

# BottomLine



THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS // VOL. 30, NO. 9 // SEPTEMBER 2019



## The 39th Annual “High Five” Turkey Drive is Getting Underway

Mark your calendar for  
November 21 & 22, 2019

pg 18

■ Isiah Thomas Gives Back // PAGE 04

■ Consumer Demands Changing in the Tobacco Category // PAGE 09

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## columns

**02** PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
People In Our Lives Matter

**06** COMMUNICATIONS CORNER  
5 Ways to Motivate Instead  
of Deflate Employees

**08** PETROLEUM NEWS & VIEWS  
Customer's Pet Peeves  
re: Cashiers

**10** GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPORT  
The Wilderness Confronted  
as Independent Retailers

**12** MICHIGAN LOTTERY REPORT  
Doubler Days Returns in September,  
Expected to Boost Club Keno Sales

**14** MICHIGAN LOBBYIST REPORT  
Fall Session Begins with  
Big Issues on Tap

**14** OHIO LOBBYIST REPORT  
Legislature in Recess, Your Home is Safe

**16** OHIO LIQUOR REPORT  
Preventing Underage Sale  
of Alcohol

## departments

**20** RETAILER SPOTLIGHT  
Catering to the Community

**22** BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT  
Representing the Industry

**24** WHERE ARE THEY NOW  
MIRF Scholarship Recipients  
Now Doctors

**26** EXPRESS LINES  
Industry-Wide Items of Interest

**34** SUPPLIER DIRECTORY  
Your Resource for Products and Services

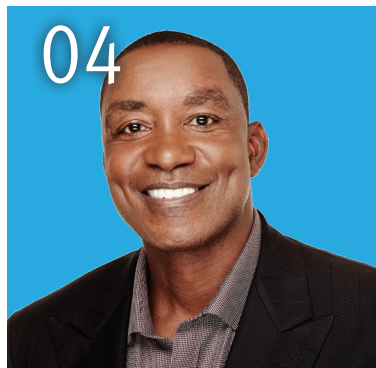
**36** MIRA CALENDAR  
Upcoming Industry Events



# BottomLine

THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS  
VOL. 30, NO. 9 // SEPTEMBER 2019

## features



### ISIAH THOMAS GIVES BACK

Isiah Thomas is a man of many talents and his ability to see the world through various lenses enables him to relate to a diverse group of people. The All-Star NBA Bad Boy turned Entrepreneur known for his start up successes, Thomas continues to shoot for the basket and scoring.



### CONSUMER DEMANDS CHANGING IN THE TOBACCO CATEGORY

In July, I wrote about what retailers could do right now in order to see immediate success. One of the recommendations was expanding Other Tobacco Products (OTP) space and reviewing your price strategy in this critical category. The OTP categories and cigarette categories are a very dynamic right now and having the correct product assortment and price strategy is crucial, in order to satisfy evolving consumer demands.



### COVER STORY //

#### THE 39TH ANNUAL "HIGH FIVE" TURKEY DRIVE IS GETTING UNDERWAY

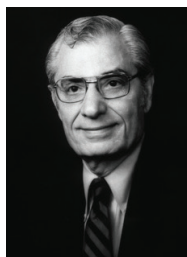
Every year, the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation Turkey Drive Committee pledges to put a turkey on the Thanksgiving table of more than 6,000 families throughout Michigan, Ohio and Illinois that may not otherwise enjoy this special meal.



# president's message

AUDAY P. ARABO, ESQ. // MIRA PRESIDENT & CEO

## People In Our Lives Matter



WADIE P. DEDDEH

In late August, one of my role models passed away, retired California State Senator Wadie P. Deddeh. This man was the epitome of the American Dream, which so many of you in our industry represent today. Uncle Wadie, as I lovingly referred to him, since he was also related to my grandparents. He was born in the Middle East and immigrated to Detroit via Ellis Island. He worked for a few stores in Detroit before he realized it was not for him. Uncle Wadie was formally educated in Baghdad, moved to California where he met his wife, Mary Lynn, of 60 plus years. He taught political science and history before he ran for California State Assembly in 1966. He was the only Democrat that year to beat a Republican incumbent during the Reagan revolution.

Even as a Democrat, Uncle Wadie was a very close friend to Governor Ronald Reagan and authored a number of important pieces of legislation which still stand today. Most notably, he authored the bill that created the highway system in California, better known as Caltrans. Fittingly, in 2006 the new Caltrans building in San Diego, a \$60 million building, was named after Senator Wadie Deddeh as the "Father of Caltrans." Uncle Wadie is survived by his wife Mary Lynn, his son Peter Deddeh, who serves as the Presiding Judge in the Superior Court of San Diego County, as well as three wonderful grandchildren, Trevor, Samantha and Alexandra.

Some of you may be reading and asking why does this matter to me? Well if it was not for Uncle Wadie, I would not be your President & CEO at the Midwest Independent Retailers Association. Uncle Wadie, along with my father Sam (who was an independent grocer) convinced me to leave the Prosecutor's office in San Diego and run a retailer trade association in California. The experience I gained at the retailer's association convinced me to become involved in politics and run for office. After my election loss, I was hired by MIRA, formerly known as AFPD. The way we have developed our approaches to government in the Midwest is reminiscent of Uncle Wadie. We are always working toward better public policy, good policy over partisan politics and a win-win scenario for all involved. This has contributed to MIRA's success over the years and even when we have lost, we have garnered the respect of many on both sides of the aisle. In this era of term limits and bi-partisan bomb throwing, we need to step back and recognize the passing of true "Statesmen" like Senator Wadie P. Deddeh, serving from 1966 to 1991, who today both Democrats and Republicans remember and celebrate his life and memory fondly. It is a reminder that there are number of good people out there and many of them are in our industry and come from our industry to serve the public good, like our own former MIRA Chairman Joe Bellino, Jr, from Monroe, Michigan.

I recommend more of you to get involved in local politics and make a difference in your communities and in your trade. Always remember that "all politics are local." Please watch out for those that abuse our political system seeking the next office in this era of terms limits. They are out there, but over time people always see through smoke and mirrors. On another note, we are very excited that the Michigan Governor Whitmer has appointed Pat Gagliardi as the new Chairman of the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC). Pat has been a great friend over the many years that he was in the legislature and during his previous service on the MLCC. Like Senator Deddeh, Pat Gagliardi is a fair and decent man who believes in serving the public and is well respected on both sides of the political aisle. We look forward to work with the new Chairman! God bless you and your families. Take a moment to hug, kiss and spend some time with those that we love in our lives! ■

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## Isiah Thomas Gives Back

■ BY DENHA MEDIA GROUP

Isiah Thomas is a man of many talents and his ability to see the world through various lenses enables him to relate to a diverse group of people. The All-Star NBA Bad Boy turned Entrepreneur known for his start up successes, Thomas continues to shoot for the basket and scoring. He is now building a relationship with the Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA) through his champagne, Cheurlin.

He recently reflected on the keynote address he delivered at the annual Scholarship Luncheon. "It was great meeting the kids and also just seeing the smiles of the proud parents," said Thomas. "When you deliver a speech, you never know who you are touching and who that little kid is

going to grow up to be. I was very enthused about the young kids and meeting them and learning about the futures ahead for them."

His ability to relate to young kids and their struggles resulted in a moving message and his desire to give back. "I was one of those kids who benefited from a lot of charity," recalled Thomas. "Many people helped me along the way and it is important to give back, to give others a chance, an opportunity. I met so many generous people along the way who encouraged and sponsored me. Who fed me meals and got me clothes to wear. I wouldn't have made it without their help. I would not have made it to the places I made it to, so I always try to give back and help others the way I was helped."

Thomas also attributes his



success to research and doing his homework. The work he did in learning about champagne in general, and particularly his Cheurlin brand, enables him to educate others about the bubbly.

"I want people to be educated consumers," he said. "We only use the high volume first presses which are of the highest quality. The first press is the absolute best press of the champagne that we are bringing into the United States."

Cheurlin is one of the only







high-volume sellers of champagne that uses the first press of the grape, which is the highest quality of champagne.

“Cheurlin Champagne is the highest quality of champagne you are going to get on the shelf in the United States,” he said. “We want to bring you the highest quality champagne at an affordable price. I am bringing you the fresh press of the grape.” It is also a low sugar champagne.

Cheurlin will be on display at MIRA’s 21st Annual Holiday Food & Beverage Show. “It is important to partner with an organization that can help market your product,” said Thomas. “When you want to get the word out and people to know about your product, MIRA and their beverage show is the place you go, particularly in the state of Michigan. This partnership with MIRA is extremely important.”

