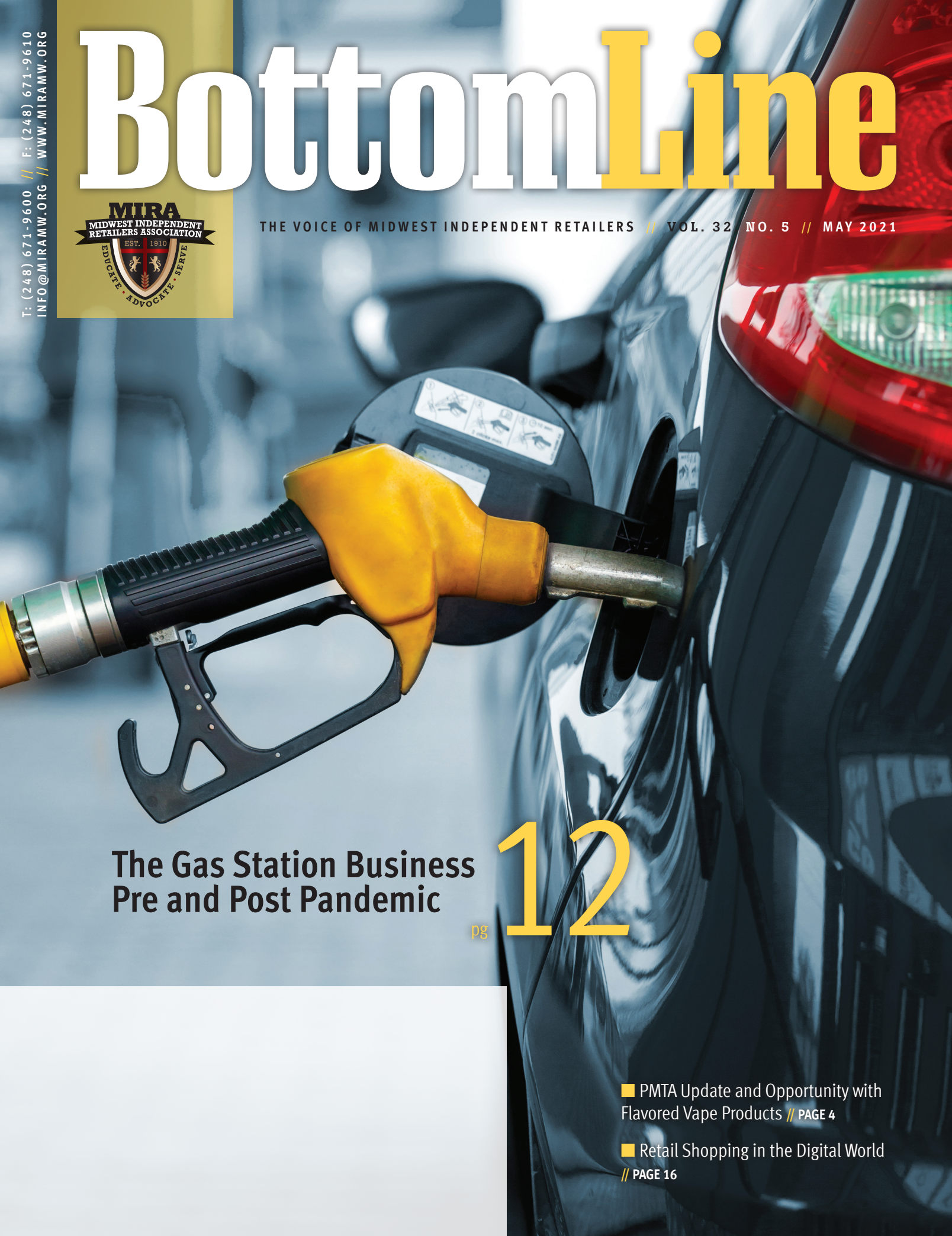


# BottomLine



THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS // VOL. 32 NO. 5 // MAY 2021



## The Gas Station Business Pre and Post Pandemic

pg

# 12

■ PMTA Update and Opportunity with  
Flavored Vape Products // PAGE 4

■ Retail Shopping in the Digital World  
// PAGE 16





**Sahtein™**  
IN GOOD HEALTH

Sahtein means *“in good health.”*

The word is often used in Arabic speaking countries after providing a meal for guests at the home by the host. For over 40 years, we have searched the world for the highest quality products and exceptional tastes, and continue to make this our priority today.



For more information visit  
[liparifoods.com](http://liparifoods.com)  
New customers contact Joe Calo at  
[Joe\\_Calo@liparifoods.com](mailto:Joe_Calo@liparifoods.com)





## columns

**02** CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE  
Preparing for the Future

**06** GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPORT  
A Report Amongst the Fog

**08** MICHIGAN LIQUOR REPORT  
Emphasis on Public Health: Aging and  
the Effects of Alcohol Consumption

**10** OHIO LOBBYIST REPORT  
Spring Break Legislation

## departments

**14** FRESH IDEAS  
Pushing for Air Quality Following  
the Coronavirus Pandemic

**18** RETAILER SPOTLIGHT  
Summer Staycations is a  
Boost to Retailers

**20** SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT  
MIRA Member Offering  
Business Solutions for Industries  
Around the Globe

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

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

**32** MIRA CALENDAR  
Upcoming Industry Events



# BottomLine

THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS  
VOL. 32, NO. 5 // MAY 2021

## features



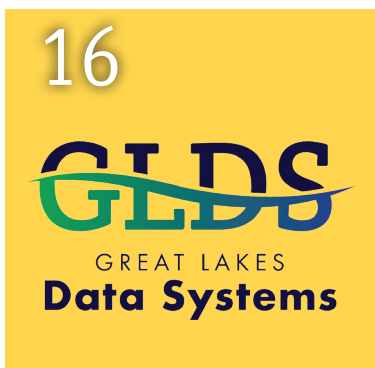
### PMTA UPDATE AND OPPORTUNITY WITH FLAVORED VAPE PRODUCTS

y now just about everyone selling tobacco products knows that tobacco companies had until September 9, 2020 to file premarket tobacco product applications (PMTAs) for new products, electronic cigarettes, and certain cigars and hookah products. Applications were not required for products on the market prior to February 15, 2007.



### COVER STORY // THE GAS STATION BUSINESS PRE AND POST PANDEMIC

Last month, the U.S. Energy Information Administration reported on the April Short-Term Energy Outlook, subject to heightened levels of uncertainty because responses to COVID-19 continue to evolve.



### RETAIL SHOPPING IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Soon the days of customers pushing carts around the store, unloading items onto a conveyer belt with a plastic divider between customer orders, paying a cashier and heading home will be a grocery experience of the past. Technology and digital programs continue to change the retail shopping experience.





