objectives for the upcoming year and legislative session in Ohio.

The meeting provided an opportunity for MIRA to introduce the newly appointed Director of Government and Community Affairs, Juan Escareno and the recently elected MIRA Chairman, Paul Elhindi, a long time MIRA member and board member from Lyndhurst, Ohio.

The meeting began with a presentation from Mike Gonzalez, representing the Ohio Lottery. Mike explained the additions and changes coming to the Ohio Lottery, including online lottery. He was also gracious enough to

field questions and criticisms about the lottery machines and how slow the new machines are running. He promised to take that information back to upper management and request that this issue be given priority.

MIRA Chairman Paul Elhindi addressed the members and outlined the priorities for MIRA for the near future. He wants to address the issues of “below-cost-selling”, unbranded fuel being sold at branded outlets, state minimum pricing, open supply, and point of collection for Ohio state transportation taxes.

Paul mentioned that we have a meeting scheduled with legislative leadership to discuss these issues and provide solutions. He also asked members to be pro-active in calling him and/or the MIRA

office when problems and issues affecting their business are noticed. We are here to help.

MIRA's President and CEO, Auday Arabo, provided the attendees with information about upcoming events in Ohio. A golf outing is planned for June 20th in Medina and a Trade Dinner is in the planning stage at a date to-be-determined.

The meeting concluded with an appeal to the membership to support the MIRA PAC-Fund. Funds from the PAC Fund enable MIRA to support legislators who back the independent retailer. You might look at a monthly PAC-Fund contribution as a utility bill; a payment that keeps the lights on.

We look forward to having these meetings regularly in Ohio. ■



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Continued Expansion of MIRA's Presence in Ohio



The growth in Ohio has led the Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA) to expand its services, programs and events in the Buckeye state to meet the growing needs of their members throughout Ohio.

While the industry may be fluctuating and changing at a fast pace, MIRA remains steadfast in their commitment to their members throughout the Midwest.

A few weeks ago, when Ohio was facing a gas tax increase, MIRA stepped in for their members who are gas station owners. Working with their network, the gas tax increase was driven down from the proposed 18¢ increase to a mere 10¢ increase. The gradual increase will go into effect in July.

In other areas that could potentially impact MIRA's members, such as the debate over whether or not the minimum wage will be increased, the association is paying close attention as they monitor each situation and ensuring they are a part of the conversation.

"The focus this year is the

golf outing, the growth of the association and a potential gala in 2020," said Auday Arabo, MIRA President and CEO.

The 14th Ohio Golf Outing will be held at Shale Creek Golf Course in Medina Ohio on Thursday, June 20th. "We're looking forward to having a great event that will not only support the association but bring manufacturers, distributors and retailers together," said Jim Green, program developer for MIRA.

The golf outing will bring members from across the industry together for a day on the course and some competitive fun.

"For a little while, we didn't have a golf outing. Historically, we didn't have the participation needed for the event to be successful," explained MIRA Chairman, Paul Elhindi. "We are bringing it back and we are encouraging members to not only come out for a day of golfing, but to meet other people in their industry and get to know one another."

In addition to bringing members together at the golf outing, the association is diligently working to add a gala to their roster events for 2020. The hope is to develop and produce a trade dinner/gala in Ohio similar to the association's other successful galas in Michigan and Illinois.

Both the golf outing and the eventual addition of a gala in Ohio are meant to not only bring MIRA members together, but bring them together in a casual setting away from the demands of their day-to-day businesses.

"We host these events to bring

members together," said Elhindi. "Just like the golf outing, the gala will be for the members. This is an opportunity for them to network with other people in their line of work, but we need them to attend and participate for these events to be successful."

There are MIRA members in Cleveland, Cincinnati and in the state's capital of Columbus. As a direct result of the growing needs in Ohio and the association's ceaseless efforts to provide for their members, MIRA has reinstated an advisory board for Ohio. This will allow members to further their engagement with the association and do so on a regular basis.

With an advisory board in place, there will be a direct line of communication between MIRA and its members in Ohio. Members will be able to bring their concerns to the table for the board to address.

"With a board in place, we will have a larger presence in Ohio," said Arabo. "We want to engage our members on a regular basis and have ongoing dialogue with them."

The advisory panel now meets quarterly in an effort to promote idea sharing, to discuss industry trends and to better serve members.

"Having an advisory board in Ohio allows us as an association to hear firsthand from members," said Elhindi. "From changes in the industry to issues they might be having, when they bring these things to us, we can help them."

If you are interested in serving on the Ohio advisory board, or attending a meeting, please call (800) 666-6233 for a meeting schedule. ■

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Details:

New & current customers are eligible for the following rebates:

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

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\$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**



petroleum news & views

EDWARD WEGLARZ // MIRA DIRECTOR, PETROLEUM

Does Your Staff Feel Like Part of The “Team”?

You can't be at your business all day, every day. But your employees represent you, whether you acknowledge that premise or not. Often times, the “deal maker” for a motorist is the way your employee meets, greets, and thanks the customer.

Differentiate your business from the rest of the pack by keeping your employees trained, informed, and up-to-date. I know these are busy times, and employees are hard to find, but quality can trump quantity most of the time.

Be helpful to the motorist and increase sales by training your employees to greet the customer, ask if help is needed, and suggest companion sales. Train the employees to “read” the customer: some really appreciate the extra attention, while others know what they want and a speedy transaction pleases them the most. Others fall between those two extremes.

Conduct regular employee meetings. Train everybody on the staff about new products, their features and benefits, and how much they cost. Don't be bashful about asking your supplier to help train your employees about new products. Remember, the more they sell, the more you'll buy from them. Ask you

employees for suggested additions to the products and services you offer. After all, they probably get around the trade area more than you do, and are aware of the newest offerings.

Attention to detail can make a difference. Provide paper funnels when a customer buys motor oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid, or power steering fluid. Offer to unseal the tin-foil seal on windshield washer solvent purchases. These extra services make the customer feel special, and feel like you're helping him with his task. If you have adequate, capable staff you can offer to “install” the fluids for the customer. This can be a teaching opportunity for you to train your mechanically inclined employees.

Spend some time on safety issues: where is the “pump STOP” switch, where are the fire extinguishers, where are utility turn-off switches? Keep the floor dry to prevent slips and falls. Promptly cleanup any spills or “over-fills”. Monitor rugs so they don't become a tripping hazard.

Also, to improve morale, cross-train your employees. Ask senior employees, beginning with you, to show workers with less experience what you do and how to properly perform tasks. You'll find that employees enjoy being made to feel a bigger part of the “team”, and you can delegate some of the time-consuming duties down the organizational chart.

Start to instill the team work spirit into your operation beginning today; it'll provide a great foundation upon which to build a successful business, differentiated from the “pack”. ■





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MIRA rebate program details:

- Minimum order of \$800, must purchase weekly to qualify.
- We service PA, OH, MD & NY.
- 2% Non-tobacco / non cigarette rebate.
- Plus and extra 1% if purchasing energy supplements
- Plus an additional 2% if purchasing foodservice products
- Plus an additional 2% if purchasing supplies

Customer must purchase these categories to qualify:

- Cigarettes
- Smokeless & other tobacco
- Energy supplements
- Coffee

Subject to pre-qualification by McAneny Brothers



c-store news & views

JIM GREEN // MIRA VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Why Pennsylvania Convenience Store Can Be a Model For All Convenience Stores?

If you look out across the industry, you don't have to look very far to see some of the very best convenience store retailers in the country when it comes to food service performance. Retailers like Sheetz, Getgo, Rutters, WAWA, Dandy Mini Mart and many others all have one thing in common. Their roots are in the state of Pennsylvania. It begs the question, why have so many retailers that have their roots in the state of Pennsylvania become industry leaders when it comes to food service? You could say it is because they must compete against each other in that market, which is true. However, I believe you have to look a bit deeper as to what they all have in common.