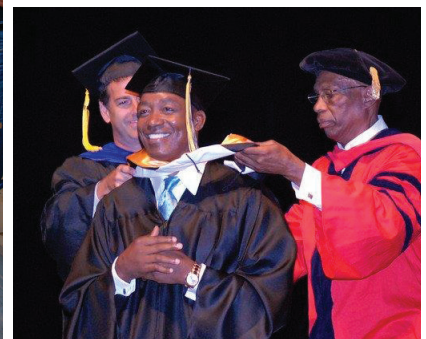
His goal for Cheurlin is the same goal he had on the basketball court – to be number 1. “When I represented Michigan, we wanted to be number 1, just like we captured Detroit with the Pistons. The team continue to get better,” he explained. “A lot people across the country didn’t know who we were, or how good we were, and once they got introduced to the Detroit Pistons, they found out we were the best team. My goal for the champagne is to show people across the state of Michigan how good our champagne is. Once they get introduced to the quality of our champagne, they will quickly find out that we are the best on the shelf.”

His many experiences prepared him for his life as the owner of a champagne company. “As a player, I was the president of the

MBPA Players Association and today they are partnered with us,” said Thomas. The 450 players are equity owners of the champagne. “They are not just endorsing it.”

In the state of Michigan, Thomas has a significant track record as a business owner from taking American Speedy Printing out of bankruptcy. He was on the cover of Forbes magazine at a young age.

He ventured into the popcorn business and he owned the Toronto Raptors. He was also involved in startups. In addition to his hands-on experiences as an entrepreneur Thomas earned a degree from the University of Indiana in Criminal Justice and later a Master’s degree from the University of California Berkley. “I really worked hard for that degree and not once ever mentioned it,” laughed Thomas. “I just wanted to mention it.” ■





# communications corner

VANESSA DENHA-GARMO // FOUNDER, DENHA MEDIA GROUP

## 5 Ways to Motivate Instead of Deflate Employees

**A**s the owner or manager of the business, you have a variety of responsibilities including managing a team of people. You not only have to manage teams and departments, but you have to motivate people. There is a defined line between being a leader who coaches and one who criticizes.

There are employees who need to be micromanaged; if you are not keeping a check list of their responsibilities, they may not get done. There are self-motivating employees who have bosses that micromanage even if they don't need it. Both have negative affects on the work environment.

Regardless, people make mistakes, they need to be properly trained or they just might not understand something.

How you communicate often defines how you lead and sometimes it's all in the phrasing.

When correcting an employee here are some suggested word changes that could motivate instead of deflate someone.

### DON'T ASK WHY?

Why questions often put people on the defensive. When a mistake is made, a boss might ask: why did this happen or why did you do this? Instead, consider rephrasing. How do you think this could have been handled differently to avoid this mistake? What plans can we put in place to avoid such a mistake?

### NO MORE OF THE PHRASE, "YOU SHOULD'VE"

Another way to transform a problem into a teachable moment is to consider changing the phrase "you should have," to one that is more empowering. "You should have" are also deflating words. Instead, use the phrase,

Next time or In the Future... This way the person knows she made a mistake, but she has an opportunity to do it better in the future.

### QUESTION THE QUESTION

It was once said that "The greatest remedy for anger is delay." How do you do that? Answer a question with a question. If a staff member is questioning you and you need time to think, put the responsibility back on him by asking for further explanation. What do you mean by that? This is also helpful if the employee is upset and making accusatory statements or critical comments.

### ACKNOWLEDGE, DON'T ARGUE

Author Sam Horn wrote a book and coined the title Tongue Fu! And, one of the many lessons she shared is the importance of acknowledging someone's feelings or issues. You may not agree with stuff, but they do have their own feelings about the workplace, so acknowledge it. "I hear what you are saying, but I don't know why you have an issue with this." That statement infuriates. How about rephrasing it to something that motivates. I understand how you feel and I think we can work this out, so your concerns are addressed.

### SHOW THAT YOU CARE

People want to be understood. Your staff needs to know you care. Instead of saying something like, "Now, that is not true. Management does appreciate the team." When someone is upset, start by reflecting on what they said: So, you feel like management doesn't appreciate you? Instead of saying, "don't be ridiculous, we don't treat that team better than yours." Instead say, "So, it seems to you like we treat Bob's team better than your team?" Don't tell someone how they should feel. Instead, articulate that she is understood. Instead of saying, "You shouldn't feel like we don't communicate well with you." Consider saying, "So you want us to have more staff meetings, so we can improve the way we communicate." ■

*Vanessa Denha Garmo is a Communications Strategist and Leadership Coach with Denha Media Group and the Communications Evangelist Institute.*



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# petroleum news & views

EDWARD WEGLARZ // MIRA DIRECTOR, PETROLEUM

## Customer's Pet Peeves re: Cashiers

**Y**ou can have quality products, a clean store, inviting displays, a convenient location, expanded hours and still lose control at the very conclusion of the customer's visit to your store. How, do you ask? The way the cashier handles the payment transaction!

Here are some "pet peeves" as detailed by unhappy customers, who probably will not complain, but take their business to another store.

- **Not counting back change.** An efficient cashier will acknowledge the amount received from the customer and count back the customers change. In addition, give the customers the coins back first, rather than "balance" the coins on top of a stack of slippery bills. This procedure shows respect and helps avoid confusion regarding how much was received by the cashier initially, and how much was given back in change.
- **Cashiers on the phone.** The in-person customer, with cash or credit card in hand, deserves your undivided attention, not the person on the phone. Be polite to the caller, put him/her on HOLD, and accommodate the in-person customer.
- **Cashiers talking with each other while ignoring customers.** Conduct both personal and your employment discussions in the break room, not in front of customers waiting for service. Your job is to talk with customers: greeting, helping, thanking them.
- **Scanning items without acknowledging the customer.** Or talking with another employee while scanning your customers purchases.
- **Ignoring customers difficulty with point-of-sale payment equipment.** There are several different methods of payment and multiple versions of payment machines, each requiring different keystroke sequences. Don't just stand there and let the customer struggle. Give a hand!
- **Two or more employees talking to the same customer, answering the customer's question (i.e. travel directions).** The customer asking for directions should get attention AFTER customers who are making purchases. And if multiple employees are working, only one should be talking to the lost traveler. Two or more employees providing directions is confusing for the traveler and disrespectful to the paying customer.

As an owner/manager you can have some fun training your employees to implement appropriate cashier behavior and avoid the "pet peeves" of customers. Do some role-playing and demonstrate how the above situations can help keep or lose customers. ■







## Consumer Demands Changing in the Tobacco Category

In July, I wrote about what retailers could do right now in order to see immediate success. One of the recommendations was expanding Other Tobacco Products (OTP) space and reviewing your price strategy in this critical category. The OTP categories and cigarette categories are a very dynamic right now and having the correct product assortment and price strategy is crucial, in order to satisfy evolving consumer demands.

In recent months, Bonnie Herzog, managing director of consumer equity research for Wells Fargo Securities, New York, has suggested that portfolio diversification has been helping tobacco companies prepare for the future. We are seeing this play out as vaping cartridges and tobacco-free nicotine pouches have been category leaders so far in 2019. According to Don Burke at MSA, even with JUUL pulling flavored-vaping cartridges (or pods) last fall, e-cigarette and their components continue to increase in volume and sales for C-Stores. Cartridge volume grew 171.7% by serving units at convenience stores for the year ending June 29, compared to the previous year. Growth at all retail outlets for cartridges was up 160.6% year-over-year, with c-stores representing 78% of cartridge distribution across all channels. The only other products surpassing vaping cartridges in the past year were tobacco-free nicotine products. Products like pouches and lozenges. These products saw a 237% increase in consumer units year-over-year, with 91% of that distribution going through convenience stores. Maximizing sales on these products are especially crucial given that cigarettes declined 4.8% in c-stores for the year ending June 29, compared to the previous year.

As our industry faces sharp declines in the cigarette category, its time for many retailers to take a hard look at the cigarette category. There are actually some positives that retailers can build upon. As premium cigarettes continue to decline, the discount/private label segment is showing 1% to 2% growth. I believe this trend will continue. Adding discount brands is a way to grow sales. Retailers implementing this strategy are focused on growing overall transactions! In 2018, transactions were down 2.3%. So as an industry, we are selling more stuff to less people. Large chains are doing this with food service. Independent retailers need to be doing it with food service too, but unfortunately many don't have the same food service offerings when it comes to branded food or a made to order programs, so they need to look at other opportunities to grow sales. I realize getting off of the RJ EDLP program is a scary proposition for many retailers. I certainly don't think it is the right decision for every retailer, especially if you have a high Newport share or if your business is heavily reliant on Newport volume. If you do decide to get off of the RJ EDLP program you will lose some Pall Mall and Newport sales. That's inevitable. However, there are many retailers that have grown their weekly cigarette sales volume by attracting new consumers which is increasing their overall transactions. These retailers know that the market basket transaction of a cigarette consumer is one of the highest in the C-store industry. They are NOT looking at the cigarette category purely through the lens of pennies profit generated on each pack. They are evaluating it on the profit generated per transaction! More pennies profit per transaction and more transactions equals greater profitability.