# chairman's message

CLIFTON DENHA // MIRA CHAIRMAN

## Preparing for the Future

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic forced many retailers to hang-on-for-dear-life to survive. There was not any time to think about the future when you were spending the majority of your time trying to comply with ever-changing governmental regulations. Furthermore, you had to worry about the health of your family, employees, and customers.

While you were worrying about all the above there were changes taking place that will affect the future of all businesses. COVID-19 has actually accelerated the rate of change as customers isolate themselves at home and work at home. A wholesale life change took place as customers were required to work from home. Customers are utilizing delivery services for a huge variety of items that were previously purchased at brick-and-mortar stores.

Failure to adapt to this new reality will be the long road to bankruptcy, because only the strong adapters will survive.

Customers are staying home buying prepared meals, groceries, health and beauty aids, alcohol, household goods and many other items online and having their selections delivered to them or using curbside pickup.

More people are staying at home because they are skeptical about being in crowds, anywhere. More people are drinking at home because of crowds, going out is too much trouble and fear of drunk driving enforcement. Customers are attached to their electronic devices which they use to work, play, and order delivery of their needs.

E-commerce exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic. You need to evaluate how you can take advantage of this new reality and service these customers new found way of buying products and services. We are not going to return to the era of 2018 or 2019. Hybrid working conditions are being initiated by many companies whereby a good percentage of employees will continue to work at home for the foreseeable future. Another percentage will work a split week, partly in the office and mostly at home.

All these conditions will reduce foot traffic at brick-and-mortar stores. Right now, is the time to evaluate how you are going to take advantage of this new reality and not be left behind. ■

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

### RETAIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Najib Atisha	Indian Village Market
Frank Ayar	Walter's Shopping Place
Lisa Berry	North Adams General Store
Jerry Crete	Ideal Party Stores
Tonia Fisher	Free Enterprises Inc.
Robert Froelich	Bob's Pit Stop
Jim Garmo	Kuzana Enterprises
Ryan Haddad	BP Dunkin Donuts
Mazen Jaddou	Mazen Foods
Rishi Makkar	Rishi International
Michael Mitchell	Markham Oil
Roy Rabban	Jackson Save-A-Lot

### SUPPLIER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Saad Abbo	U.S. Ice
Tony Franchi	Lipari Foods
Conrad Haremza	Proximo Spirits
Ken Hebert	Great Lakes Coca-Cola
Rachel Hibbs	Frito-Lay
Eric Medwed	Heaven Hill Brands
Bryan Morrow	Pepsi Co.
Dave Orlando	Prairie Farms Dairy Co.
Brian Pizzuti	RND Co of Michigan

### EMERITUS DIRECTOR

Phil Kassa	Heartland Marketplace/ Saturn Food Center
------------	--

### STAFF & CONSULTANTS

Ed Weglarz	President & CEO
Karen Walker	Comptroller
Ken Schulte	Director, Business Development & Vendor Liaison
Juan Escareño	Director, Government Relations & Community Outreach
Jim Green	Vice President, Program Development
Mahasen Salman	Business Development
Mary Ann Yono	Business Development/ Front Desk Administrator
Raneen Samona	Accounting Assistant
Clay Jankowski	Event/Publication's Promoter
Andrea Hesano	Event Coordinator/Publication Sales
Matt Minor	Michigan Lobbyist, Capitol Strategies Group
Terry Fleming	Ohio Lobbyist, TC Fleming & Associates
Curt Fiedler	Illinois Lobbyist, Morrill & Fiedler, LLC
Tamar Lutz	Graphic Designer, Tamar Designs, LLC
Vanessa Denha	Magazine Writer, Epiphany Communications & Coaching
UHY-MI	Certified Public Accountant





Conifer  
Insurance  
Company



# MIRA's Business Insurance Partner

Proud to serve all MIRA Members: Independent grocery stores, convenience stores, gas and auto service stations, restaurants, bars and taverns in Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and surrounding states!

## MIRA Members Enjoy a 10% Discount\*

- Liquor Liability
- General Liability
- Commercial Property
- Workers Compensation

## MIRA Members Exclusive Endorsed Insurance Program

- Michigan based carrier
- Competitive rates
- Experienced underwriting and claims handling

Toll-Free: (866) 412-2424  
[www.coniferinsurance.com](http://www.coniferinsurance.com)



Conifer  
Insurance  
Company

@coniferinsurance  
[f](#) [i](#) [in](#) [t](#)

10% discount is subject to minimum premium requirements.





## c-store news & views

JIM GREEN // MIRA VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### PMTA Update and Opportunity with Flavored Vape Products

**B**y now just about everyone selling tobacco products knows that tobacco companies had until September 9, 2020 to file premarket tobacco product applications (PMTAs) for new products, electronic cigarettes, and certain cigars and hookah products. Applications were not required for products on the market prior to February 15, 2007. Nearly eight months after the required submission date, many retailers still have questions on which products they can sell. The FDA has said that once it has completed processing all PMTA submissions, it plans to release a list of the products submitted under all three pathways for FDA approval: PMTA, Substantial Equivalence (SE) and Substantial Equivalence Requests (EX REQ). Currently the posted SE and EX REQ information is complete. The PMTA information will be posted when it is compiled and at the time that I am writing this article, it was not available.

What is concerning to many retailers is that they have heard about the FDA cracking down on electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). The FDA have sent numerous rounds of warning letters to firms illegally selling product. According to the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products (CTP), Director Mitch Zeller said CTP intends to prioritize enforcement based on the likelihood of youth use or initiation to make the most efficient use of resources. I do not think it is a stretch to say that disposable flavored vape products will be one of the primary targets of the FDA's enforcement. Due to this, retailers concerned they will get stuck with illegal product, and some retailers unable to keep up with everything that is going on with the process, have just decided not to sell disposable flavored vape products. For those who have continued to offer these

products, many have done extremely well! I strongly urge everyone to re-evaluate what you are doing in this category, because the opportunity to grow the disposable flavored vape category has recently increased significantly. Effective March 28, 2021, PACT Act requirements were extended to electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), which include e-cigarettes and vaping products. What this means is the PACT Act prohibits the use of the U.S. Postal Service to deliver e-cigarettes and vaping products directly to consumers. UPS and FedEx do not ship these products as well. The intent was to kill online sales. Consumers must go to a brick-and-mortar business to purchase these products and show ID. This creates a perfect opportunity to grow sales and add foot traffic to your location.