Up until recently, convenience stores in Pennsylvania were not able to sell beer. They were missing this critical category along with the ancillary sales from the foot traffic this category typically drives. They really only had tobacco and gas as the primary categories to drive sales. They needed another revenue driver and foot traffic builder, so Pennsylvania retailers were one of the earliest to adopt and develop the food service category. They have done this so well that they have changed millennial's perception when it comes to food service. They don't view food from convenience stores as gas station food. They see them as restaurants. Four sandwiches from these retailers recently made CSP's list of 30 Must Try Sandwiches that included QSR's. This is also reflected in the fact that Sheetz was just voted #4 on Best Regional Fast Food List. I'm not saying every retailer needs to evolve into Sheetz. However, these convenience store leaders from Pennsylvania do provide a roadmap for retailers in

states like Michigan and Ohio as to what is possible with food service. As cigarette sales continue to decline, beer sales showing decline and the uncertain landscape for gasoline volume, foodservice is the only foreseeable category that can move the needle on store sales and profit. It should be noted that these progressive food service retailers who have made the investment into food service are now well positioned to face a market that is now experiencing declining sales in cigs and beer.

Convenience stores are giving quick-service restaurants a run for their money, especially among younger shoppers. Foodservice sales account for 23% of sales at convenience stores in the U.S., according to NACS State of the Industry Data and 43% percent of millennials buy more food from C-Store than just three years ago. However, there are concerns even though total sales for the convenience channel surged approximately 9% to \$654.3B, with In-store sales increasing 2.2% to a record \$242.2 billion in 2018. Transactions were down 2.3% so we are selling more stuff to less people. A large majority of the food service transition was led by top-quartile retailers, that is, those retailers who produced total sales in the top 25% of the channel. Bottom-half retailers, meanwhile, are still clinging to tobacco and beer sales. This is reflective in the fact that the number of single-store operators declined by nearly 2,200 units in 2018.

Retailers should not be timid in claiming their share of customers looking for a fast, quality dining experience. It starts with developing a food service mind set then establishing a food service identity. This is something that you do well that customers know and can have confidence when visiting your store. C-Store retailers can start out with breakfast sandwiches, pizza and a variety of products from a grab-n-go that includes sandwiches and portable ready to eat items. S. Abraham and Sons, Team Sledd and McAneny Brothers are industry leaders with food service and can help you get started by providing numerous food service solutions. ■

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michigan lobbyist report

MATT MINER // CAPITOL STRATEGIES GROUP

Chances of Gas Tax Increase Dwindling as Legislature Moves Budgets Without Increase

The prospects of a gas tax increase passing the republican controlled legislature took a hit last month when the Senate Transportation

Subcommittee backed out the proposed 45¢ gas tax increase Michigan Governor Whitmer recommended in her budget earlier this year. The \$2.1 Billion that the Governor built into her budget was nixed in favor of a much smaller increase, which would keep a long-term road funding plan separate from the 2019-2020 budget. The Senate road plan is expected to be unveiled by early summer, and the plan is to try and get the budget

sent to the governor in June, keeping a similar timeline the Legislature stuck to during the previous administration. The House has taken a similar tone as the Senate, setting up a potential veto showdown with Governor Whitmer this fall. State Representative Shane Hernandez, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, has stated that two things are certain for the House budget: the 45¢ gas tax will not be included and it will include increased investments similar to those concurred in by the Senate.

It appears that the legislature is making auto no-fault reform a key focus for the spring session, saving the road funding hurdle for the fall. This process is juxtaposed to the emphasis Governor Whitmer has put on the process. Her mission out of the gate has been to secure \$2.5 Billion for road funding and to tie that increase into an overall budget solution. Conversely, the legislature has spared big ticket items from being tied to the budget process, opting to silo issues individually. It remains to be seen where the chips fall as the summer break nears, but for now two legs of the stool are focused on a different agenda. ■

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SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

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michigan lottery report

BRIAN O. NEILL // MICHIGAN LOTTERY COMMISSIONER

Big Spin Instant Game Offers Big Prizes, Second Chance TV Game Show to Players

Offering players unique game concepts has helped the Michigan Lottery's instant game portfolio set records the past four years. Instant game sales in 2018 reached a record \$1.5 billion, an impressive 12% increase from 2017. To support ongoing growth, the Lottery has been hard at work developing games that will attract players by offering big prizes and unique opportunities.

The success of the GOLDEN TICKET and GOLDEN TICKET II instant games over the past two years has shown that players are drawn to games

that offer the chance to win big prizes instantly and big prizes in a second chance contest. All told, the games sold a combined eight million tickets leading to more than \$6 million in commissions for retailers.

To capitalize on player interest in big instant wins and second chance game opportunities, the Lottery will launch The Big Spin® instant game on July 9. Each \$10 Big Spin ticket will offer players a chance to win prizes ranging from \$10 up to \$1 million. In addition to more than \$71 million in instant-win prizes, Big Spin will feature a second chance game that will offer players a chance to win \$100,000 up to \$2 million on each spin.

Players may enter non-winning Big Spin ticket Spin Codes at www.MIBigSpin.com to be entered in a drawing for the opportunity to appear on a televised show. Twenty players will be selected to appear on the Lottery's Big Spin game show. Each player will have the opportunity to spin the Big Spin, where they have the chance to win up to \$2 million. All players who appear on the show are guaranteed to win a minimum of \$100,000.

We expect the Big Spin game to be attractive to a large number of players and build on the current strong interest and purchases in instant games. ■

INSTANT TICKETS // PULL TAB TICKETS

NEW INSTANT TICKETS:

On sale June 4th:

- IG 290 – Black Limited – \$2
- IG 295 – \$300,000 Wild Time – \$5
- IG 306 – \$2,000,000 Bonus – \$20

INSTANT GAMES SET TO EXPIRE:

Expiring June 3rd:

- IG 201 – Wild 1's – \$1
- IG 776 – Max Money – \$30

Expiring July 1st:

- IG 207 – Bring On the Bens – \$5
- IG 772 – Deluxe 7's Playbook – \$20
- IG 779 – Hot Fortune – \$20
- IG 785 – \$500,000 Bonus – \$5

NEW PULL TAB TICKETS:

On sale June 4th:

- MI 547 – Star Spangled Bucks – \$1
- MI 557 – \$2,000,000 Platinum Play – \$5

PULL TABS SET TO EXPIRE:

Expiring June 6th:

- MI 506 – Neon Bars – 50¢

Expiring June 11th:

- MI 515 – Ms. Pac Man – \$1

Expiring July 16th:

- MI 514 – Triple Diamonds – \$2
- MI 516 – Bank Buster – 50¢
- MI 517 – Polar Dough! – \$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.



**MICHIGAN
LOTTERY™**

About 97 cents of every dollar spent on Lottery tickets is returned to the state in the form of contributions to the state School Aid Fund, prizes to players and commissions to vendors and retailers. In the 2018 fiscal year, the Lottery provided more than \$941.3 million for Michigan's public schools, its fourth record contribution in row. Since it began in 1972, the Lottery has contributed more than \$22 billion to support public education in Michigan. For additional information, follow the Michigan Lottery on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and online at www.michiganlottery.com.



MICHIGAN



LOTTERY™

For fun.
For schools.™

In 1972, the seed of an idea was planted, a way for the Michigan Lottery to support our public schools. And 47 years later, look how it's grown.

To date, the Lottery has contributed \$22 billion to Michigan public education. Last year alone the Lottery contributed \$941 million — \$2.5 million to schools every day.

As the symbol of the Michigan Lottery, our tree represents more than fun. It represents development, growth and the steadfast support the Lottery provides to Michigan public schools.