To help our members navigate this opportunity, we are launching our new partnership with Xcaliber International at the MIRA trade show. Xcaliber is the maker of Edgefield cigarettes. Over the last 4 quarters Edgefield cigarettes has achieved a growth rate of 9%. Both S. Abraham and Sons and Team Sledd stock Edgefield and are currently available. ■



# government relations report

JUAN ESCAREÑO // MIRA DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## The Wilderness Confronted as Independent Retailers

*"There is nothing in front but a flat wilderness of standardization either by Bolshevism or Big Business. But it is strange that some of us should have seen sanity, if only in a vision, while the rest go forward chained eternally to enlargement without liberty and progress without hope."* – G.K. CHESTERTON

In the early twentieth century, G.K. Chesterton lamented the changes forced upon England's merchant class by politicians and bureaucrats. He saw the left, Bolshevism, attempting to use the means of government to enforce a standard upon business that they themselves would not live by. A standard that was meant to enforce their utopia upon the masses, willing or not. But on the right, Big Business, he also saw them attempting to use the means of government to enforce a collectivist attitude towards business. The right wanted laws to be shaped so that the little guy, the independent shop owner, and the family store could be snuffed out by legislation and regulation.

G.K. Chesterton saw the little guy confronted by a struggle on two fronts. On one side we have progressives advocating for legislation that is bad for business. All we have to do is look at the ordinance passed by the Chicago City Council upon retail locations with 100 or more employees. The control of the schedule has been handed to the employee without recourse for the employer. A definitive blow to the small business owner wanting to grow in Chicago.

On the other side of the struggle, big business. They fair no better for the little guy trying to grow his business. Big Business looks for opportunities to shape laws and regulations that will make the playing field uneven in their favor. They want to drive the cost of doing business up while driving the cost of products like liquor, or fuel down for themselves. They are the first to surrender to pedant laws because it cost the little guy more money to comply. Hence the first to surrender in Chicago against the progressives were some of the big chains. No surprise.

Both sides offer a liberty paid for at an enormous cost. Liberty for them is acting upon the legislation they seek. It hurts them none that new regulations or laws make your business less profitable. It troubles them none to see a collectivist move in laws for food, fuel, or liquor. The progressive and big business want the same results but only with a different leader. True liberty is allowing the small business owner the opportunity to grow and compete on just and fair terms.

The truth is known by us in this field. A growth in wealth that benefits more people is found in the nucleus of the independent retailer feeding his family, and employing countless people so that they may have an opportunity to advance. Most independent retailers seek to pay a just wage and schedule fairly. Most regulations and laws advocated by our adversaries on both sides only hinder you from maximizing on the potential of your business.

In these trying times, MIRA is here to continue advocating for reasonable regulations that make it fair for everyone. A person or entity should not have an advantage simply because they are bigger. Chicago passing this scheduling law shows more than ever the need to be in MIRA. Here we can act as a collective voice of reason against the opposing sides in this wilderness. Together we will weather the tempest unleashed by our adversaries.

And finally, I want to ensure our members are compliant with current regulations. Take the opportunity to learn of the trainings MIRA offers for you and your staff and take 15 minutes a week to read our weekly email with updates.

MICHIGAN //

### THE LEFT HAND KNOWS NOT WHAT THE RIGHT HAND IS DOING

#### Quick bullet points if you retail CBD's:

- We have learned and confirmed that MDARD is requiring ALL retailers to obtain a \$1,350 processor license to retail CBDs.
- You cannot sell any food or drink items that contain CBDs because the FDA has not approved them for sell
- You may only retail items that have been licensed for sell in the State of Michigan (Ask your distributor for documentation)
- CBDs contains THC, which is still a controlled substance. The current laws and regulations have left

liquor stores in a gray area so we recommend waiting until the dust settles on these new product lines

- New regulations and laws are being pushed later this year and we will continue to keep you updated

#### What is MIRA doing for you in regard to CBDs:

- We are working on a legislation to reduce the retail licensing fee and making the process more transparent
- We are seeking clarification for liquor stores wanting to sell CBD's





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# michigan lottery report

BRIAN O. NEILL // MICHIGAN LOTTERY COMMISSIONER

## Doubler Days Returns in September, Expected to Boost Club Keno Sales

**M**ichigan Lottery players have a chance to double their fun this September when the popular Doubler Days promotion returns for the Club Keno game.

During the month of September, all Club Keno tickets purchased at Lottery retailers are eligible for Doubler Days. A Doubler message will be printed on random tickets and will double all prizes won on that ticket, and there is no additional cost to players. Club Keno Extra prizes also are included in the Doubler Days promotion. The Jack prizes and Club Keno Extra eight of 10, nine of 10, and 10 of 10 prizes are excluded from the promotion.



**MICHIGAN  
LOTTERY™**

This popular promotion has a strong track record of generating excitement among players and boosting Club Keno purchases.

The Doubler Days promotion offers double benefits to retailers with increased sales and increased commissions. Lottery retailers weren't the only ones to benefit from this successful promotion when it ran earlier this year. All told players won more than \$2.3 million in Doubler Days bonus prize money.

### **\$20,000,000 BLOWOUT! OFFERS MORE THAN \$2 MILLION IN SALES AND REDEMPTION COMMISSION**

The Lottery's newest \$10 instant game, \$20,000,000 Blowout!, offers players a chance to win exclusively \$50 and \$100 prizes. All told, the game offers more than \$21 million in total prizes available.

Based on the success of similar games in other jurisdictions, we expect this game to be very popular with players. Since this game offers players a chance to win \$50 or \$100, all prizes can be redeemed at Lottery retailers. That means more than \$2 million in sales and redemption commissions are available for retailers to earn. ■

*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](http://www.michiganlottery.com).*

## PULL TAB TICKETS // INSTANT TICKETS

### NEW PULL TAB TICKETS:

#### On sale September 3rd:

- MI 553 – Fantastic 4's – 50¢
- MI 548 – Godzilla – \$1

### PULL TABS SET TO EXPIRE:

#### Expiring September 12th:

- IT 875 – Quick Cash – \$1
- IT 876 – Last Call – \$1
- IT 877 – Winning Streak – \$2
- IT 878 – Money Maker – \$5

#### Expiring September 17th:

- MI 519 – Coin Quest – 50¢
- MI 521 – Bankroll Riches – \$2

#### Expiring October 15th:

- MI 509 – Stampeded Gold – \$1

### NEW INSTANT TICKETS:

#### On sale September 3rd:

- IG 292 – Lucky Doubler – \$2
- IG 307 – \$20,000,000 Blowout! – \$10
- IG 311 – Worth Millions – \$30

### INSTANT GAMES SET TO EXPIRE:

#### Expiring September 2nd:

- IG 782 – Amazing 8's – \$2
- IG 784 – Triple Million – \$10

#### Expiring October 7th:

- IG 208 – \$1,000,000 Gems – \$10
- IG 219 – Bonus Cashword – \$3

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



**01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10**  
**11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20**  
**21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30**  
**31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40**  
**41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50**  
**51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60**  
**61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70**  
**71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80**

**THE JACK**  
\$90,956

**KICKER**  
3x

**DRAW #**  
10000956

# DOUBLER DAYS<sup>SM</sup>

**Double their winnings.  
Double your redemption commission.**

Watch players have double the fun with DOUBLER DAYS in September. That's when random Club Keno tickets print with a doubler message. Lucky players who find that message on their ticket will double their winnings. And when a player doubles their winnings, you'll double your redemption commission. Tell your customers to play Club Keno today!



Applies to Club Keno, Kicker and Extra prizes only. The Jack prizes and Extra 10-spot game top prizes are excluded from this promotion. Club Keno, Kicker and Extra prizes will be doubled up to a maximum of \$4 million per draw. The Club Keno mark is a registered trademark with IGT Global Solutions Corporation. Overall odds of winning Club Keno are from 1 in 4 to 1 in 17. Overall odds of winning Extra are from 1 in 3 to 1 in 10. Knowing your limits is always the best bet. Call the Michigan Problem Gambling Helpline for confidential help at 1-800-270-7117.





## michigan lobbyist report

MATT MINER // CAPITOL STRATEGIES GROUP

### Fall Session Begins with Big Issues on Tap

**T**he fall legislative session begins in Lansing this month with several big ticket issues pending from the spring legislative session. The biggest hurdle for the legislature to finish is the 2019-2020 budget for the state of Michigan. The spring session concluded with the expectation that legislators and the Governor would hash out their differences over the summer and complete a budget before the October 1st deadline. As the summer wore on, it became clear that the talks weren't gaining traction, with both sides nowhere near compromise on how to raise funds to fix the roads. The Governor has insisted on connecting the road funding solution to the completion of the entire budget. Republicans have asserted that they are separate issues and have begun the process of passing a budget independent of extra road funds.