A simple recommendation is to ask your wholesale supplier if the disposable flavored vape products that you are purchasing from them are guaranteed, in case they need to be pulled from the market. If you are purchasing products from a person delivering these items directly to your store, insist on them providing to you their acceptance letter from the FDA. If they cannot provide you that documentation, you need to find another brand. One brand I would encourage retailers to add to their portfolio is MNGO Disposable Stick. MNGO has submitted their PMTA's and leading the industry in compliance. We sampled MNGO products compared to other brands on the market and MNGO was the favorite. They have eleven different flavors available. I also had an opportunity to review some of the MNGO sales from various MIRA members selling MNGO disposable flavored vape products and they are doing well. Even if you are selling another brand, I would recommend expanding the number of sku's you are offering by adding MNGO disposable flavored vape products to your product mix. I also want to mention that MIRA members can earn up to \$1.50 rebate on all 8-count display boxes purchased if you meet the purchase requirements listed in the MIRA Program Books. Selling MNGO disposable flavored vape products is a safe and effective way for retailers that want to have success in this category. ■





**Outstanding Service • Unusual Flexibility**  
**Family Owned Traditions and Values**  
**Big Business Opportunities • Small Business Service**

*We flawlessly execute these basics everyday:*

SERVICE LEVEL

SHIPPING  
INTEGRITY

CATEGORY  
MANAGEMENT

EDI DATA SUPPORT

PROMOTIONAL  
TOOLS

SALES SUPPORT

***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*





# government relations report

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

## A Report Amongst the Fog

*"The difficulty in tactical maneuvering consists in turning the devious into the direct, and misfortune into gain."* – SUN TZU

**T**his past month has been a roller coaster on the legislative front for MIRA in Michigan. Once again, the goliaths of the liquor industry will push their agenda upon our small stores. Ready to drink cocktails with an alcohol content of less 13.5% will be available for stores with only beer and wine licenses. Delivery will be expanded so that common carriers can deliver for retailers. There are some things in the legislation that we have pushed to clarify. We will have better language on face-to-face sales for stores wanting to deliver. We will have a conversation and will push for strong rules and regulations on common carriers delivering spirits. We pushed to lower the first proposals number of 16% for ready to drink cans to the new 13.5% threshold.

We pushed hard with our relationships and with our adversaries on this issue. The approach was to make the bill less damaging since the word on the street was that Governor Whitmer will sign this bill once it arrives on her desk. We had two options: openly oppose and provide no constructive dialog to make the bills better or oppose and work with the authors to try and make the final version a little better. This fight reminds of the words Saul Alinsky wrote in his first book, "As an organizer, I start from where the world is, as it is, not as I would like it to be. That we accept the world as it is does not in any sense weaken our desire to change it into what we believe it should be - it is necessary to begin where the world is if we are going to change it to what we think it should be. That means working in the system."

We will work in the system to make things better, knowing it is not the desired outcome but at least we



move the ball down the field a little for our team. The work of politics is the art of relationships. Who you know and who you can persuade. It's not a question, it's a fact in politics. Persuasion comes just like it did for the old block captains of Chicago. Persuasion is determined by our political action committee account. Relationships are built on trust and mutual self-interest. Without both, we are simply fighting a battle against Goliath without even a rock to throw.

I write these articles as an opportunity to reflect but also share my learnings while out in the field. I believe this work should leave us all wanting to learn from our mistakes and most importantly learn how to make setbacks and obstacles into opportunities. The way we allow an obstacle to shape our tomorrow is determined by our measure of hope. Let me explain. If we see nothing but loss in what is in front of us, it will shape our mindset and actions. If we see the opportunity in an obstacle, we will try to see what going over or under the obstacle will bring. Hope is needed in this line of work.

The assaults upon the independent retailer will not end with these bills. I must believe that our work will lead to a better tomorrow for the future shop keeper. It will leave a better tomorrow for my children whom one day may want to venture into the world as shop owners. ■



# Our Westland location is now open for business.



3d rendering • jonn shamoun • thenewcentury.com

## New U.S. Ice Headquarters and Manufacturing Facility.

We look forward to providing you all our high-quality ice products and services in our new 2nd location's state-of-the-art 60,000 sq. ft. facility in Westland, Michigan, manufacturing and delivering cubed, block, dry ice and ice carvings, producing 800 tons of ice per day out of both facilities in Westland and Detroit. Call 313-862-3344 or visit us online at [usicecorp.com](http://usicecorp.com) for all your ice needs.

**The Midwest's Largest Independent Ice Manufacturer**



PURE *M*ICHIGAN®







# michigan liquor report

PAT GAGLIARDI // CHAIR, MICHIGAN LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

## Emphasis on Public Health: Aging and the Effects of Alcohol Consumption

**M**ay is recognized nationally as Older Americans Month. The Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) urges seniors to keep tabs on their alcohol consumption especially if they are getting older, have health issues or take medications.

As we get older, moderation in alcohol consumption becomes increasingly more important for a number of reasons. With age, comes increased health issues and use of medications to treat those conditions -- medications that can negatively interact with alcohol consumption.

Aging actually lowers the body's tolerance for alcohol and slows the body's ability to break down

alcohol, remaining in a person's system longer. Older adults generally experience the effects of alcohol more quickly than when they were younger, putting them at higher risk for falls, car crashes, and other unintentional injuries that may result from drinking. Older people also have thinner bones than younger people, so their bones break more easily. Studies show that the rate of hip fractures in older adults increases with alcohol use.

Light to moderate alcohol consumption is considered acceptable for healthy adults. The National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism advises that people older than age 65 who are healthy and who do not take any medicines, have no more than seven drinks a week. The American Diabetes Association guidelines indicate one drink or less a day for women, or two drinks or less a day for men is acceptable.

Heavy drinking can exacerbate certain health problems that are common among older adults, including: diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, liver problems, osteoporosis, memory problems and mood disorders. Alcohol increases the







amount of estrogen in the body, and for women and particularly postmenopausal women, that has a role in developing hormone-sensitive breast cancer.

For seniors who consume alcohol and take medications, consider these important safety reminders:

- Always ask your health care provider or pharmacist first if it is safe to drink with prescribed or over-the-counter medicines. They can best advise you on which medications may interact harmfully with alcohol.
- Adhere to warning labels on medicines that caution against consumption of alcohol. The danger is real. Mixing alcohol with certain medications can cause nausea and vomiting, headaches, drowsiness, fainting, or loss of coordination. It also can increase the risk for internal bleeding, heart problems, and difficulties in breathing.
- Many prescription and over-the-counter medications, as well as herbal remedies can be dangerous or even deadly when mixed with alcohol. Medications that can interact badly with alcohol include: aspirin, acetaminophen, cold and allergy medicine, cough syrup, sleeping pills and medications for anxiety or depression.
- Be extremely cautious or avoid alcohol altogether when taking beta-blockers (used to treat high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, abnormal heart rhythms, and chest pain (angina) and sometimes used in heart attack patients to prevent future heart attacks). Alcohol can potentially make beta-blockers less effective or increase the risk of side effects.
- Alcohol can also make a medication less effective or even useless, or it may make the medication harmful or toxic to your body.
- Harmful interactions between alcohol and medicines can occur even if they are not taken at the same time.

Older people who choose to drink with permission from their health care provider and are aware of the

risks, can stay within their limits to help prevent any serious interactions by:

- Taking light beers and dryer wines which are lesser in alcohol content and calories.
- Not consuming sweeter alcohols or drinks which are higher in sugar.
- Mixing a mixed drink with water or sweet drinks with diet soda.