Knowing your limits is always the best bet. Call the Michigan Problem Gambling Helpline for confidential help at 1-800-270-7117.

michiganlottery.com



ohio lobbyist report

TERRY FLEMING // TC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES

Ohio's Budget Moves Forward

The Ohio House has passed HB 166, Ohio's two-year General Revenue Budget bill, and sent it to the Senate. The bill was over \$70 billion dollars when introduced by the Governor, but only \$69 billion was passed by the House. Of concern to MIRA members is the part of the legislation that would raise the age required to purchase all tobacco products to 21. MIRA has made known its support of this as we believe it levels the playing field for all retailers since many cities have already passed similar legislation. There were some tax changes made in HB 166, but they do not impact small business owners. The Budget focused primarily on children's issues and medical care job creation. The current budget expires on June 30th of this year, so the General Assembly must pass the new budget and get the Governor to sign it by June 30th. The new budget will be in effect until June 30, 2021. The Senate will make their changes and priorities and then the bill will go to a conference committee between the House and Senate.

When the bill is finally approved by the assembly the Governor then gets the last shot as he may "line item veto" any language he doesn't agree with. He can't add to the bill, only subtract.

The Ohio House also passed two other bills that MIRA made sure did not impact members negatively. HB 71, a minimum markup bill on tobacco products, would prohibit suppliers from selling to anyone at a lower cost than they sell to wholesalers. This bill would only affect wholesalers. Also passed by the House was HB 237, which would allow liquor distributors to mail product to people directly, thus bypassing state liquor stores. Unless you're a liquor agent, this will not impact you. MIRA still believes that Ohio's distribution system needs a complete overhaul and is working to that end.

Lastly, MIRA Chairman Paul Elhindi, MIRA President & CEO Auday Arabo, and MIRA Director of Petroleum Ed Weglarz met with Ohio House leadership to discuss issues adversely affecting MIRA petroleum members: below cost selling, unbranded fuel being sold at branded stations, and tax collection of motor fuel. It was a very good meeting and as a result, MIRA has a meeting scheduled with Ohio Attorney General David Yost later in June. It seems as if this year has sped by as we're in June already, and after the budget is done, the legislature will most likely adjourn till September. ■

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Ohio's

FUTURE

BUDGET OF THE STATE OF OHIO

FISCAL YEARS 2020 - 2021



PINNACLE

Propane Cylinder Exchange Made Simple



Pinnacle Propane partners with retailers to customize a propane cylinder exchange & purchase program to fit the needs of their business.

Commitment to Customers

Our business is grounded on our unwavering commitment to customer service, safety and transparency.

Dependable Service

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A Taste for Celebrity





From an NBA Champion to owning a champagne company, basketball legend Isiah Thomas discovered bubbly after winning the 1989 NBA Championship.

“My earliest experience with champagne was having it poured over my head. It wasn’t until after I retired from playing ball that I discovered I love drinking it,” Isiah Thomas is quoted saying on his company website.

Known for his business savvy and philanthropic endeavors as much as his storied athletic career, Isiah and his wife Lynn wanted a healthier, great tasting champagne without the added sugar. Isiah is quick to point out, “it had to be reasonably priced and it definitely couldn’t come with a headache the next day. It took years but that’s exactly what we found in Cheurlin Champagne.”

For decades, celebrities have endorsed a variety of products including food and beverages. Over the years, many have launched their own brands but not all have remained in the marketplace.

“Celebrity endorsing products is much different than a celebrity launching his or her own brand,” said Jim Green, MIRA. “A celebrity face behind a well-established big market item with major marketing dollars already behind it has a greater chance of success. You probably see an upswing in sales. They might endorse it for a short period of time and we have seen many of these endorsements over the years but actually owning their own brand and being successful is much different.”

The 12-time NBA All-Star who has also been named one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History ventured in a combination of the two. Thomas partnered with an existing, successful brand in Cheurlin Champagne. He is known for his competitiveness and his appetite for all kinds of challenges and his Champagne is the latest one.

Paul Newman has been one of those success stories. His company has products for the grocery shelves.

In August 27, 1982, the first shipment of Paul Newman’s Own salad dressing was delivered to a retail outlet, marking the beginning of the successful food company. Paul Newman, the late actor and philanthropist, bottled his homemade salad dressing with encouragement from friends and neighbors who raved about the recipe. On that first day, 500 cases of Newman’s Own salad dressing were shipped to Stew Leonard’s in Norwalk, Connecticut, which was the first store to carry Newman’s Own products.

In its first year of business, Newman’s Own generated more than \$300,000 in profits. To fulfill his lifelong commitment to making the world a better place, Newman decided to donate 100 percent of the profits



and royalties to charity, a mission that continues. Over the decades, hundreds of millions of dollars have been given to charitable organizations, worldwide.

Soon after the launch of salad dressing, Newman’s Own branched out to other all-natural products, such as pasta sauce, lemonade, salsa, popcorn, and most recently, frozen pizza and frozen skillet meals. Today there are more than 100 varieties of Newman’s Own products available.

At the outset of his business, Newman was asked how long an organization like his can last when it gives all the profits away to charity. Newman said, “I don’t know. It’s going to be an interesting experiment.” Thirty years later, with more than \$350 million to charity, no one can argue that it has been an interesting experiment and an incredible success.

Paul Newman was committed to helping make the world a better place. To carry on his philanthropic legacy, Newman’s Own Foundation turns all net profits and royalties from the sale of Newman’s Own products into charitable donations. To date, Paul Newman and Newman’s Own Foundation have given more than \$350 million to thousands of charities around the world.

There have been several celebrity-owned and endorsed products over the years. Some have flourished while others floundered.

Great teammates.



Proud to be the official ice sponsor for Midwest Independent Retailers Association's 43rd Annual Golf Open, providing crystal pure cubed ice for their golfer's refreshments.



In 2014, the New York Post reported that Jay Z had purchased “an indeterminate chunk” of the “Ace of Spades” champagne brand — also known as “Armand de Brignac” — which is one that he’s reportedly been “long associated” with throughout his career thanks to its decadence (it’s \$300 a bottle). The sale was confirmed by the New York-based company that owns the champagne, Sovereign Brands.

Detroit Native Kid Rock launched his own product, Bad Ass Beer which was featured on Guy Fieri’s show “Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives.” The show airs on the Food Network. On September 12, 2017 Kid Rock’s Made in Detroit restaurant officially opened along with the Little Caesars Arena, in Detroit, Michigan.

Kid Rock appeared in his restaurant pouring the first of his American Badass Lager. Additionally, surprising fans later after returning to the restaurant for drinks after his concert.

Revolutionary from a marketing perspective, Wheaties started using athletes to promote products. Originally launched as Washburn’s Gold Medal Whole Wheat Flakes by General Mills in 1921, the cereal adopted its decidedly more catchy moniker a couple years later; “Have you tried Wheaties?” The radio ad debuted in 1926.

The company eventually forged a partnership with professional baseball in the 1930s and the brand caught on. Armed with that pithy slogan and a slew of player endorsements, including Lou Gehrig’s, the company was no longer just selling crunchy wheat flakes: It was selling all-American athletic aspirations.

Athletes made the leap from back-of-the-box stories and stats to being featured on the front of the cereal box in 1956. Gold Medal Olympians eventually graced the cover box.

According to a 2016 article in Eater, the company works more than a year ahead of time to identify the athletes destined to grace the cover box and spike Wheaties sales. Among those considered worthy of the “champion” label have been nearly two dozen more Olympians, including breakout stars like gymnast Mary Lou Retton, swimmer Michael Phelps, track and field star Jackie Joyner-Kersey, and speed skater Apolo Anton Ohno. A handful of Olympic teams — like the wildly successful 1996 U.S. women’s gymnastics squad — have also been featured on the box.

According to a 2012 study published in the Journal of Advertising Research, sales of athlete-endorsed products rise four percent on average following the announcement of such deals. Product sales (and the company’s stock price) also see an additional jump when the athlete scores a major achievement — say, an Olympic medal.