This stalemate has led many to wonder if a government shutdown is looming if the two sides can't come to an agreement by the October 1st deadline. Stay tuned for the fireworks.

#### FOIA EXEMPTION BILL READY FOR INTRODUCTION

Members of the House Regulatory Reform Committee have prepared a bill for introduction this fall that will exempt from the Freedom of Information Act all information relating to the sale of alcoholic beverages by private businesses. Currently, all sales derived from alcoholic beverages purchased from the state are accessible to the general public on the Michigan Liquor Control Commissions website. This means potential competing entities can see all purchases of spirits made by a certain store in a certain municipality. Without the half-mile rule in place to protect business owners from people from looking to poach customers, this measure is necessary to protect individual business rights.

MIRA lobbyists are working to get this bill brought before the house Regulatory Reform Committee this fall. ■



## ohio lobbyist report

TERRY FLEMING // TC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES

### Legislature in Recess, Your Home is Safe

**A**fter finally agreeing on a budget bill, the Ohio General Assembly recessed, most likely until October, or even November after the elections, but they will have some hearings in the meantime. Of course, after the shootings in Dayton where 9 people were murdered, gun control took center stage. Governor DeWine has proposed several bills on gun control, but it remains to be seen if the legislature will agree with him. Gun legislation is always a very divisive issue, with Democrats generally favoring strong gun laws and Republicans opposing them based on the second amendment. With the passage of HB 6, the bailout for nuclear power and coal companies, the opponent's tried to get a ballot

issue to overturn HB 6, but Attorney General David Yost threw out their initial language saying it was confusing and inaccurate.

MIRA language, designating the last week in September as Independent Retailer Week, got caught up in the delay of the budget and then the quick adjournment, but the sponsor assures me of passage prior to end of August. Finally, President Trump made two visits to Ohio in the last month with each rally drawing huge crowds.

MIRA members, this would be a great opportunity for you to have a conversation with your elected officials while they're at home. It would also be a great time to encourage fellow Independent Retailers to join MIRA. The old adage "there's strength in numbers" is as true today as it was 100 years ago. MIRA is your voice in government and as an old independent retailer once said, "A businessman who says he's not interested in government, would be like a fish saying he's not interested in water." ■



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CONVENIENCE DISTRIBUTOR

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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

Are you prepared for the fastest growing segment that has been seen in C-Stores for years? Team Sledd is an expert in New Age products (which includes CBD and Alternative tobacco products). Don't miss out on this category with huge profits!!

### • TOTAL VALUE TO YOU •

**\$1,350** Estimated Rebate\*  
(Annual Total Paid Quarterly)

**\$2,000** Est. MIRA Member  
Program Savings

**\$3,350** Total Member Benefits  
PER LOCATION

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

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





# ohio liquor report

JIM V. CANEPA // OHIO DIVISION OF LIQUOR CONTROL

## Preventing Underage Sale of Alcohol

It might still be the middle of summer festivities for most of us, but for students, it's back to school season! Whatever that might mean for you, for many students it means social events to reconnect with old friends and to make new ones. These events can often include underage consumption of alcoholic beverages. In order to keep you and underage persons safe, it's important you know your role in preventing the sale to minors.

Always thoroughly check IDs of young people attempting to buy alcohol. It's illegal not only for them to purchase alcohol if they are under 21, but it's also illegal for you, the permit holder, to sell it to them.

There are scanners available to check the validity of identification – which can be a current driver's

license, an official identification card, or a military identification from the U.S. Department of Defense.

It's also important to double check each item that young people are attempting to purchase; many beverages today are in similar packaging to non-alcoholic beverages, making it harder for clerks and cashiers to tell the difference. Additionally, even if a person is 21, it is important not to sell to those overly intoxicated.

It takes a village to ensure this doesn't happen, and it starts at the point of sale. As a permit holder, we need your help this time of year to be wary of underage and over consumption of alcohol. Knowledge of the law for you and your employees is imperative, and following the law is mandatory. As for our part, we offer additional materials and resources, available at [www.com.ohio.gov/liqr/](http://www.com.ohio.gov/liqr/). There is also Alcohol Server Knowledge training available through the Division of Liquor Control or the Ohio Investigative Unit to permit holders and their employees to ensure they know the laws. I encourage everyone to take the training. We all want what's best for the future generation, and that starts with working together to protect them. ■







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**Family Owned Traditions and Values**  
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CATEGORY  
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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*



# The 39th Annual “High Five” Turkey Drive is Getting Underway

Mark your calendar for November 21 & 22, 2019

■ BY DENHA MEDIA GROUP

**T**his year, at the 39th Annual “High Five” Turkey Drive, the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation Turkey Drive Committee has pledged to put a turkey on the Thanksgiving table of more than 6,000 families throughout Michigan, Ohio and Illinois that may not otherwise enjoy this special meal.


“We look to our members and the community at large to help support this much-needed program,” said Auday Arabo, President and CEO of MIRA. “Since 1980, the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation and its members have provided Thanksgiving turkeys to needy families and each year the list of charitable groups asking for turkeys grows. There are more requests than

we could ever fill. We need your help. Thanksgiving is a time to reflect, give thanks, and help those who are less fortunate.”

Many organizations and individuals volunteer for the program, such as Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM). “Blue Cross provides funding to purchase over 1,000 turkeys each year for this event,” Cathy Brock explained. “Blue Cross also fields a team of approximately 50 volunteers from our middle and small group salesforce to help with distribution.”

BCBSM has been participating for several years. “MIRA’s Annual Turkey Drive provides Blue Cross the opportunity to act upon our commitment to our social mission,” said Brock. “Volunteerism plays a major role





in the daily lives of Blue Cross employees. Our employees are regularly encouraged to be involved in events and opportunities that help the residents of Michigan, especially more vulnerable populations.”

Prairie Farms has been participating with the Annual Turkey Drive since the early years of the program. “We have participated with a truck and product, usually sour cream and other items, for them to have on their table during the holiday,” said Dave Orlando. “Some of our employees have volunteered for years to try to get the helping hands out to customers to bring in more cash for this great program.

Prairie Farms was participating in the association’s annual community outreach event long before they were even Prairie Farms. “The tradition started for us over 25 years ago I believe, when we were called Tom Davis & Sons Dairy Company. Gary Davis and I always looked forward to each year, because we brought our kids with us to help and learn what a great cause it is.”

A \$300 donation to the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation 39th Annual Turkey Drive will provide turkeys for 20 families. When you consider that each turkey serves about 12 people, that equals enough Thanksgiving turkey for 240 people. You can also donate food items (canned, boxed or bottled) or other products such as clothing or household items, above and beyond – or in lieu of – your monetary donation.

The many organizations value the partnership. “Blue Cross values partnering with an organization that believes in giving back to its community, helping others, and expressing gratitude toward its members,” said Brock.

At Prairie Farms giving back to the community where employees work and live has always been a priority. “We try to make a difference to somebody who is in need of it,” said Orlando. “Prairie Farms is committed in the program that AFD started and now MIRA continues to do each year. I truly think to myself; how can you not want to do this and help someone that needs it and make someone feel special.”

“It makes a big difference, for all the years I have had the privilege of doing the turkey drive I can remember pulling up to a church or school where we were stopping to drop off some of the turkeys and I would see the same people year after year with tears in their eyes hugging all of us and saying thank you for this gift,” explained Orlando.

Volunteers also like to share their favorite parts of the program. “The volunteers that I have had the pleasure of meeting throughout the many years are there,

because they feel something in their heart to help out and not just to say look at me, I’m helping out. It truly is something inspiring to see. I just want to thank MIRA for always trying to make a difference,” said Orlando.

“I, and my colleagues, love the interaction with the individuals who come to pick up the turkeys and other items for distribution to their communities and respective organizations,” said Brock. “It’s been fun and heart-warming to see many of the same people year after year, knowing that their hard work and dedication to their communities and organizations will do so much good for so many people.”

A center point of the Annual “High Five” Turkey Drive are the association’s paper hand turkeys. These paper hand turkeys are sold by various participating retailers in an effort to raise money contributions for the cause.

Businesses are encouraged to sell paper hand turkeys at their registers to generate a significant donation for the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation.

“Paper turkeys are a fun, simple way to raise funds while sending a message to your customers and the community that you care about feeding the hungry. Best of all, 100% of the money you raise will go toward purchasing turkeys for a charity of your choice!

#### HERE’S HOW THE PAPER HAND TURKEY PROGRAM WORKS:

- Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation will send you a starter package which includes turkey hand cut-outs and a poster to place in your store to raise awareness.
  - Place the paper hand turkeys at the register and have your cashiers encourage customers to buy a paper turkey for a suggested donation of \$1, \$5 or even \$10.
  - Every \$15 you raise buys you one turkey towards your charity.
  - The purchaser can sign the paper hand turkey and we encourage you to display it prominently in the store. Paper hand turkeys can be displayed on walls, windows, or hung from the ceiling to generate maximum awareness.
- Program runs from September 1st – November 11th.