Baby boomers are enjoying alcohol well into their senior years and we urge them to do so responsibly, just as we remind our children and grandkids.

Michigan's seniors are a fast growing and treasured segment of our society and we know that nationally, problematic alcohol consumption can happen among older people.

Michigan has the 14th highest percentage of residents aged 65 and older out of all 50 states, according to the U.S. Census Bureau 2019 statistics. That is, 17.5% of Michigan's population is 65 years old or older, with 29.1 residents aged 65 and older for every 100 working-age residents (16-64 years old).

Almost a quarter of Michigan's population was age 60 or over (more than 2.4 million people) in 2018, and the U.S Census projects that will increase to 2.7 million by 2030. Michiganders aged 60 will live for about 23 more years on average, based on calculations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Those age 85 and older continue to be the fastest-growing population segment in our state.

Older Americans Month began in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy designated May as Senior Citizens Month. Two years later, President Lyndon B. Johnson passed the Older Americans Act of 1965 and formally declared May as Older Americans Month. This annual designation serves to honor older Americans by celebrating their contributions to our communities and our nation. ■

*It is the mission of the MLCC to make alcoholic beverages available for consumption while protecting the consumer and the general public through the regulation of those involved in the importation, sale, consumption, distribution, and delivery of these alcohol products.*

**Sources:** Michigan State Plan on Aging Fiscal Years 2021-2023, Michigan Dept. of Health and Human Services, Aging and Adult Services Agency; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; AARP; Texas Heart Institute; Journal of the American Geriatrics Society; Cleveland Clinic; U.S. Census Bureau 2018.





# ohio lobbyist report

TERRY FLEMING // TC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES

## Spring Break Legislation

**R**ecently, the Ohio General Assembly was on a two week Easter break, but the previous two months were busy ones. Two major pieces of legislation were passed and sent to the Governor for his signature. The first was HB 74, the Transportation Budget for Ohio for next two years. The good news for MIRA members is there was no gas tax increase included. There were a number of fee increases, however, including license plates, driver's license, temporary permits and other related fees to fund the Ohio Highway Patrol. When the bill was in the House the leadership asked MIRA about an amendment to allow County Auditors to do fuel quality testing – something they've been trying to get for over 30 years. MIRA responded in the negative and the House defeated the amendment. MIRA contacted other service station retailers to be aware of the next attempt in the Senate but received no response, MIRA also contacted Senators and no effort was made to include language in Senate. The Governor signed the bill and it became law immediately because it has funding included.

The other major bill that passed the legislature was SB 22, which created the *Ohio Health and Advisory Committee*, giving the committee oversight on emergency orders from Department of Health and the Governor. Governor DeWine vetoed the bill, but both House and Senate overrode the veto and the bill will become effective in late June 2021. This means



that if the committee wants to overturn some of the pandemic regulations, they can.

Here is a breakdown of other bills that MIRA is currently following:

- SB 13 – This bill reduced the time frame for law suits to be brought and has been signed by the Governor.
- SB 9 – This bill would require the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review to oversee a program to reduce regulations in state agencies over a two year period. SB 9 has passed the Senate and is pending in the House.
- HB 234 – This bill would phase out Ohio's Commercial Activity Tax over a 4 year period. MIRA will follow this closely and if it appears it has chance to move then a similar tax on gasoline should also be phased out. So far, the bill has had two hearings.
- HB 165 – This bill would provide a 5¢ per gallon tax credit for fuel containing 15% up to 85% ethanol. This bill has also had two hearings
- HB 132 – This bill makes it easier for tow companies and storage facilities to get title to cars or items left in storage. ■



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

# MIRA MEMBER EXCLUSIVE



# INNOVATORS -- NOT -- IMITATORS

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



Special **MIRA**  
Program Available

## Team Sledd

CONVENIENCE DISTRIBUTOR

Your **Retail** Partner!

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



On time. Every time.  
All the time.

### Details:

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

- 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

### • 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)





# THE GAS STATION BUSINESS PRE AND POST PANDEMIC

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING\*

Last month, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported on the April *Short-Term Energy Outlook* (STEO), subject to heightened levels of uncertainty because responses to COVID-19 continue to evolve. Reduced economic activity related to the COVID-19 pandemic has caused changes in energy demand and supply during the past year and will continue to affect these patterns in the future. U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) declined by 3.5% in 2020 from 2019 levels.

This STEO assumes U.S. GDP will grow by 5.6% in 2021 and by 4.2% in 2022, according to the EIA website.

For the 2021 summer driving season (April–September), EIA forecasts U.S. regular gasoline retail prices will average \$2.78 per gallon, up from an average of \$2.07 per gallon last summer.

Higher forecast gasoline prices reflect higher forecast crude oil prices, higher wholesale gasoline refining margins, and higher U.S. consumption of motor gasoline. “For all of 2021, we expect U.S. retail prices of regular-grade gasoline to average \$2.66 per gallon and retail prices for all grades to average \$2.78 per gallon, which would result in the average U.S. household spending about \$480 (31%) more on motor fuel in 2021 compared with 2020,” according to the EIA website.

“Gas pricing and inventory is complex and in reality, a dance between a commodity that





changes price once a day, availability and trucking from the terminal and the competition at the street,” said Michael Mitchell, Vice President Markham Oil/Markham Enterprises Inc. and Sunoco Distributor Council Secretary. “We are hoping that COVID gets under control and that the motoring public can get out to enjoy our great state.”

EIA expects U.S. gasoline consumption to rise in response to growing levels of GDP and employment. “In addition, as COVID-19 vaccines are more widely distributed, we expect that driving will increase, causing gasoline consumption to rise,” EIA claims. “We forecast that U.S. gasoline consumption in 2021 will average 8.6 million barrels per day, which is up from consumption in 2020 but down from consumption in 2019.”

“It is still not clear why the gasoline prices are going up,” said Paul Lutfy, owner of Cloverleaf in Southfield, a BP gas station. “There really isn’t a shortage.”

Mitchell started in the business in 1969. His businesses adapted from full service two-bay repair including batteries, tires and towing to basic convenience store (C-store) items and car washes. Later, they began to offer food while co-branding with major players. “We also added beer, wine and spirits at our stores. We are always challenged to find new ways to adapt to the market,” said Mitchell, MIRA board member.

Gasoline today is often a lost leader for owners. “And when the prices go up, it does hurt our business,” said Lutfy. “The more money motorists are spending on gas, the less they have to spend in the store.”

Lutfy built his gas station and C-store in 1999 with the future in mind. He reinvented and rebranded his business. (Read his spotlight story in the upcoming June issue).