From the Convenience Store (C-Store) perspective

there have been many failed attempts. Those examples include Jeff Foxworth Beef Jerky, Jimmy Buffet Tea, Steven Seagal’s Lightning Bolt, Nelly’s Pimp Juice, Carmelo Anthony – The Melo, Katy Perry’s – Kettle Corn Pop Chips, Heidi Klum - Heidi’s Fruit Flirtations Gummie Candy and 50 Cents – Street King (SK) Energy Shots.

According to some reports, some famous faces actually do more harm to a product than good. Ad Week reported on some failed celebrity consumable product endorsements.

In 2017, Pepsi attempted to conjure spirit of the moment in one of its ads, by making reality star Kendall Jenner the peacemaker between protesters and law enforcement, at a rally that alluded to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Critics called the spot tone-deaf saying it trivialized not only the protests, but also the killings of black people by law enforcement.

During the 2014 Superbowl, which is basically Christmas for advertisers, SodaStream released a spot featuring actress Scarlett Johansson endorsing its bubbly water machine.

The ad was controversial because, at the time, the Israeli company had a facility located in the contentious West Bank territory and Israeli settlements in the area were illegal according to international law. Johansson, who was subsequently dropped as a spokesperson for international relief organization Oxfam, said she stood by her endorsement of SodaStream.

The company later moved its facility out of the West Bank thanks to a restructuring, which the CEO claimed did not have political motives. CEO Daniel Birnbaum blamed plummeting sales instead on the fact that Johansson’s Superbowl spot was critical of other big-name beverages.

In the height of his celebrity, Kobe Bryant lent his name and face to Nutella, McDonald’s and Sprite. In 2003, the former pro basketball player was indicted on charges of sexual assault, a case which was later settled in a civil suit out of court. Shortly after the assault charges came to light, Nutella—once declared as the former player’s “favorite spread”—decided to part ways with Bryant, a move it claimed had nothing to do with his legal trouble.

Coca Cola, which owns Sprite, initially said it would stand by Bryant, but stopped running his ads as well, claiming it had previously decided to go in a new direction with the company’s marketing.

However, some celebrity faces have helped companies market their brand to a broader audience. Walk down the aisles of a grocery store on any given day or time of the year, and you will notice celebrity endorsed or owned products. ■



Isiah Thomas: Businessman, Legendary Sports Icon, Philanthropist to speak at MIRA's Annual Scholarship Luncheon



He is not only a member of the Detroit Bad Boys; he is a Detroit Legend. Born and raised on Chicago's West Side, Isiah Lord Thomas, III's professional career spans more than three decades in business, sports, and entertainment. Thomas garnered worldwide attention for his contributions in all levels of professional basketball - including induction into the NBA Hall of Fame - and for his distinctive business start-ups and philanthropic endeavors.

He is now adding entrepreneur to his portfolio.

Thomas is Chairman and CEO of ISIAH International LLC, a holding company with a diverse portfolio of business ventures and investments. For more than 35 years,

he has invested in, owned, and operated new and existing businesses including: Isiah Real Estate, a development firm specializing in commercial properties; TAND Properties, a property and asset management firm; GRE3N Waste Removal; Marquis Jet Partners; Popcorn Indiana; the Toronto Raptors; and most recently, Isiah Imports, the exclusive owner and importer of CHEURLIN and Cheurlin Thomas Champagnes. Thomas is inspired by opportunities and organizations whose foundation match his core values of honesty, loyalty, respect, trust, and sacrifice.

UNCORKING THE BUSINESS OF BUBBLY

A wine and champagne enthusiast, Thomas wanted a great tasting champagne without the added sugar found in most brands. His research revealed France's champagne growers pay homage to nature focusing on soil, topography, and climate. Thomas concluded that artisanship was the answer and the future of champagne. His pursuit led him to the Cheurlin family who has crafted France's finest champagnes since 1788. Confident they are the region's best producer of champagne - an alliance was born.

From the vineyard in Celles-sur-Ource, the Cheurlin's have leveraged the optimal climate and fertile grounds of historic Champagne, France to produce award-winning champagnes that generations have enjoyed. Thomas' conclusion was quickly recognized by the champagne industry and consumers alike. It is well reflected in the list of prestigious recognitions below.

THE STAR THAT SHINES ON OTHERS

The NBA star and businessman is also a dedicated philanthropist. "We are so honored to have him as this year's keynote speaker at MIRA's Annual Scholarship Luncheon," said Auday Arabo, president and CEO. "This is a man who had a major presence on the court

and now has one in business."

Thomas will be delivering his speech on June 18th at the Detroit Athletic Club.

Off the court, Thomas dedicates a large portion of his time to working with youth programs in urban communities helping to instill confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills. Inspired by his mother's work to improve the lives of disadvantaged women and families in Chicago, Thomas founded the Mary's Court Foundation in her honor. The Foundation was created to support the health, safety, academic, and personal achievements of Chicago's youth and youth around the country.

Thomas' service to educational, anti-crime, and anti-poverty programs began in Detroit when he was in the NBA and continues today in cities across the United States. He gained national recognition for his role in Chicago's Peace Tournaments and his advocacy to prevent youth violence. He launched the Peace Game Tournaments to reduce gang violence through communications and athletics.

In early 2013, Thomas, in partnership with then Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, started a fundraising campaign to launch the Windy City Hoops program in ten park districts. The program provides a safe haven to kids and families through sports and he now serves on the Chicago Public Safety Action Committee. He has awarded more than 100 scholarships to criminal justice students through the Isiah Thomas Scholarship at Indiana University and the Isiah Thomas Sports & Entertainment Scholarship at Florida Memorial University. Recently, he announced a new annual scholarship at the University of California at Berkeley in the African American Studies department.

Thomas received his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Indiana University. In 2013, he earned his master's in education from UC at Berkeley Graduate School of Education. He lives in New York with his college sweetheart, and wife of 34 years, Lynn. ■

AN AWARD-WINNING CHAMPAGNE

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION

- Champagne Producer of the Year – 2018
- Champagne Producer of the Year – 2017

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION (2018)

- Double Gold Medal – CHEURLIN Spéciale (Brut)
- Double Gold Medal – Cheurlin Thomas Célébrité (Blanc de Blanc)
- Gold Medal – Cheurlin Thomas Le Champion (Blanc de Noir)
- Silver Medal – CHEURLIN Rosé de Saignée

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION (2017)

- Gold Medal – CHEURLIN Spéciale (Brut)
- Gold Medal – Cheurlin Thomas Célébrité (Blanc de Blanc)

DRINK PINK VINO INTERNATIONAL ROSÉ COMPETITION (2017)

- Gold Medal – CHEURLIN Rosé de Saignée

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION (2017)

- Gold Medal – Cheurlin Thomas Célébrité (Blanc de Blanc)
- Silver Medal – CHEURLIN Spéciale (Brut)
- Silver Medal – CHEURLIN Rosé de Saignée



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MIRA MEMBER EXCLUSIVE



Two-Time Scholarship Recipient to Pursue Career in Medicine

■ BY ASHOURINA SLEWO // DENHA MEDIA GROUP

Established in 1999, the Midwest Independent Retailers Association's (MIRA) philanthropic arm, the Michigan Independent Retailers Foundation (MIRF), has been dedicated to helping students who choose to pursue higher education. Each year, the MIRF awards \$1,000 or \$1,500 academic scholarships to students who either are attending college or plan on attending college. Designed to reinforce the importance of education and charitable giving, the MIRF has successfully awarded more than \$600,000 in scholarship funds to extraordinary students throughout the Midwest.

Aya Nasrallah has been fortunate enough that she has been awarded a scholarship via the MIRF two times, consecutively.

"I received the scholarship the summer of 2017 and 2018 when I was 18 and 19 years old," she explained. "I was really lucky to get it twice!"

Nasrallah has her father to thank for her knowledge of this scholarship's existence, she says. "I heard about the scholarship through my father who works for Faygo Inc." With the summer semester looming over her head, Nasrallah jumped at the opportunity to fund her summer schooling via scholarships. "I knew that summer classes were around the corner and this would help out so I applied."