For more information about how your business can participate in the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation Turkey Drive, visit [www.MIRAmw.org/events/turkey-drives](http://www.MIRAmw.org/events/turkey-drives) or call (800) 666-6233. ■



## Catering to the Community

■ BY ASHOURINA SLEWO // DENHA MEDIA GROUP

**O**wned by Lisa Berry, the North Adams General Store is located in southern Michigan in a small village inside Hillsdale County. Berry purchased her first business in 1997, with the purchase of her second store following closely in 1999. She purchased her third store in 2008.

Currently, Berry manages two of the three businesses, with the third being sold on a land contract.

Alongside Berry in the management of her businesses is her family.

"We are family owned, my daughters and my husband work for the stores," explained Berry. "We do employ outside help. There are six other people besides my family. We will be adding more employees very soon."

At her businesses, Berry looks at things a little differently than other business owners. While some see their stores and products their most important assets, Berry believes her employees are her greatest assets. This belief influences everything from the hiring process to the way Berry creates the schedule.

"My greatest asset is my employees. I count on them to run the store in my absence as I would run it," Berry explained. "When hiring, I try to match the shifts to what a person wants in days and hours. If they need time off, I give it to them even if I have to work it myself. This saves from people calling in sick."

Going the extra mile to accommodate her employees as best as she can allows for a smooth daily operation of her stores.

In accommodating her employees, Berry is further able to meet the wants and needs of her customers and community.

Being located in such a small and secluded area of the state, Berry strives to make the North Adams General Store a one stop shop.



"We try to have anything a person would need to save them driving to town. We do, of course, specialize in liquor, beer and wine. We encourage our customers to special order from us," explained Berry. "Many times, we've had people request things that other places don't want to bother with. We feel even one bottle that we special order, that person will return with another request and they in turn will tell their friends that we will do what we can to help them."

In recent months, Berry added a deli in the North Adams General Store as an extra effort to expand their offerings to their customer base.

"We are now adding hot foods and eventually pizza. Most of the food is homemade," Berry said. "I couldn't have asked for a better response from the community. We cater to our customers and take special orders."

"Our customer base is incredibly diverse," says Berry. "I have never had such a diverse range of people frequenting one location. We are surrounded by the farming industry. Inside our village we have many that are retired. There is a factory a few buildings down. Within 6 miles of the store, we have an entire Amish community, a nudist resort and also a very large motorcycle clubhouse. They all frequent my store."

Despite having purchased her very first store in 1997, Berry was only recently introduced to the Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA). Since becoming a member of MIRA, Berry has found the association to be a fierce advocate of her business.

Becoming a MIRA member has been the best business decision she has ever made, she says.

"Not only do we receive better pricing and rebates because of our affiliation with MIRA, they make us a top priority being a small business," she said. "Two years ago, my store was threatened by a large corporation concerning the half mile rule for liquor licenses. I called on a Friday afternoon to Ken Schulte, who in turn called and had the CEO, Auday Arabo, himself involved and making calls on my behalf to Liquor Commission. I wasn't standing alone." ■

### RETAILER: NORTH ADAMS GENERAL STORE

**Location:** North Adams, Michigan

**Founded:** 1997

**Employees:** 10

**MIRA Member Since:** 2017

**Slogan:** "You can conquer the world...with proper planning."





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## Representing the Industry

■ BY ASHOURINA SLEWO // DENHA MEDIA GROUP

**T**he Midwest Independent Retailers Association (MIRA) is comprised of members throughout the retail industry. From gas stations, liquor stores, and grocery stores to the very suppliers that fill the retailers' establishments.

With members from all over the industry, MIRA's board is tailored to be inclusive of their membership. Their Supplier Board of Directors, for instance, showcases the perspective of the many suppliers MIRA represents.

Longtime board member and the Vice President of sales at RNDC of Michigan, Brian Pizzuti, is happy to bring the perspective of suppliers and RNDC customers to the table.

Pizzuti has been with RNDC for more than 19 years.

"My role is to manage the sales and marketing of spirits to help grow our outstanding portfolio of brands that our supplier partners offer, as well as trying to closely work with state agencies and legislature to make sure the business grows for all stakeholders including our great retailers," he explained.

For the last eight years, Pizzuti has sat on the MIRA Supplier Board of Directors.

"I have proudly served on the board for 8 years and have enjoyed very much getting to know my fellow board members and the great people who work hard every day at MIRA," Pizzuti explained.

The VP of sales became increasingly involved with the association when he noticed the constructive relationship RNDC had with MIRA.

"Our company has always been a close partner with MIRA and have built a strong relationship," he explained. "We see great value in the trade shows and like the opportunity to give back in ways like the scholarship program."

MIRA President & CEO, Auday Arabo, was the first to approach Pizzuti about running for the board. "When Auday Arabo joined the association, we struck up a great working relationship as well as personal and I was honored when he discussed me running for a board seat," he said.

On the political front, Pizzuti says their two organizations have "shared similar views and ambitions and have worked closely to make these ambitions a reality."

As a board member, Pizzuti is entrusted with helping retail



members thrive and grow through the years. "I help do this by engaging in lobby efforts in Lansing personally, as well as with my organization's strength and resources," he explained. "I am also tasked with helping to fundraise to allow MIRA to keep driving for these same goals."

With several RNDC customers a part of MIRA's membership, Pizzuti's work with the association is personal.

"When these businesses are healthy and growing, then it keeps my business growing as well," he said. "The independent retailer is the back bone of the spirits industry and no one works harder. I have great respect for all the MIRA members."

Through his work with MIRA, Pizzuti has found the association to be effective and encourages retailers to join and reap the benefits that come with being a member. He says it's a great investment.

"It is a no brainer to be part of this organization," he said. "Not only do your membership dollars help support and protect against legislation that can negatively impact all of us but there are great discount programs to help you save money and rebate programs that off set your membership costs. I strongly believe that being a member is a great investment for you and future generations of your family."

MIRA is the retail industry's voice, says Pizzuti. The collective voice the association provides for its membership is second to none.

"Without the strong voice in Lansing small businesses couldn't stay on top of all the legislation and how it can affect all of us," he said. "We need to put all of our collective strength together to champion for what's important and that is exactly what MIRA does. MIRA is the best advocate of our industry and I have seen the great work they have accomplished and know they will continue to fight for all of us." ■





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\*10% discount is subject to minimum premium requirements.



**MIRA MEMBER EXCLUSIVE**

## MIRF Scholarship Recipients Now Doctors

■ BY ASHOURINA SLEWO // DENHA MEDIA GROUP

**F**or the Ozimek siblings, receiving a scholarship from the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation, formerly the Associated Food & Petroleum Dealers Foundation, was one of many things that allowed and inspired them to pursue higher education.

Jesse Ozimek received the scholarship when she was in her senior year of high school at 17 years old while her brother, Aaron, received the scholarship when he was 20 years old. Both students were encouraged by their aunt, Donna Crawford, to apply for the scholarship opportunity.

At the time Aaron received his scholarship, he was attending Central Michigan University (CMU). At CMU, he was studying Psychology and taking the pre-requisite classes that would allow him to transition to Life University, where he would eventually become a doctor of chiropractic.

"While attending Life University, I completed the coursework for my postgraduate degree in clinical neurology from The Carrick Institute and plan to take the neurology board examination this year," he explained.

Meanwhile, Jesse also earned her first Bachelor of Science degree from CMU. She then graduated Summa Cum Laude from East West College of Natural Medicine, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Professional Health Sciences and a Master of Science in Oriental Medicine.

She has also been certified by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine and has achieved status as a Diplomat of Oriental Medicine.

Today, Jesse is an acupuncturist and a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine. Her brother is a chiropractor and functional neurologist.

"While studying for my neurology degree, I was lucky enough to participate in grand rounds with Dr. Carrick several times where we saw his most complicated and advanced stage cases; from concussion to stroke, Parkinson's to Alzheimer's, ADD to PTSD," Aaron explained. "Being exposed to such a wide array of patients and presentations so early in my education is what gave me the confidence to open my own practice focused on chronic and neurological disease down in Woodstock, Georgia."

Outside of his primary practice, Aaron is also the primary doctor in a local Alzheimer's and memory care facility.



AARON OZIMEK

JESSE OZIMEK

For both siblings, their journey into the field of medicine was spurred by personal reasons.

During his time in high school, Aaron suffered from chronic Lyme Disease. Despite seeing a number and a variety of doctors, it was Aaron's chiropractor who referred him to the specialist that would ultimately save his life.

"He found specialists for me to consult with and was constantly searching for any new idea that may push me towards health," he explained. "He showed me that the body has an incredible power to heal itself if you only give it the right conditions, and I knew that was the path I wanted to follow."