Also, cars are getting more gas for the mileage and electric are on the rise. “The new administration may offer some incentives such as tax credits to promote electric cars,” said Ed Weglarz, president and CEO of MIRA. “Our members really need to reinvent themselves and add partnership business like Tim Hortons, Wendy’s or a C-store to remain competitive. Food service is imperative for gas station owners. Many are adding pizza ovens and full delis.”

Motorists saw drastic changes in gas prices over the years. “The demand for E-85 dropped considerably after the government subsidy ended,” said Mitchell. “When unleaded fuel dropped in pricing and E-85 went up many customers switched back to E-10 fuel.”

Profits are not in fuel for the petroleum dealer. “Better

fuel economy has definitely affected volume and has forced a lot of smaller stores out of the market,” said Mitchell who adds that he has more questions than answers when it comes to electric cars.

He shares these thoughts and questions. The power grid in major cities and rural areas are already maxed out, reason for the rolling blackouts and other issues during heavy use or bad weather. The majority of the electric power is generated by natural gas and that is a byproduct of drilling for crude oil. “I wonder what will happen to the pricing of what we use to heat our homes and cook with as the demand for electric climbs?” asked Mitchell. He continued with more questions that MIRA members and others need to consider:

- Could car companies own or demand use of proprietary charging equipment?
- Will there be such a strong secondary market that supports customization and do it yourself repairs?
- We depend on oil for plastic asphalt and so many other products. What will farmers and truckers have for options? Trains?
- Will tractors, trucks and cars be phased out?
- Will we be forced to give up our 1975 Chevy project? Motor sports?

“So much of what we do and who we are is based on the automotive and related markets,” said Mitchell.

Meanwhile, Lutfy plans to put in charging stations at his Southfield business and explains that the pandemic has proven that C-Stores are essential. “My gas sales went down considerably for a while. However, with restaurants and bars closing early, people depended on 24-hour locations for late night snack shopping.”

To stay competitive Lutfy and Mitchell understand the importance of looking ahead and managing the current climate. “My business is located near highways but with venues closed and gatherings limited, no one is driving downtown for events like a baseball game,” said Lutfy. “We have had automotive plants close over the years that hurt our businesses. People don’t even buy the newspaper like they used to years ago. I used to sell 175 newspapers a day. Today, I am lucky to sell 35.”

With the pandemic lingering, the challenges remain. “We are taking each day at a time and one of our major problems is that in the COVID era, the work force has dried up due to increased unemployment benefits and stimulus payments,” said Mitchell. ■

*\*Writers with Epiphany Communications and Coaching are content creators for Bottom Line.*





## Pushing for Air Quality Following the Coronavirus Pandemic

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING\*

As Michigan started to open up its restaurants and bars during the pandemic, air quality became a concern and businesses reached out to heating, ventilation and cooling companies (HVAC) for air purifiers.

“These requests started to come in on a regular basis,” said MIRA member, Ron Garmo with Running Right Heating and Cooling. “These products have been on the market but because of the pandemic, they are now in demand.”

Even though many food retail businesses remained open because they are considered essential businesses, maintaining quality air is a priority for many retail establishments.

Garmo’s company also supplied businesses with stickers that let patrons know that they have purifiers in the stores. “These products are a great way to make customers feel more protected,” said Garmo. “Businesses want their customers to know that they care about their health!”

“We looked at many products on the market and we decided to work with two companies that did extensive research,” said Garmo. “Aerus, for example, used FDA labs to do research on their products.”

According to the testing of the iWave product, the Human Coronavirus was reduced by 90% in just 60 minutes. Aerus product are on the international space station.

iWave and Aerus products are designed to remove odors from your kitchen, prevent mold and bacteria in HVAC systems, kill bacteria and viruses, reduce

odors as well as allergens, and dust particles. These products are marketed to safely purify air throughout the building, reduce costly grease build up in duct work and protect the health of patrons and the staff.

iWave and Aerus also claim that the products kill mold, bacteria, viruses, reduces odors, and even reduces allergens and static electricity. iWave and Aerus products require no maintenance and they have no harmful byproducts, safely cleaning the air in restaurants and supermarkets. With hundreds of thousands of installations worldwide, the products are touted as the best air purifiers for restaurants and supermarkets.

The iWave product underwent test runs using the iWave-C (GPS-DM48-AC) in a test designed to mimic ionization conditions like that of a commercial aircraft’s fuselage. Based on viral titrations, it was determined that at 10 minutes, 84.2% of the virus was inactivated. At 15 minutes, 92.6% of the virus was inactivated, and at 30 minutes, 99.4% of the virus was inactivated.

This test was run in a test chamber in a lab setting with the Nu-Calgon iWave-R Air Purifier P/N 4900-20. A petri dish containing a pathogen is placed underneath a laboratory hood, then monitored to assess the pathogen’s reactivity to Needle Point Bi-polar Ionization (NPBI) over time. This controlled environment allows for comparison across different types of pathogens.

The tests showed that the SARS-Co-V-2 (COVID-19)

virus was reduced by 99.4% in a 30-minute time-period.

This test was run in a test chamber in a lab setting with the Nu-Calgon iWave-R Air Purifier P/N 4900-20. A petri dish containing a pathogen is placed underneath a laboratory hood, then monitored to assess the pathogen’s reactivity to Needle Point Bi-polar Ionization (NPBI) over time. This controlled environment allows for comparison across different types of pathogens.

According to the company, EMSL Labs, a laboratory rated as “Elite” by the Center for Disease Control, and ATS Labs have tested the effectiveness of iWave products against various pathogens. All testing was done in a large environmental chamber in an effort to simulate a home environment. The testing resulted in very high kill rates “in the space.”

Other common air purification technologies require ongoing maintenance with bulb/cell replacement every year or two, making the cost of ownership undesirable. iWave air purifiers have no harmful byproducts, and most models require no ongoing maintenance and have no replacement parts.

“These are not the only products consumers are requesting” said Garmo. “We are also selling Air Scrubbers for cars that don’t require professional installations. They are plugged into cigarette lighters and there are also units small enough to travel with and could be plugged into hotel rooms.” ■

*\*Writers with Epiphany Communications and Coaching are content creators for Bottom Line.*



A photograph of three diverse people (two men and one woman) sitting at a table in a cafe, smiling and looking towards the left. The man on the left is holding a coffee cup. The background features exposed brick walls and industrial-style pipes.

# A FORCE FOR GOOD

Strong communities are the foundation of a healthy, thriving environment for all people. That's why you can count on DTE Energy to support local organizations that are having a real impact. We are proud to partner with MIRA.

**DTE**





## Retail Shopping in the Digital World

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING\*



Soon the days of customers pushing carts around the store, unloading items onto a conveyer belt with a plastic divider between customer orders, paying a cashier and heading home will be a grocery experience of the past. Technology and digital programs continue to change the retail shopping experience.

"E-commerce, curbside pickup and self-checkout are all changing the way people shop," said Jason Baylis, president of Great Lakes Data Systems, Inc.