Calling the University of Michigan Dearborn home, Nasrallah is a Behavioral and Biological Sciences major with a Philosophy minor. She does not want to stop at her undergraduate degree, though. Highly ambitious and driven, with a fierce love for children, Nasrallah has her sights set on pediatrics.

"I hope to pursue a career in medicine as a pediatrician, because I love kids," she explained.

The U of M junior would like to pursue a career in medicine, so that she may be able to work with children and help them feel better and healthier.

"I would be honored to help rid any pain they go through and give them more time for uninterrupted fun and innocence," she said. Beyond this, Nasrallah hopes to progress enough in her career that she can spearhead projects and open free clinics for people who cannot otherwise afford healthcare or medical treatment.



"When I get further in my career, I hope to open up free clinics in Detroit for people that can't afford consistent healthcare," she explained. "[Medicine] has always been the career I wanted to pursue, before, during, and after receiving the scholarships."

Receiving the academic scholarship through the MIR Foundation two years in a row, says Nasrallah, has enabled her immensely during her journey in pursuing higher education. In fact, had it not been for the scholarships, Nasrallah would have either accrued more debt or forgone taking certain classes altogether.

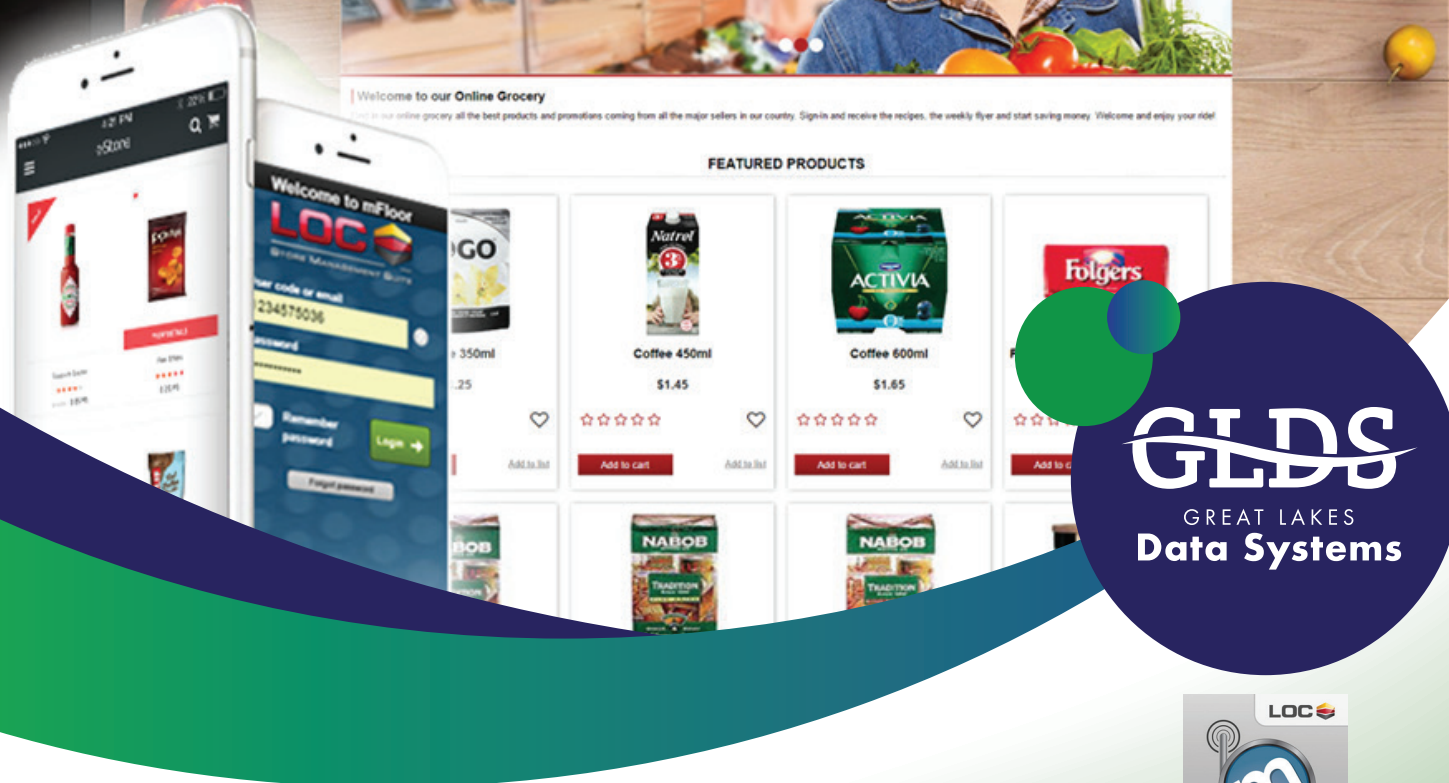
"The scholarships helped me immensely in my college career," she said. "I was able to take on classes I would have otherwise needed to take out loans for, which in turn, would discourage me and second guess my options. The classes I took through this scholarship were essential to my learning and I'm grateful to have been given the opportunity to take them."

As a student, Nasrallah urges students to take advantage of any and all scholarship opportunities. It is these scholarships that will further allow them to pursue their academic goals.

"Take advantage of this scholarship and apply it to courses or materials that are absolutely needed," she explained. "And as you are taking the class, remember through what means you are there and how it was paid for. I often would forget the blessing of the scholarship and go through the semester without being thankful. A thankful mind is a wise and happy mind."

With each semester, Nasrallah gets a little closer to her goal of being able to help children and those who cannot afford healthcare. The MIR Foundation, she says, has played a major role in getting her closer to her degree.

"Thank you to everyone who has helped me pay for classes through this scholarship, from the sponsors themselves to the greeters at the door during the scholarship program," she said. "I am in immense appreciation and hope to follow in your footsteps of philanthropy." ■



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MIRA Welcomes New Director of Government, Community Affairs

■ BY ASHOURINA SLEWO // DENHA MEDIA GROUP

As the industry evolves and grows, so does the Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA). The association mirrors the industry in an effort to best serve their members. As the membership's needs continue to grow, MIRA has risen to the occasion as they have brought on Juan Escareno to the growing team.

Escareno is the association's new Director of Government and Community Affairs. He was born in Aurora, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, to immigrants from Mexico. Escareno got an early start in the retail industry as he grew up working in his father's grocery stores, of which he owned two, in the Chicago suburbs.

He was involved in the industry even before he made his way onto MIRA's team. "I was working in the labor side of retail before coming to MIRA," he explained.

Prior to accepting his current position with the association, Escareno had worked with MIRA's president, Auday Arabo.

"I worked with Auday several years ago to bring Detroit religious leaders and grocery store owners together to discuss common issues impacting the residents and the owners of the stores in Detroit," he said. "We brought two groups together that were historically at odds with each other."

The father of six has been working with the association for less than a month. Despite still being a relatively new face on the scene, Escareno has his sights set on getting things done and serving as the membership's eyes, ears, and mouth when it comes to the legislature.

"I am the eyes, ears, and mouth piece for the independent retailers when talking with elected officials and community groups," he explained. "My job is to make sure laws and regulations don't put our members at a disadvantage against the big retailers and corporations."

Working with a variety of policy makers, regulators, and community groups, Escareno's day to day at work varies – no two days are alike. He says, "Every day is different because I am advocating for our members in multiple states."

In his short time with MIRA, Escareno has learned that each day brings a new challenge or issue that is impacting members. With each day, he pushes himself to learn how these issues impact



members and what the best course of action is to alleviate them. During his time advocating for members and the association, Escareno hopes that he will be able to go above and beyond what the job calls for while forming meaningful relationships with the people he meets as a result of his position.

Moreover, he is looking to build bridges and connect with people who he can ally himself with. "I just started but I hope to build the relationships needed in government and the community to help our members thrive in their ventures," he explained.