Eventually, Aaron found himself being treated by Dr. Lu, a diagnostic healing monk. At the time her brother was fighting Lyme disease, Jesse was studying Journalism and Advertising. Witnessing her brother's healing at the hands of Dr. Lu, Jesse decided to change course and now works under Dr. Lu.

"It is an amazing learning opportunity. I am grateful to give back in the clinic that changed my family's life," Jesse explained.

While grappling with his illness, Aaron could not take on as many classes or a job, therefore putting him in a tight spot financially as he pursued his education. The scholarship he received through the association's foundation, served him well.

"This scholarship was a major boon to me during a time in my life when I was at my lowest, giving me both a bit more financial stability, and recognition that I was on my way towards something great," he explained.

The Ozimek siblings encourage all students to take advantage of this scholarship and the opportunities that come with it!

"I thought of applying to scholarships as honing my skills for life," explained Aaron. "Sitting down and applying to scholarships requires the same type of motivation as being an entrepreneur; there is no boss telling you what your assignments are or what to write about."

"Putting in a little effort to apply could pay off in a big way," said Jesse. ■





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## C-Store Pizza Drives Traffic, Increases Sales

Core-Mark recommends retailers go with a turnkey pizza program

■ BY CORE-MARK

Pizza is America's go-to food. Whether enjoying a snack, serving a meal or hosting a casual get-together, Americans depend on pizza.

Technomic, the food research organization, reports that 83% of consumers eat pizza at least once a month and 43% enjoy pizza weekly. That enthusiasm for pizza has built the U.S. pizza industry into a \$45.73 billion business, reports CHD Expert, a foodservice data provider.

According to the NACS State of the Industry Report of 2018 Data, foodservice represents 21.5% of total gross margin for the average convenience outlet, and prepared food was the largest sales and gross profit driver within foodservice. Offering ready-to-eat pizza could help boost sales in stores with limited food offerings.

"C-store retailers are missing out if they don't have an in-house pizza program," said Chris Scott, corporate director of foodservice,

Core-Mark. "And the easiest way to execute a pizza program is to partner with an experienced provider that can ensure a quality offering that differentiates you from your competitors."

According to the 2018 Pizza Consumer Trend Report from Technomic, today's pizza consumers are more knowledgeable about the components of pizza. They shun soggy crusts, rubbery cheese and scanty toppings. 44% want pizzas with high-quality and/or fresh toppings and ingredients, a figure up four percentage points from the 2016 report.

Most convenience stores don't have a full kitchen suitable for producing made-from-scratch pizza. But turnkey pizza programs, such as Basilio's, available from Texas-based Core-Mark, can drive traffic into the store, ensure hot food around the clock and encourage repeat business.

Basilio's is an Italian-style pizza with a made-from-scratch crust, kneaded by hand for at least eight minutes and then double proofed.

The pizza sauce is made with California vine-ripened tomatoes and blended with herbs and spices. The color and flavor are natural because artificial colors or preservatives are never added. The cheese is 100% real mozzarella pre-mixed with a flavorful blend of Italian spices, allowing for a longer hold time in the warmer.

All prep work is done ahead of time, and c-store employees only need to cook the pizzas for a few minutes, depending on the type of oven used, until they are ready to serve.

Pizza options include a 14-inch large pizza or a 7-inch personal-sized pie in several flavor combinations. Pizza by the slice offerings also are available, which can attract new customers and help generate profits during dayparts when business might otherwise be slow.

When choosing a pizza partner, look for one that provides account support, quality point-of-sale materials and easy to execute promotions, Scott advised, and ask plenty of questions when interviewing a potential supplier.

"Will you get banners, outside signage, pump toppers and videos, if you can run video advertising at your fuel pumps? Are quality ovens and hot boxes available to purchase or lease?" he said. "Most importantly, make sure the provider will scale the program to your needs and the ability of your operation. That is important to ensuring your pizza program is a big success." ■







## Cashierless Checkout Still Making Inroads

Big chains explore AI following the initial success of Amazon Go

■ BY NACS ONLINE

U.S. retailers large and small continue to test the use of artificial intelligence to track what products shoppers are buying and then automatically bill their accounts when they walk out the door, reports the Wall Street Journal.

The concept of cashierless stores was born with Amazon Go, which launched in early 2018 and has since expanded to 15 locations. Amazon Go relies on cameras and sensors in each location to identify products that customers take off the shelves.

Cashierless checkout—both in the United States and in Asia—is a major theme in this year's Ideas 2 Go video that will debut October 3 at the NACS Show.

Recent entrants into the cashierless shopping arena include Sam's Club Inc., the warehouse retailer owned by Walmart, and Giant Eagle, the Pittsburgh-based grocery and c-store chain. In July, Sam's Club announced it would offer a version of cashierless payment at a 32,000-square-foot store in Dallas starting this month. AI technology will allow shoppers to use their smartphones to scan an image of the product they want to buy. The cloud-based system uses computer vision and machine learning to identify products selected by matching them to a database of stored images.

In June, a global survey of about 400 retailers by International Data Corp. found that 28% are testing or piloting cashierless systems, according to



Leslie Hand, vice president of IDC's Retail Insights division. She knows of nearly 100 companies worldwide trying out the systems. "It's awoken that fire for retailers to understand that this is the future of retail and they need to invest in it," Hand said.

United Kingdom-based Tesco and Carrefour SA of France also are testing cashless systems. Tesco has said its method costs one-tenth of systems used by competitors, because it relies only cameras, not sensors.

Not every form of cashierless technology is a success. For six months, Walmart tested a cashierless system that was based on scanning barcodes but discontinued it in April 2018. The technology was impractical for pricing produce and other items that had to be weighed by a cashier, which slowed the

checkout process.

Another issue is potential theft. Manual scanning operates on an honor system, and some customers don't scan every item, often requiring stores to validate purchases. In the Sam's Club trial, for example, an employee checks customer purchases as shoppers exit, but just one product per customer to see if it's listed on the electronic receipt.

Still, the potential benefits include speed and convenience. Even small companies are testing the waters. Choice Market Holdings, which operates a Denver convenience store focused on fresh food, plans to open four other locations. Next year, it hopes to install a cashierless system using in-store cameras and sensors in two of the stores, said Mike Fogarty, Choice Market's founder and CEO. ■



## Convenience Store Beverage Purchases Rise in the U.S.

■ BY WWW.BEVERAGEDAILY.COM

Americans' need for convenience isn't slowing down, but it is getting healthier. GasBuddy, a crowdsourcing platform for fuel prices and c-store data in the US, Canada and Australia, released a new report on drink shopping habits.

More than 165 million Americans shop at c-stores every day, netting \$242bn of in-store sales in 2018. GasBuddy surveyed over 1,000 people in July, and 51% reported that they purchase a beverage at a gas station c-store at least once a week, with 20% doing so daily.

When asked if they have "moved more towards healthier options like sparkling water, drinks with vitamins and electrolytes, over traditional soft drinks compared to five years ago," 44% of respondents agreed with the statement.

People ages 18-29 said they prefer c-stores over drug stores and grocery stores, and are 56% more

inclined to get beverages at the former. The same was true for 53% of the 30-44 age group.

The younger demographic was also revealed to be the least trustworthy of big brands, as 25% of 18-29 year olds said they are 'brand loyal' compared with 39% of baby boomers.

This group is the most easily influenced by coupons and sales, 85% saying they influence their decision to purchase; and 67% of all consumers saying they will try new items based on discounts or interesting packaging.

### HEALTHY EFFICIENCY IS KEY

Carbonated soft drinks, energy drinks, water, sports drinks, juices and teas are lumped together as packaged beverages, and they come in third for largest in-store convenience category with 15.3% of sales.

"Water is the number one beverage product purchased at a gas station c-store by 18-29 year-olds, while carbonated soft drinks

topped the list for the 30-44 and 45-60 age group," GasBuddy said.

The top five types of packaged beverages purchased at a gas station, according to GasBuddy, are carbonated soft drinks, water, coffee, energy drinks and sports drinks.

Packaged beverages are also the most popular 'impulse buys' in c-stores, with 65% of survey participants saying their drink purchases are typically unplanned before visiting the store.

Frank Beard, convenience retail analyst at GasBuddy, said "Today's consumers-especially millennials-are buying more food on-the-go, including snacks, drinks, and prepared meals."

"Efficiency is paramount in today's society, and convenience stores are providing the desired ease and choice of options for an evolving customer. C-stores are also responding to a growing desire for healthier options." ■

## Amazon Applies for Liquor License in San Francisco

The company wants to open a brick-and-mortar store at its local warehouse

■ BY NACS ONLINE

Amazon is dipping its toe into the liquor store arena in San Francisco, as the company has filed for a permit to operate a storefront at its local warehouse, Business Insider reports. The brick-and-mortar store would be 200 square feet and provide Amazon with a base for delivering and selling beer, spirits and wine. The storefront would be

open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, but would deliver alcohol from 8 a.m. to midnight.