Great Lakes Data Systems offers a variety of tools and programs for MIRA members who are the independent grocer, gas station owner and c-store operator. "If you don't keep up with the Jones' when it comes to technology, you are going to have some serious challenges," said Baylis. "People don't clip coupons anymore. The days of shoppers walking around the grocery store with their envelope of coupons are over."

With technology, a grocer could have 12 checkout lanes open and only four cashiers as self-checkout continues to grow. "Retailers have been met with growing labor costs and now are relying on technology to absorb those expenses," said Baylis.

"If retailers have to pay \$15 an hour, it becomes a challenge. The technology relieves them of that labor cost," said Baylis.

Loyalty programs for the independents are not as common as they are in the big box stores. "We encourage our clients to focus on customer engagement more so than loyalty programs," said Baylis. "A chain store may give you a dollar coupon to spend the store but we encourage programs that direct customers to various departments in the store. If you spend \$50 for instance, a customer would get a \$10 coupon to spend in the bakery or deli department."

Great Lakes Data Systems offers various programs that are designed to be at different levels of customer engagement. "Customers will drive a bit farther, if they know they can purchase more items with an incentive program," said Baylis.

Digital signage is also growing in food retail establishments. Instead of the sticker on the shelves displaying the price of an item, stores are adding digital signage much like customers see inside a Kohl's or Target.

Cliff Denha is on a year-long plan to digitize the Wine Palace in Livonia. Two of his four sons are helping him move the business more in the technology age. "I am not a tech savvy person, but as a businessman, I know the importance of implementing technology in the business. I don't want to be playing catch up. I have always looked at my business thinking ahead."

The plan is to have the more than 30,000 items in his store all on a computer data base using a Great Lakes Data Systems program to create

an e-commerce store. "We are known for having hard to get products like a specific bottle of wine," said Denha. "With our e-commerce business, a customer from California for example can order a bottle from us and we can ship it to them in less than 48 hours."

Amazon set the bar and "now our customers are forced to catch up and compete," said Baylis.

When Denha opened the Wine Palace, he had to call in credit card numbers on the phone. "Today, customers just have to wave their card above our register and the sale is charged," said Denha. "It's amazing how much technology has changed the business model, but it's not cheap."

Credit Card business accounts for more than 80% of Denha's sales. "If the Wi-Fi is down, it is a mess," he said. "We put firewalls in place so we can keep operating even when we have glitches."

Technology continues to improve with a variety option emerging. "When you are using the cloud for enhanced point of sales, we are really sharpening the tool," said Baylis. "We listen to our clients and work to understand their needs. We have created programs based on what clients have told us that they need. We create programs that allow flexibility for clients. We have external devices connected to the cloud that enables merchant to access store information easily."

The COVID-19 pandemic increased online shopping activity. "More and more customers are shopping without ever stepping into a store," said Baylis. ■

*\*Writers with Epiphany Communications and Coaching are content creators for Bottom Line.*



***Proudly feeding America & Grateful to  
those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.***

A close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes in a draped, wavy pattern. The colors are vibrant red, white, and blue.

# **MEMORIAL DAY**

**HONORING ALL WHO SERVED**

**SF SHERWOOD**  
**FOOD DISTRIBUTORS**

A Harvest Sherwood Company

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

**313-659-7300**

***Sherwoodfoods.com***





## Summer Staycations is a Boost to Retailers

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING\*

**M**ore than year after the COVID-19 pandemic plagued the nation, food retailers are bracing for another summer of staycations and those businesses located near beaches, parks and camp sights are most likely to see a growth in sales.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an abrupt end to holidays abroad and with less people traveling out of the country and in some cases, out of their own states, families are creating vacations at home.

Lisa Berry and her family own North Adams General Store in North Adams, Michigan and L&B Kwik Stop in Jackson, Michigan, both near places people swim, boat and fish. “We also have two motorcycle clubs, one near each of our businesses,” said Berry. “They do a lot during the summer and often end up in our stores.”

The biker club near the North Adams business has more than 300 members. “They do these poker runs in the summer and they often end up in our businesses picking up items,” said Berry. “They are involved in various charities and hold these events. It’s good for the community.”

Berry and family are also involved in community outreach. “We support church events, youth sporting leagues and other charity groups,” she said.

Their established relationships in the community have made their stores favorite summer stops before heading out to enjoy a hot sunny day. “Our deli department has been doing great,” said Berry who cooks various recipes upon customer requests. “I cooked Galumpkis, stuff cabbage rolls, for the first time around St. Patrick’s Day because a customer asked me and they were a big hit. I was so worried how they were going to taste.”

The store was set to remodel their kitchen when COVID-19 hit and plans were halted for a bit. “I was cooking with few resources in my kitchen,” said Berry. “At one point I didn’t have a sink. I was so limited with what I could do.”

With travel halted and people staying home,



sales increased at the two store locations. “Food and beverage sales increased,” said Berry. “I cook every day and stock our deli counters and by midday, I have to cook more food. Beer, wine and liquor sales also increased. More and more customers started to purchase high end liquor.”

During the Pandemic sales increased for both businesses. “Customers realized that we carry many staple items and picking the up from our store is more convenient,” said Berry. “When the pandemic first hit and supermarkets were out of toilet paper, I had three cases in the back. We now have customers who still buy their staple items from us. They pick up paper towels, and toilet paper from us and other items.”

They also sell squirt guns and balloons for kids to pick up on the way to the beach and parks. “We have kids hanging out with their grandparents in the summer and they shop at our stores picking up various items.”

The challenges Berry faces is the lack of staff. “We purchased a pizza oven hoping to expand our kitchen and food items and we can’t find any help,” said Berry. “It’s crazy. We just need to get people to work.”

There are still several countries that will not allow anyone to travel into at this point including Canada. “Customers will pop in to purchase items for a road trip,” said Berry. “So many customers are traveling by car to Nashville and Gatlinburg in Tennessee. It seems to be the new vacation hot spot.” ■

*\*Writers with Epiphany Communications and Coaching are content creators for Bottom Line.*





## ASSORTED FRUIT DRINK GALLONS

# \$1.43

*Special rate to MIRA Members of \$1.43 per gallon of fruit drinks if you buy 24 cases or more!*



*Thank you for being a Borden customer!*





## MIRA Member Offering Business Solutions for Industries Around the Globe

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING\*

**S**axon Incorporated invented the liquor tag in 1990 and has been providing tags ever since to the Michigan Marketplace. For more than 30 years, Saxon Inc. has been specializing in the manufacturing, development and delivery of pressure sensitive label products and die cut loyalty tools. The Ferndale, Michigan-based company provides clients with custom business solutions which support many industries across the globe.

"In 2017 the Saxon Liquor Orderer app was born, offering the marketplace a much easier and faster form in which to place their liquor orders on the Michigan Liquor Control Commission's (MLCC) website by combining an app that will allow them to do inventory and place orders in the same step," said Kevin Mitchell. "In the beginning, the app was a pretty raw but still a functional product, it since has grown to a very feature rich product that was 100% customer driven."