On the other side of MIRA's operations now, Escareno is amazed by MIRA's efforts and all the association has been able to accomplish for their members and their industry. Even with limited resources, the association has done a stellar job.

"It is amazing to see what MIRA has accomplished with limited resources when confronting the big corporations trying to undermine the independent retailers," he said.

Having grown up in the retail industry, Escareno understands that the work and advocacy he does is pivotal to the livelihood of independent retailers throughout the Midwest and the overall industry. Ultimately, he would like to level the playing field and give independent retailers a fighting chance.

"My father worked hard to save and open stores because he wanted a better life for his children. He was the little guy against the big guys who had more capital and relationships in the political world," Escareno explained. "The odds were against him because he didn't have a MIRA. I hope that we can level the playing field for independent retailers so they have an opportunity to grow and provide for their families." ■



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Consequences of Not Paying Payroll Taxes



■ BY AYAR LAW

As an employer, you have the responsibility of withholding payroll taxes from your employee's paychecks and sending the money to the IRS. These are sometimes known as trust fund taxes, because you are holding your employee's money in trust until the deposit is made.

The IRS takes this duty very seriously. You could face several consequences, if you don't pay your payroll taxes on time:

- The failure to deposit penalty.
- The Trust Fund Recovery Penalty (TFRP).
- In rare cases, criminal charges may be prosecuted.

FAILURE TO DEPOSIT

The failure to deposit penalty increases over time. If your payment is 1 to 5 days late, a penalty of 2% of the unpaid tax is assessed. The penalty then increases as follows:

- A 5% penalty is assessed for payments that are 6 to 15 days late.

- A 10% penalty is assessed for payments 16 or more days late. This penalty is also assessed if you pay within 10 days of the first IRS notice requesting payment.
- A 15% applies to payments made more than 10 days after the date of the IRS notice.

Don't borrow trust fund tax money and use it to operate your business. The cost of the penalties will be much more than the cost of obtaining alternative financing.

If you made a single honest mistake and forgot to send in your payroll deposits, you may be able to request penalty abatement.

TRUST FUND RECOVERY PENALTY

The TFRP can be assessed when you willfully fail to be trust fund taxes. This penalty can also be assessed individually against each person who is responsible for collecting or remitting the payroll taxes.

The TFRP is equal to 100% of the unpaid trust fund taxes. You'll

have to show that you weren't a responsible person or that your failure to pay trust fund taxes was not willful in order to avoid the TFRP.

A responsible person can be a business owner, partner, officer, or employee. Many factors will be examined to determine if you qualify as a responsible person.

Willfulness can be shown in a variety of ways. If you used the money to pay other creditors or for personal benefit, it may show that willfulness was present.

Criminal prosecutions for these cases aren't common, but could be pursued in especially egregious cases. You could face up to five years in jail if convicted.

RESOLVING UNPAID PAYROLL TAX CASES

You may have several options at your disposal for resolving your case. You could use penalty abatement or an installment agreement to pay off amounts you failed to deposit on time.

You should also do everything possible to defend yourself against a TFRP assessment. If you receive a proposed assessment on Letter 1153, you have 60 days to protest the assessment. Do not sign Form 2751 without consulting a tax attorney because this is an admission that you are responsible for the TFRP.

Contact a tax attorney if you have unpaid payroll taxes or need assistance with your trust fund recovery penalty defense.

Get help with unpaid payroll tax problems by calling Ayar Law at (248) 262-3400 to request your consultation with a tax attorney. ■



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How Sulfites Affect a Wine's Chemistry

Wine professionals discuss sulfur's impact on everything from oxidation to aromatic compounds and texture

■ BY RÉMY CHAREST // SEVENTYFIFTY

The emergence of natural wine and the strong viewpoints that sometimes come with it—or against it—have generated endless arguments about sulfite additions and their effects on wine. Chemistry may be more useful than ideology for resolving those disputes, and on that front, scientific research is increasingly showing that sulfites have a very wide set of effects on wine's aromas, mouthfeel, structure, and development in both the cellar and the bottle.

Traditionally, sulfur dioxide (also known as SO₂ or sulfite) has been thought of as a relatively innocuous preservative agent, acting mainly as a barrier against oxidation and undesirable bacteria. While SO₂ is effective in that manner, it also does quite a lot more, especially in the early stages of vinification, when it becomes part of numerous reactions and transformations. Indeed, sulfur, the “S” in SO₂, is a highly reactive element because it has six valence electrons that enable it to chemically bond to other compounds in many different ways, contributing to the formation of a broad range of molecules.

CHANGING EVERYTHING

Scientists and winemakers are becoming ever more aware of the multifaceted effects of sulfur in wine chemistry. “What research is increasingly showing,” says Régis Gougeon, a professor of enology at the University of Burgundy

in Dijon, France, who has been studying the subject for well over a decade, “is that changing sulfite additions—or eliminating them—means modifying the organoleptic characteristics of the wine and its whole chemical profile.”

Using or eschewing SO₂ at various stages of winemaking has effects on an array of chemical compounds in wine. Phenolic compounds like tannins and anthocyanins—and the way they combine at the molecular level—are modified by the sulfite levels in fermenting or aging wine in a variety of ways that are still not fully understood. Notably, SO₂ acts in combination with oxygen and/or acetaldehyde to affect color and mouthfeel.

The type and prevalence of aromatic components like esters and thiols are also affected. For instance, in Sauvignon Blanc, greater sulfite additions will favor the presence of thiols, sulfur-based compounds that provide aromas like grapefruit and passion fruit, especially if the wines are vinified using a reductive approach—such as in stainless steel tanks, with very limited contact with oxygen. Winemaking and barrel aging with little or no sulfur added, on the other hand, will sharply reduce the presence of these thiols, leading to a set of aromas that will trend more toward mineral, citrusy, or tropical notes.

The list goes on. Sulfur-related reactions will affect the formation and prevalence of many other compounds, like aldehydes, which are linked to

the appearance of oxidative character; amino acids, which are involved in the development of various polyphenols and aromatic compounds; peptides and fusel alcohols; and things like hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), which can produce reductive off-flavors like rotten egg, and various polysulfides. The way sulfur is present in the wine—whether bound in those various compounds or available as free SO₂—also affects the way chemical reactions will develop during and after vinification.

Not only are the effects of sulfite-related decisions wide ranging but they are long lasting: Using the same grapes to make different wines with different sulfite regimens will cause the bouquet, mouthfeel, and color of each wine to differ in the short term and the long term. A study published in *Analytical Chemistry* in July 2015 by Gougeon and his colleagues showed that “memories” of sulfur additions persisted in Chardonnays that had undergone three different levels of sulfite additions—even after several years of bottle aging. The differences in chemical composition linked to sulfite additions persisted even as the wines evolved in bottle.

“The choices made on this front, especially at the start of the process, will lead to a completely different molecular fingerprint in the wine, and to very different trajectories for the wine's evolution in bottle,” says Gougeon. “You're choosing either to create a pool of antioxidants in the wine or to have wines where the oxidative



processes have already taken place. The earlier the sulfite additions, the more the sulfur stays in the wine.” It’s not just that a higher concentration stays in the wine, but that the SO₂ lingers longer because it has been more intrinsically bound into the wine. “And there’s a kind of addictive process at work,” Gougeon continues. “Once you start adding SO₂, you often need to keep adding more.” Otherwise, the sulfur will dissipate, weakening the barrier against oxidation.

MAPPING SULFUR’S EFFECTS

Over the course of the past decade, researchers have used a new method of study called metabolomics to learn more about the effects of sulfur on wines. Metabolomics combines different modes of analysis-like gas chromatography and mass spectrometry-to create an exhaustive map of the chemical landscape of a particular substance. Whereas chemical analysis most often targets specific compounds, metabolomics seeks to show every molecule, known or unknown, to create a complete picture of a particular wine. When a researcher performs this analysis before and after a substance has been exposed to, say, oxidation or sulfite additions, this untargeted, wide-range approach allows all the changes in the substance’s chemical fingerprint to be made visible, including those of compounds that haven’t been known to change-or even known to exist.