The company's liquor license application highlights its desire to delivery alcohol through its Prime Now service, which already delivers alcohol in Dallas, Chicago, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., and parts of New York City.

Amazon also has been working on opening a second grocery store chain, with the first location scheduled for California. The company has been trying to find more ways to marry online orders and delivery, along with expanding its grocery outreach. Also recently, Amazon expanded its Counter program to include Rite Aid stores. ■





## FDA Issues Fact Sheet on Menu Labeling

The agency reiterated its desire to work with foodservice establishments to help them comply with the rules

■ BY NACS ONLINE

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a fact sheet to inform stakeholders about the agency's continued efforts to implement menu labeling in chain restaurants and similar retail food establishments. The goal of the menu labeling requirements is to provide consumers with consistent nutrition information for standard menu items (including food on display and self-service foods) in chain restaurants or similar retail food establishments.

The agency stated it is committed to working flexibly with establishments to help them achieve compliance. To meet this goal, the FDA said it will carry out a number of activities:

### PROVIDE CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

The FDA will continue to work with industry stakeholders to support their implementation activities by responding to training requests and email inquiries ([calorielabeling@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:calorielabeling@fda.hhs.gov)). Stakeholder questions and input have helped the agency tailor its resources for the industry, specifically the development of fact sheets and a Menu Labeling Training Module that the agency announced in 2018. These tools are designed to educate stakeholders on how to comply with menu labeling

requirements. The FDA said it plans to work cooperatively with chain restaurants or similar retail food establishments and continue to offer training and additional resources on general menu labeling requirements to industry stakeholders, including trade associations, as needed.

### ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS TO INFORM FURTHER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

FDA is also planning to assess general industry implementation of the primary components of the menu labeling requirements including:

- Posting calorie information on menus and menu boards for all standard menu items;
- Disclosing calorie information on signs adjacent to foods on display and self-service foods that are standard menu items;
- Including succinct statements concerning suggested daily caloric intake and statements of availability for written nutrition information on menus and menu boards; and
- Having required written nutrition information available on the premises of the chain restaurant or similar retail food establishment upon request.

The agency also reiterated its willingness to work with trade associations and consumer groups on this issue. ■

## Ohio Hemp Bill Signed - Sales Legal in Ohio

■ BY OHIO WHOLESALE MARKETERS ASSOCIATION

Governor DeWine signed Senate Bill 57 into law today at the Ohio State Fair and because the bill includes an emergency clause, effective immediately sales of products derived from hemp, include hemp CBD products, are legal in Ohio.

In keeping with the federal definitions, the law defines “cannabidiol” as the cannabidiol compound, containing a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol [THC] concentration of not more than three-tenths percent, derived from hemp.

“Hemp” is defined as the plant *Cannabis sativa* L. and any part of that plant, including the seeds thereof and all derivatives, extracts, cannabinoids, isomers, acids, salts, and salts of isomers, whether growing or not, with a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than three-tenths percent on a dry weight basis.

“Hemp product” means any product, containing a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than three-tenths per cent, that is made with hemp. “Hemp product” includes cosmetics, personal care products, dietary supplements or food intended for animal or human consumption, cloth, cordage, fiber, fuel, paint, paper, particleboard, and any other product containing one or more cannabinoids derived from hemp, including cannabidiol. ■



## FDA Orders Four Companies To Stop Selling Flavored E-Cigarette, Hookah Products

■ BY NATHANIEL WEIXEL // THE HILL

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is demanding that four tobacco companies stop selling 44 different flavors of vaping liquid and hookah products that the agency said are being sold illegally.

The actions come as the agency is trying to crack down on the youth epidemic of e-cigarette use.

The agency said it has issued warning letters to Mighty Vapors LLC, Liquid Labs USA LLC, V8P Juice International LLC and Hookah Imports Inc. and has sought their response within 15 days.

Failure to correct the violations may result in further action,

such as seizure or injunction, the agency said.

The FDA said the companies have been selling products that were introduced to the market after the effective date of a rule that gave the agency the authority to regulate all tobacco products. Under the rule, any product introduced after that date must receive FDA authorization before being marketed.

The agency gained the authority to regulate all tobacco products in 2016, but when the administration changed in 2017, the FDA decided to delay enforcing the laws for vaping products until 2022. Former FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb moved the deadline up a year to

2021 before stepping down earlier this year.

As a result, e-cigarettes have largely existed in a regulatory gray area, though a federal judge last month ordered the FDA to impose a 10-month deadline on e-cigarette companies to submit their products for regulatory approval.

“Our actions make clear that we will continue to keep a close watch on whether companies are breaking the law and will take swift steps when violations are found,” acting FDA Commissioner Ned Sharpless said in a statement. “The marketing of illegal tobacco products is particularly concerning given the epidemic of youth vaping that we’re facing.” ■

## Store Openings Outpace Closings

A new study found that for every store that shuts its doors, five more go into business

■ BY NACS ONLINE

For every store that closes, five are opened, according to a new report from IHL Group, Chain Store Age reports. Last year, more than five retail chains opened stores for every location that shut its doors. IHL also found that the number of chains opening new locations jumped to 56% in 2019, with the number of stores closing dropping by 66% over the past year.

“Retail Renaissance—True Story of Store Openings/Closings” found that in 2018, 20 chains accounted for 52% of all store

closures, while this year, the 20 chains that announced the most location closures represented 75% of all closures.

“U.S. retail has increased \$565 billion in sales since January of 2017, fed not just by online sales growth but net store sales growth,” said Lee Holman, vice president of research for IHL Group. “Clearly there is significant pressure in apparel and department stores, however, in every single retail segment there are more chains that are expanding their number of stores than closing stores.”

IHL reported that “64% of retailers are increasing the

number of stores in 2019, 12% are decreasing and 24% report no change in store counts. This compares to 2018 with 41% increasing store counts, 37% decreasing and 22% with no change.”

For every chain that closed a location, more than five chains (+5.2) opened new stores. Here are the ratios by segments:

- Food/drug/convenience/mass merchants: +9.5
- Apparel, hard goods, department stores: +3.7
- Restaurants, fast food, table service: +6.3 ■





## Pay Attention to Food Safety

Convenience Matters podcast highlights safe food handling practices for consumers

■ BY NACS ONLINE

On the episode of Convenience Matters, “Keeping Food and Customers Safe,” NACS hosts Jeff Lenard, vice president of strategic industry initiatives, and Chris Blasinsky, content communications strategist, discussed the ins and outs of consumer-focused food safety with Shelley Feist, executive director at the Partnership for Food Safety Education.

Feist suggested basic food tips for consumers. “Some of the things people know they should do to reduce their risk of illness, they don’t consistently do them,” she said. “Being conscientious about

hand washing can really make a difference between being well and being sick.” Also, keeping cold foods cold/on ice, cooking or reheating food safely and avoiding cross contamination.

NACS is a partner of the Partnership for Food Safety Education. The group’s website, [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org), provides a wealth of information for both consumers and retailers. “What our website does really well is help you find a download to print or share with others about these four core messages of clean, separate, cook, chill,” Feist said. “We also include recipe videos with safe handling prompts.”

Convenience stores sell an

estimated 45% of all bagged ice in the United States, which can help consumers keep their food chilled on road trips, at outdoor events and during a natural disaster. Feist said the partnership’s research shows that customers appreciate assistance in protecting their food. “Retailers giving tips helps them enjoy quality and healthy foods,” she said.

Each week a new Convenience Matters episode is released. The podcast can be downloaded on Youtube, iTunes, Google Play and other podcast apps, and at [www.conveniencematters.com](http://www.conveniencematters.com). Episodes have been downloaded by listeners more than 60,000 times in 80 countries. ■



## Juul Develops Retailer Checkout System

The company is giving millions in incentives to retailers who install its new electronic age-verification system

■ BY NACS ONLINE

Juul Labs Inc. has developed a new tool to help retailers not sell vaping products to minors, the Wall Street Journal reports. The age-verification system modifies point-of-sale software to halt any Juul purchase until the clerk scans an ID. The system also restricts each purchase to one vaporizer and four refill packs.

QuickTrip and Cumberland Farms are among the convenience store chains who have signed on to integrate the system. Juul is the dominate e-cigarette player,

with distribution to around 125,000 U.S. stores. The company might also open its own branded locations in Texas.

Retailers have until May 2021 to adopt the Juul age-verification systems. After that date, the company will no longer allow non-compliant stores to sell its products. The system “basically takes the burden off the clerk,” said CEO Kevin Burns.

All Juul buyers must submit ID under its age verification system, and scanned personal data is immediately deleted from the system. Juul is giving retailers

financial incentives to install the new system. Last month, Juul executives appeared before the House Oversight and Reform Committee’s Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee during a hearing examining JUUL Lab’s “Role in the Youth Nicotine Epidemic.”