Since the introduction of the Saxon Liquor Orderer, the company has also automated the system within to streamline operations while complementing the Saxon Liquor Orderer. This has increased accuracy of customer accounts where liquor tags are required.

Being the inventor of the liquor tag experience, Saxon has set itself apart from the rest. They do this also with "quality of product, ease of use as well as of course good old fashioned customer service that drives what we do here at Saxon Inc.," said Mitchell. "Relationships with our customer is paramount and because the growth in the industry has been purposeful, and deliberate."

He also adds that being available to their customers is essential. Word of mouth continues to organically grow the business. "Our app really has allowed us to change the face of the industry here in Michigan, its success driven by Saxon's inventiveness and our developer Ripeworks located here in Michigan has allowed us to excel," said Mitchell.

Saxon was started in 1985 as a dream of two men who did business together. Starting with label manufacturing, Saxon Inc. evolved into a manufacturer, setting the standard in the label printing industry.

With more than 30 industry patents under their belt, they have led the industry for more than 30 years. Using a distributor-based concept product manufacturer for the food, automotive,

sporting industries as well as many other industries, Saxon Inc. has flourished while others have failed. Signature products like Peel-a-Deal, The Protector and many of others have been seen for years by consumers directly. "The four-color process labeling has



KEVIN MITCHELL

become our specialty while we have been making huge inroads in the scale label industry as well as many others," said Mitchell. "RFID labeling, our newest venture is promising and will continue to grow leaps and bounds."

Kevin Mitchell drives sales at Saxon Inc. He was given the concept of the Saxon Liquor Orderer app and developed it from the ground up as well as inside and out. "I have become very proud of the accomplishment here that has transformed an industry," he said. "My work here is based on trust that the owners give me and I am allowed to wear any hat I like depending on the need that arises at any given time. Having provided customer service in the supermarket and packing house industries for more than 40 years and being a customer of Saxon Inc. for 13 years before joining them, I am truly lucky to work in such a place."

Mitchell says that Saxon Inc. is one of Michigan's best kept secrets. "Being a MIRA member has allowed us to get the word out about us while helping us set the bar higher in providing an example to our industry," he said. "MIRA's commitment to their member industries has allowed us to commit to those same industries. Exposure, of course, is what MIRA has brought to Saxon Inc. and it is our desire and goal to give that back to MIRA and its membership in kind."

During his free time, Mitchell spends time with his family including his wife and grandchildren. He also enjoys fishing and volunteering. "I live on the lake and enjoy all aspects of lake life with my bride of 16 years, Raisa," he said.

As for work, "it is our goal at Saxon Inc. to bring Saxon liquor tags and the Saxon Liquor Orderer to every liquor retailer in the great State of Michigan," he said. "Providing products printed second to none - while not perfect - how we handle those imperfections we hope will set us apart from others. If we do that, we know we will lift others up along with ourselves in providing excellence in the trade." ■

*\*Writers with Epiphany Communications and Coaching are content creators for Bottom Line.*



# SAXON INCORPORATED

# LIQUOR ORDERER™ APP!

**Make ordering easy...**

*Simply Scan Saxon Tags*

*Place Your Order Today!*

## Key features now available in The Saxon "Liquor Orderer"™:

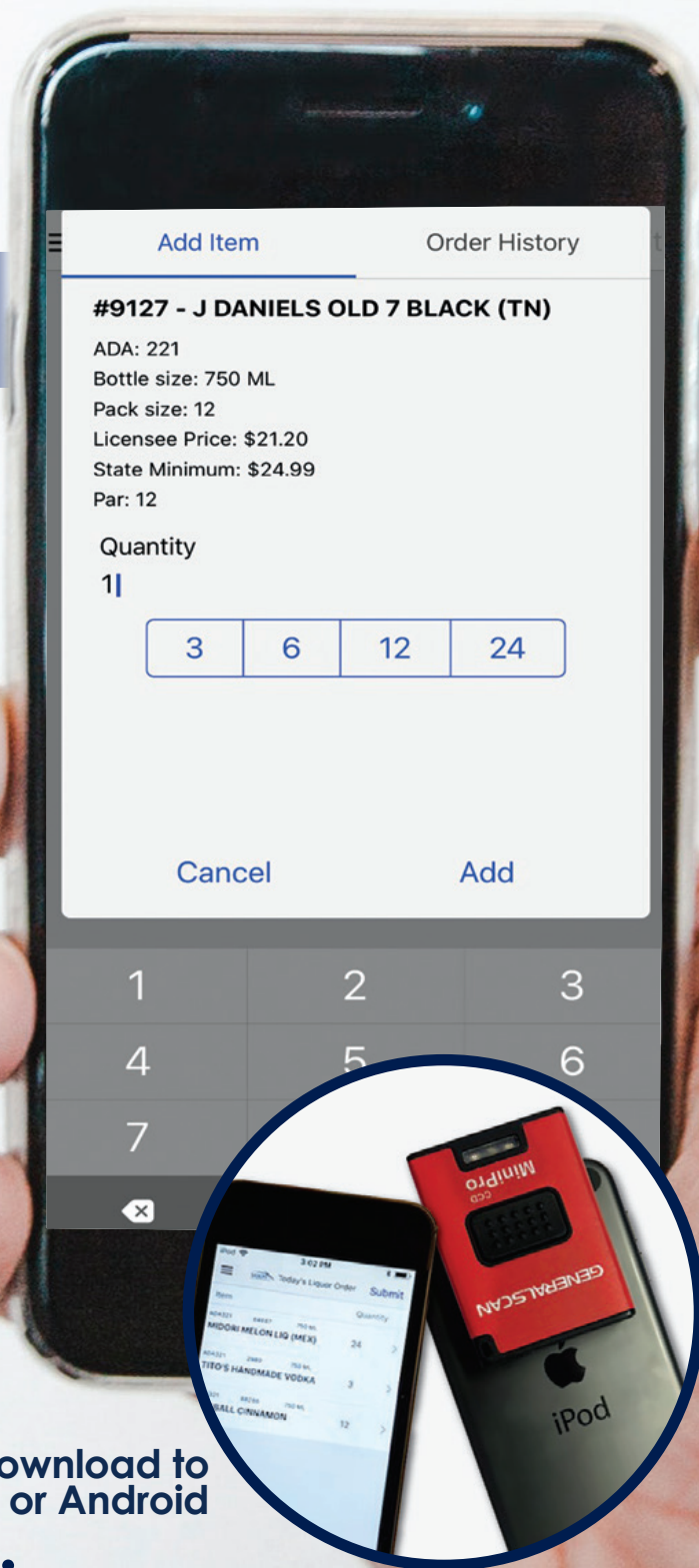
- **Sorting** – Sort your order by Size and/or ADA
- **Error Graphics** – Improved visibility of errors on submitted orders
- **MLCC** customer notification direct to the app
- **Daily Updating** of MLCC price and new item changes
- **Speed Keys** – Just tap the most commonly ordered quantities
- **Custom Tag** – Create and request new and/or custom price tags (extra charge if more than 200 custom tags per year)
- **My Tag** – Create and maintain your own tag database
- **Order History** – View a rolling 12-month history of your orders
  - by Total Orders or by Individual Items
  - Duplicate entire orders and edit