“We knew a few thousand compounds were present in wine,” says Gougeon, “but now, through metabolomics, we know there are tens of thousands, many of which have yet to be identified.” He

also points out that some of these still-unknown families of chemical compounds seem to participate significantly in oxidative processes and reactions to sulfite additions, so much more remains to be learned.

For instance, a study published in *Nature* in January 2018 that was led by Fulvio Mattivi, a researcher at the Fondazione Edmund Mach in Trento, Italy, and a leader in the use of metabolomics in wine research, showed that compounds called flavanols and indoles, which play a role in the mouthfeel and aging characteristics of wine, are significantly affected by the use of SO₂ during winemaking. This research led to the identification of several new compounds that seem to have significant effects on a wine’s character and evolution during bottle aging-notably, how tannins get smoother over time. In the paper’s conclusion, the authors recommend the reevaluation of SO₂ chemistry and its effects on wine-something for which metabolomics is opening new avenues.

THE WINEMAKER’S POINT OF VIEW

On a more practical level, how do the effects of different sulfite regimens express themselves in the cellar? Some winemakers who have produced both sulfite-added and no-added-sulfur wines in parallel concur with Gougeon’s ideas about the very distinct trajectories produced by both approaches.

Matthieu Carliez, the technical director for the estates of the Vignobles JeanJean group in the Languedoc region of France, vinifies with and without sulfite additions. As the group has been turning to organic viticulture,

it’s also experimenting with some no-sulfur winemaking at smaller estates, both to respond to market demand and to expand its approaches in vinification.

Carliez’s outlook is largely aligned with the results of Gougeon’s studies, particularly with regard to oxidation. “Wines that have had sulfite additions from the beginning have been protected from interaction with oxygen at all times,” he says, “whereas those that see no added sulfites fight oxygen and get used to it from the start. As a result, their longer-term resistance to oxygen tends to be greater.”

Claire Naudin, the owner and winemaker of Domaine Naudin-Ferrand in Burgundy, has seen similar results over the last 10 years. A portion of her Pinot Noirs get crushed, destemmed, and sulfited at the crush pad, while the rest are whole-bunch fermented and foot trodden, with no sulfur added at any point of vinification or barrel aging. The former approach allows her to maintain the style traditionally associated with the domaine, while the latter is an opportunity for her to expand the range of wines and terroir expression.

“The no-sulfur wines tend to taste older when they’re young,” Naudin says. “That goes with their color, which can have a slight orange tinge-but as the wines get older, they keep showing a remarkable freshness of fruit.” Since oxygen has entered the process more actively and earlier on, aromatic traits usually linked

WINE CHEMISTRY

continued on page 36.



U.S. Senators Introduce Tobacco 21 Bill

Senate Majority Leader McConnell and Sen. Kaine co-sponsored the federal measure

■ BY NACS ONLINE

On May 20th, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) joined together on a bill that would put the federal minimum tobacco buying age at 21, the Washington Post reports. The proposal comes as more states are mandating a 21 minimum age for tobacco and vaping products.

"Today, we are coming together to side with young people's health," said Kaine. "With this bipartisan

legislation, Senator McConnell and I are working to address one of the most significant public health issues facing our nation today."

In April, McConnell announced his intention of introducing the bill as part of his campaign to reduce e-cig use among teens. "We've heard from countless parents who have seen the youth vaping crisis firsthand," he said. "Together, Senator Kaine and I are addressing this public health crisis head-on. By making it more difficult for tobacco products to end up in the

hands of middle school and high school students, we can protect our children and give them the opportunity to grow and develop into healthy adults."

With McConnell's support, the Tobacco-Free Youth Act will likely go to the Senate floor for a vote after passing through the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, where Kaine is a member. Meanwhile, Altria and Juul Labs have both gone on record in favor of a federal minimum tobacco buying age of 21. ■

Walmart Adopts Tobacco 21 Purchase Age

The retail giant also will stop selling certain flavored e-cigarettes as of July 1st

■ BY NACS ONLINE

Walmart has announced it will raise the minimum age to 21 to purchase tobacco products across all U.S. stores starting July 1st, Reuters reports. The retail giant's move follows those of drugstore chains Walgreens and Rite Aid in recent weeks to stop selling tobacco products to customers younger than age 21.

In a letter to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, the world's largest retailer said it also will discontinue the sale of fruit- and dessert-flavored electronic cigarettes as part of efforts to battle increased vaping among teens.

In March, the FDA put 15 national retailers, including Walmart, Kroger, Walgreens, Boots Alliance and Family Dollar Stores, on notice for allegedly

selling tobacco products, such as e-cigarettes, to underage consumers. While studies show that e-cigarettes have the potential to shift lifelong smokers onto less harmful nicotine products, many health professionals fear that they could draw a new generation into nicotine addiction.

Walmart said the FDA has conducted approximately 12,800 compliance checks involving minors at Walmart stores and Sam's Club locations nationwide since 2010. During that period, Walmart stores passed 93% and Sam's Club cleared 99% of those checks. Last year, Walmart stores cleared 94% of the 2,400 FDA checks and Sam's Club passed 100% of its 15 checks, Reuters reports.

"While we have implemented a robust compliance program, we

are not satisfied with falling short of our companywide goal of 100% compliance," John Scudder, U.S. chief ethics and compliance officer for Walmart, said in the letter. "Even a single sale to a minor is one too many."

The letter also assured the FDA that Walmart would remain focused on improving its compliance rates, and any sale-to-minor violation would be dealt with promptly. The company will continue to use internal and external data, including FDA data, to implement alerts, controls, training and monitoring to reduce the risk of an underage sale. This year, the company plans to conduct 8,000 secret-shopper visits, and any worker who fails a secret-shop will be required to complete a "corrective action plan." ■

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Organics Sales Top \$50 Billion in U.S.

Sales are accelerating quicker than nonorganics, but the overall organic growth rate is easing



■ BY NACS ONLINE

U.S. organic sales are still growing faster than the general market, topping \$50 billion for the first

time in 2018, according to the Organic Trade Association (OTA), the Minneapolis Star Tribune reports. “Organic is now considered mainstream. But the attitudes surrounding organic are anything but status quo,” said Laura Batcha, CEO of the association.

However, that rate is not advancing as quickly, a sign that the organic market is reaching a maturation point as new health and wellness claims siphon off shopper dollars. The organics market was bolstered by non-food categories, such as personal care, pet food and household goods products. “Consumers want clean labels and to reduce the chemical load on their bodies,” the OTA said.

“The (U.S.) population isn’t growing as quickly as it once did, and the fertility rate is declining,” said Michael Boland, director of the Food Industry Center at the University of Minnesota’s Department of Applied Economics. “The [organic market] maturing is happening, I think, because people have decided they don’t need to be 100% organic, and people are only going to fill their baskets with so many fruits and vegetables.”

Boland pointed to more health claims on labels that attract shoppers, such as plant-based ingredients and healthy fats. “The space has become more complicated,” Boland said. “You have a fragmentation going on.” ■

C-Stores Gain Traction on Quick-Service Restaurants

43% of millennials purchase more food from c-stores now than three years ago

■ BY NACS ONLINE

Convenience stores are giving quick-service restaurants a run for their money, especially among younger shoppers. Foodservice sales account for 23% of sales at convenience stores in the U.S., according to NACS State of the Industry Data. That’s a 3% growth in the past five years.

One in four Americans spent \$6-\$10 at least once a week on convenience store foodservice items, according to a new GasBuddy report. Among consumers ages 18 to 29, 20% visit

a convenience store for food three to four times a month and spend \$10-\$15 at least once a week.