On the heels of a North Carolina legal suit against various vape product manufacturers for allegedly advertising to those underage, the system is one way Juul is attempting to prevent the sale of vaping products to minors. ■



## Entering into Convenience

NACS Show education session gives attendees a sneak peek of how industry leaders got their start

■ BY NACS ONLINE

Want to know how successful convenience store leaders got started in the industry? The answer lies in this year's "Convenience Matters LIVE: The Real Rock Stars of Convenience" educational session during the 2019 NACS Show.

"One of the things previous Show attendees told us was that they were very interested in hearing how successful leaders developed their careers in the industry directly from those leaders," said Jenna Collard, NACS director of education engagement. "With this session, we're bringing our industry 'rock stars' to share what they've

learned along their convenience store journey."

Convenience Matters NACS hosts Carolyn Schnare, director of strategic initiatives, and Jeff Lenard, vice president of strategic industry initiatives, will conduct live interviews with Tanner Krause, president of Kum & Go, and Chuck Maggelet, chief adventure guide for Maverik. In addition, snippets from past LIVE sessions will be aired, including famous road trippers Frank Beard and Al Hebert (composing two episodes) and industry icons Billy Milam, COO of RaceTrac Petroleum, and Kevin Smartt, CEO/president of Kwik Chek Food Stores, Inc (also

two episodes).

Each week a new Convenience Matters episode is released, which can be downloaded on Youtube, iTunes, Google Play and other podcast apps, and at [www.conveniencematters.com](http://www.conveniencematters.com). Episodes have been downloaded by listeners more than 60,000 times in 80 countries.

Visit the education session website at [www.nacsshow.com/Explore/EducationalSessions](http://www.nacsshow.com/Explore/EducationalSessions) for more details on the dozens of workshops available. Registration is now open for the 2019 NACS Show, scheduled for October 1-4 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta. ■

## Kroger Reduces Food Waste Footprint by 9%

The grocer released its Zero Hunger | Zero Waste results, plus its 2020 sustainability goals progress

■ BY NACS ONLINE

The Kroger Co. announced its Zero Hunger | Zero Waste efforts reduced its supermarket food waste footprint by 9% in 2018, creating measurable improvements in its retail operations and more environmentally-conscious associates.

"We know our customers, associates, stakeholders and investors care deeply about people and our planet," said Rodney McMullen, Kroger's chairman and CEO, in his letter to ESG stakeholders. "The world around us is changing too—a warming climate, global population growth,

loss of biodiversity, water scarcity and more. These eco-realities affect our collective ability to feed people today and in the future."

Kroger's progress was outlined in its 2019 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) report, which highlighted its improved food waste diversion (13%), which the chain achieved in supermarket food waste diverted from landfills, moving from 27% diversion in 2017 to 40% in 2018. Kroger supermarkets have saved more than 2 billion kWh, placing the company well ahead of its 40% electricity savings goal by 2020. Plus, Kroger reduced the amount

of plastic resin in Kroger's "Our Brands" packaging by 9.1 million pounds so far—well on its way to reaching its 10-million-pound goal by 2020.

In addition, Kroger associates rescued 10% more food from its stores, plants and distribution centers—meaning 100 million pounds of wholesome, nutritious food went to feed food insecure families in America. In 2018, Kroger directed more than \$328 million in charitable giving—in food and funds—to its communities. About \$192 million of this amount focused on ending hunger. ■





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UTS Telecom ..... (248) 669-2300

## SODA POP, WATER, JUICES & OTHER BEVERAGES

 **Coca-Cola Refreshments (Metro Detroit program)**  
..... **Metro Detroit M (313) 868-2008**  
..... Belleville M (734) 397-2700  
..... Flint M (810) 237-4000  
..... Cleveland O (216) 690-2653

 **Faygo Beverages, Inc. M** .....(313) 925-1600  
Alligator Ice ..... 1-866-594-2867  
Amica Tea LLC ..... (312) 796-7445  
Boom Boom Energy ..... (313) 722-2221  
Monster Energy Company ..... (800) 426-7367  
Pepsi Beverages ..... Detroit 1-800-368-9945  
..... Howell 1-800-878-8239  
..... Pontiac (248) 334-3512  
..... Cleveland (216) 252-7377  
..... Twinsburg (330) 963-5300  
Smart Life LLC ..... (248) 466-0770

## TOBACCO ALTERNATIVES

Grinds Coffee Pouches ..... (412) 414-3155  
JUUL Labs ..... (415) 299-7341  
Swisher International ..... (904) 607-7405

## TOBACCO COMPANIES & PRODUCTS

Altria Client Services ..... (513) 831-5510  
R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company ..... (336) 741-0727

## UNIFORMS, LINENS, WORK WEAR & SUPPLIES

 **Detroit Chemical & Paper Supply /**  
**1st Impressions** ..... (586) 558-8805  
 **UniFirst Corporation** ..... (888) 256-5255 ext. 232

## WASTE DISPOSAL & RECYCLING

 **Midwest Recycling M O (Clothing recycle boxes)**  
.....(313) 304-9099  
Commercial Waste Systems (Cardboard recycling buyers)  
..... (219) 663-5678  
Stamper Facility ..... (586) 228-6500

## WINE & SPIRITS COMPANIES

 **Benchmark Beverage Co.** ..... 1-800-666-6233  
Broken Shed Distilleries ..... (914) 282-0457  
Cheurlin Champagne ..... (312) 929-2699  
Cornerstone Wine Distributor ..... (586) 839-2552  
Diageo ..... (517) 349-3790  
Heaven Hill Distilleries ..... 1-800-348-1783  
Luxco ..... (313) 333-4637  
Proximo Spirits ..... (810) 278-0599  
Remy Cointreau USA ..... (248) 347-3731  
Tenute Delogu ..... info@tenutedelogu.com  
Vision Wine & Spirits ..... (312) 320-4445

## WINE & SPIRITS DISTRIBUTORS

European Wine Imports of Ohio, LLC ..... (216) 426-0979  
Great Lakes Wine & Spirits ..... 1-888-860-3805  
Imperial Beverage Co. .... (269) 382-4200  
Lagniappe Beverage ..... (773) 358-2344  
RNDC of Michigan ..... 1-888-697-6424

## FOOD RESCUE / FOOD BANKS

### MICHIGAN

Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank  
..... (616) 784-3250  
Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank -  
Benton Harbor ..... (269) 983-7229  
Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank -  
Cadillac ..... (231) 779-0056  
Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank -  
Ishpeming ..... (906) 485-4988  
Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank -  
Sault Ste. Marie ..... (906) 632-0348  
Food Bank of Eastern Michigan ..... (810) 239-4441  
Food Bank of South Central Michigan .. (269) 964-3663  
Food Gatherers ..... (734) 761-2796  
Forgotten Harvest ..... (248) 967-1500  
Gleaners Community Food Bank ..... (866) GLE-ANER  
Greater Lansing Food Bank ..... (517) 908-3680  
Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes ..... (269) 343-3663  
The Manna Food Project ..... (231) 347-8852  
Western Upper Peninsula Food Bank ... (906) 482-5548

### OHIO

Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank .... (330) 535-6900  
Cleveland Foodbank ..... (216) 738-2265  
The Foodbank, Inc. .... (937) 461-0265  
Freestore Foodbank ..... (513) 482-4500  
Mid-Ohio Foodbank ..... (614) 274-7770  
SE Ohio Foodbank & Kitchen ..... (740) 767-4500  
Second Harvest Food Bank of Clark, Champaign and  
Logan Counties ..... (937) 325-8715  
Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio  
..... (440) 960-2265  
Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley  
..... (330) 792-5522  
Shared Harvest Foodbank ..... (800) 352-3663  
Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank ... (419) 242-5000  
West Ohio Food Bank ..... (419) 222-7946

### ILLINOIS

Central Illinois Foodbank ..... (217) 522-4022  
Eastern Illinois Foodbank ..... (217) 328-3663  
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





## 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*



## NOVEMBER 21 & 22, 2019

### MIRF'S "HIGH FIVE" TURKEY DRIVE

As the holiday season approaches, the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation turkey drive committee has pledged to put a turkey on the Thanksgiving table of over 6,000 needy families throughout Michigan, Ohio and Illinois that may not otherwise enjoy this special meal.

*Michigan // Ohio // Illinois*



## JANUARY 25, 2020

### MIRA'S 104TH ANNUAL TRADE DINNER & BALL

Join over 1,000 leaders in the food, beverage & petroleum industries at this one-and-only black tie gala. Delight in fine cuisine, dancing and entertainment and engage with colleagues and friends to celebrate the strength and vitality of MIRA and the members it serves.

*The Mirage // Clinton Township, MI*



## MAY 2, 2020

### MIRA'S 3RD ANNUAL CHICAGO METRO GROCERS GALA

Enjoy fine cuisine, network, dance and enjoy live entertainment with more than 500 industry leaders. Sponsorship opportunities available.

*The Empress // Addison, IL*

## publishers statement

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

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

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

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

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