It’s coming down to speed and convenience. Restaurant Dive reports that Americans aren’t looking to wait in drive-thru lines anymore, or pair getting gas with grabbing a bite. Fifty-six percent of Americans have purchased a meal at least once per month in a c-store, and 25% of Americans age 30 to 44 have purchased food at a c-store five or more times a month.

Restaurant Dive noted the recent efforts made by Wawa, 7-Eleven, Casey’s and QuikTrip

to expand their retail footprints and meal offerings. Wawa is bringing digital integration to its stores, while 7-Eleven is testing a new wave of food and beverages in Los Angeles. Casey’s now has a pizza parlor and bakery with donuts made from scratch, and QuikTrip has added made-to-order sub sandwiches in Tulsa and Wichita.

The article pointed out that c-stores have a big opportunity here to expand their horizons and move away from the stereotypical food that QSRs and c-stores are often perceived to offer. ■



OHIO //

Ohio Medical Marijuana Industry Slow to Grow Under State Regulations

■ BY PATRICK COOLEY // THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Ohio's medical marijuana industry is more tightly regulated than any other type of business in the Buckeye State, and industry insiders say that regulation has delayed the opening of many dispensaries.

Four months after dispensaries were officially allowed to sell marijuana in Ohio, only 17 of the 56 dispensaries that were granted provisional licenses have been given operating licenses. Of the five proposed dispensaries in Columbus, only Terrasana Cannabis Co. on Grandview Avenue is open.

The resulting lack of competition is one of many factors contributing to high-priced products, said Mary Jane Borden, co-founder of the Ohio Rights Group, which advocates for medicinal cannabis users. The expense could send some patients to the illegal market, she said.

Some of the delay stems from the fledgling industry's growing pains, industry experts said. But many also blame the stringent application process. Before dispensaries acquire their operating licenses, they must show the Ohio Board of Pharmacy that their operations follow the plans outlined in their application to the letter.

"A big selling point was that we were going to have solar panels on the roof," said Bobby George, who owns Rise, a chain of five dispensaries in Ohio. The pharmacy

board "made sure we did it."

Rise opened two dispensaries, in Toledo and Lorain, on May 1, and its three others have provisional licenses.

George said the industry needs to open dispensaries at a faster pace, but he doesn't begrudge state officials for making sure that dispensary owners stick to the pledges in their applications.

"Their job is to manage the process," he said.

State officials say dispensaries receive extra scrutiny, because marijuana is still illegal at the federal level.

"There needs to be safeguards in place," said Ali Simon, public and policy affairs liaison for the pharmacy board. "Patient safety is crucial to us."

Some cannabis industry representatives say the state is taking those safeguards to an unnecessary level.

"I would say the problem rests with the micromanagement and overzealous regulations and controls," said Tim Johnson, co-founder of the Ohio Cannabis Chamber of Commerce, which promotes the medical cannabis industry. "Let the market work."

Bob Bridges, a patient advocate and member of the state Medical Marijuana Advisory Board, said Ohio's cannabis industry is being unfairly over-regulated. Liquor stores, which also sell an intoxicating substance, and pharmacies, which also sell

medication, have far fewer hoops to jump through, he said.

"It's not like reinventing the wheel," Bridges said. "We have pharmacies in Ohio. There are (rules and regulations) to go on already."

"Some dispensary owners wrote in their applications that they would hire employees trained in states with existing medical marijuana programs, not realizing how difficult that pledge would be to fulfill," said Brian Wingfield, who owns the Ohio Cannabis Co. dispensary in Coshocton, which opened in March.

"You have to get your employees hired, licensed in Ohio, then licensed in that other state, and then send them to that other state for training, and bring them back for your inspection," Wingfield said.

State officials warned dispensary owners early in the process not to put anything in their application if they couldn't make it happen, he added.

Simon said that any changes by dispensaries to the plans outlined in their application need the approval of the pharmacy board, and they must cite a valid reason for their proposed changes.

"Additionally, licenses are limited, and unlike pharmacies, dispensaries go through a competitive approval process," Simon said. "Holding dispensaries to the promises made in their applications kept the process fair," she said. ■



Philip Morris Envisions Smokeless Future

The COO said the company would eventually quit nicotine, as well

■ BY NACS ONLINE

Philip Morris International has a vision for the future, and it doesn't include cigarettes, FOX Business reports. COO Jacek Olczak told FOX's Stuart Varney that the company will "absolutely 100%" going smokeless.

"We can un-smoke consumers—we can un-smoke Philip Morris," Olczak said. The company already has been working on alternatives to cigarettes, including a heat-not-burn IQOS product, which the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved for sale in the United States.

"The way we see it, we will be moving Philip Morris out of combustion," he said. "And based on scientific capability to one day move Philip Morris beyond nicotine."

When asked the timeline for such a move away from cigarettes



and other smoked tobacco products, Olczak said, "I wish we will achieve it before I retire. So, I still have a few years to go. ... Now that we're gearing up where I'm located most of the resources, there are a full alignment of all our employees, our board staffing. We have a right wing into our sales to achieve something

that, you know, 15 or so years ago would be just a dream."

Tobacco products have increasingly come under scrutiny lately, as more states have raised the tobacco-buying age to 21, and Congress is considering a bill to make 21 the federal minimum tobacco purchase age. ■

WINE CHEMISTRY

continued from page 31.

to aging tend to emerge earlier. As a counterpoint, the wine usually remains more aromatically stable over time, since the oxidative reactions that yield those traits have already taken place.

Naudin has also noticed that sulfur has an effect on aromatics during and after fermentation, particularly in red wines. "During alcoholic fermentation, the impact is enormous," she says. "In the no-sulfur wines, the focus is entirely on fruit, without any

reductive notes-gamey, cassis, or even garlicky notes in reds. For me, the cassis notes are very much connected to sulfur additions before fermentation." She also notices more floral notes in her unsulfured red wines, though she admits that this could result from the whole-bunch fermentation. The tannins in these wines also tend to be softer and the color lighter.

Gougeon believes that a better understanding of how sulfur affects wine style could lead winemakers toward less dogmatic approaches to sulfite management. "In some vintages, you might want to use

sulfites at the beginning, and in others, at the end of the process," he says. "What we are currently lacking is a reliable set of indicators that could tell winemakers which wines could be made without sulfur and which ones might need some. It would be better to use markers of potential stability in the wines, rather than preestablished, uniform protocols."

If such indicators could be provided to winemakers, future decisions about sulfite additions might become more effective and more pragmatic-and less about ideology or fashionable ideas. ■

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Greater Chicago Food Depository	(773) 247-3663
Northern Illinois Foodbank	(630) 443-6910
Peoria Area Food Bank	(309) 671-3906
River Bend Foodbank	(563) 345-6490
St. Louis Area Foodbank	(314) 292-6262
Tri-State Foodbank	(812) 425-0775





JUNE 18, 2019

**MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS
FOUNDATION'S 10TH ANNUAL
SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON**

Every year, the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation awards academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 each to extraordinary and deserving students in Michigan, Ohio and Illinois. Help the MIR Foundation invest in the leaders of tomorrow. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities available. Special Keynote Speaker: 2-Time NBA Champion, Isiah Thomas, Detroit Pistons.

Detroit Athletic Club // Detroit, MI



JUNE 20, 2019

MIRA'S 14TH ANNUAL OHIO GOLF OUTING

This outing is a social event where retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers and service providers all come together to have a little competitive fun. A day on the course includes breakfast, dinner and 18 holes of golf!

Shale Creek Golf Club // Medina, OH



JULY 17, 2019

**MIRA'S 43RD 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



SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

**MIRA'S 21ST ANNUAL HOLIDAY
FOOD & BEVERAGE BUYING SHOW**

As Michigan's largest liquor show, retailers and on- and off-premise licensees come from miles to see, sample and buy a wide variety of new products. Admission for MIRA members is free. Must be 21 years or older to attend this show.

Suburban Collection Showplace // Novi, MI

publishers statement

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