**Call to order today!**  
**800.727.1976**

Download to  
I-Phone or Android

**www.saxoninc.com**

811 Woodward Heights | Ferndale, Michigan 48220 | Fax 248.398.2359







MICHIGAN //

## The CDC Issued New Guidelines That Will Allow Vaccinated People to Lessen the Use of Masks Outdoors

### Choosing Safer Activities

		Your Activity		
		Outdoor		
Safest	Unvaccinated People	Walk, run, roll, or bike outdoors with members of your household	Fully Vaccinated People	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends		
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people		
Less Safe		Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households		
Least Safe		Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event		
		Indoor		
Less Safe		Visit a barber or hair salon		
		Go to an uncrowded, indoor shopping center or museum		
		Ride public transport with limited occupancy		
		Attend a small, indoor gathering of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from multiple households		
Least Safe		Go to an indoor movie theater		
		Attend a full-capacity worship service		
		Sing in an indoor chorus		
		Eat at an indoor restaurant or bar		
		Participate in an indoor, high intensity exercise class		

- Fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask outdoors, except in crowded settings and venues.
- People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna), or two weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson).
- Currently authorized vaccines in the United States are highly effective at protecting vaccinated people against symptomatic and severe COVID-19. A growing body of evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection or transmit SARS-CoV-2 to others.
- There are several activities that fully vaccinated people can resume now, at low risk to themselves, while being mindful of the potential risk of transmitting the virus to others.

#### Get a COVID-19 vaccine



Prevention measures not needed

Take prevention measures

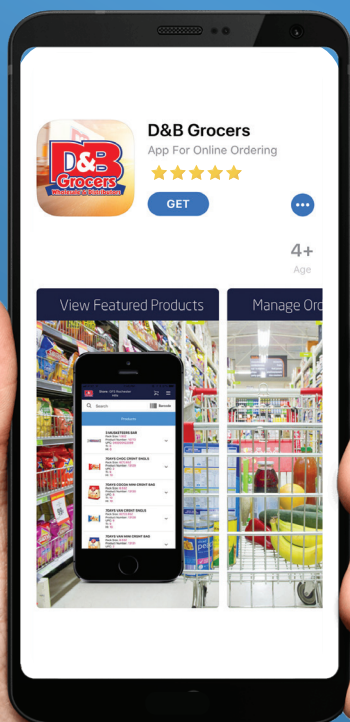
Fully vaccinated people: wear a mask  
Unvaccinated people: wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and wash your hands.

- Safety levels assume the recommended prevention measures are followed, both by the individual and the venue (if applicable).
- CDC cannot provide the specific risk level for every activity in every community. It is important to consider your own personal situation and the risk to you, your family, and your community before venturing out.





# PLACING YOUR ORDER JUST GOT EVEN EASIER!



## DANDBGROCERS.COM OR DOWNLOAD THE D&B GROCERS APP



INFO@DANDBGROCERS.COM  
35400 CENTRAL CITY PARKWAY | WESTLAND, MI 48185  
(734) 513-1715





## Grocers Look to Help Seniors Bridge the Digital Shopping Divide

The pandemic brought more seniors online. Now grocers are figuring out how to retain their digital spending.



■ BY GROCERY DIVE

When the coronavirus pandemic swept the U.S. last spring, Community Foods Market in Oakland, California, turned to free delivery to encourage seniors to shop online.

“Even though we were doing kind of everything to keep our store clean and sanitized daily and limit traffic coming into the store, I just was not that comfortable with the idea of encouraging seniors to come out at what was the peak of the first [COVID-19] surge,” said Brahm Ahmadi, CEO and president of the store.

The store sits just a few blocks from two large senior living facilities and serves a senior population that has a high percentage of low-income people and households without cars, Ahmadi said.

With the help of grant funding and a GoFundMe campaign, the grocery store rolled out the free senior delivery as one of several initiatives to help vulnerable shoppers, Ahmadi said. “Over time, some of those seniors who are repeat

[customers], they’ve gotten pretty savvy with the website,” he said.

Community Foods is one of the many grocery stores that focused their attention on helping older shoppers navigate e-commerce as a way to avoid COVID-19 exposure and address mobility challenges. Now, those grocers are investing in making online shopping a better experience for seniors — a goal that comes with its own unique set of challenges.

Instacart noted in a report earlier this month that it saw a 9% increase in seniors using its service — the largest bump among age groups — between the first and fourth quarters of 2020. However, while the rate of shoppers ages 60 and older jumped at the start of the pandemic, according to Brick Meets Click, the retail consulting firm’s latest data indicates that many senior shoppers are headed back to in-store shopping.

David Bishop, partner at Brick Meets Click, said there’s a growing urgency among tech-facing retailers to serve seniors

because of the demographic’s size along with focusing on compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires retailers to meet certain levels of accessibility.

“The senior consumer, [ages] 65 and older, is growing at a rate that’s almost three times that of the rest of the population ... Those over 65 are going to represent a larger share of the overall market from a consumer spending perspective,” Bishop said. “If we want to win in five years, we need to figure out how we can do a better job serving that portion of the market.”

### DESIGNING WITH ACCESSIBILITY IN MIND

To better understand how seniors use online shopping, Bishop recently turned to a familiar source: his mother, who is in her 70s. Last March, Bishop began observing her while she shopped, filming her as she placed an order for more than 20 items on Instacart.

Bishop noticed that building an online cart of more than a dozen items was a tedious process for her, and that she had trouble, at times, finding the items she wanted. She had difficulty getting rid of pop-up screens, navigating product substitutions and determining how to add more than one of any given product to her cart. When it came time for her to check out, Bishop added his mobile number to the order because, while his mom has a cell phone, she didn’t want to use it to receive updates about the order.

Because older consumers can face increasing difficulty with mobility and cognitive abilities and, potentially, a steeper learning curve when adapting to online shopping, Bishop recommends that the grocery industry invest more

**GROCERS LOOK TO HELP SENIORS**  
*continued on page 26.*





# Tastes so good, it's gotta be Velvet



## 3% Annual Rebate for Velvet Customers

Exclusive Program for MIRA / Velvet customers  
Contact MIRA to Sign up! Call Today: **800.666.6233**  
Email: [info@miraonline.com](mailto:info@miraonline.com)



\*Rebates paid by MIRA.

MIRA MEMBER EXCLUSIVE





## GROCERS LOOK TO HELP SENIORS *continued from page 24.*

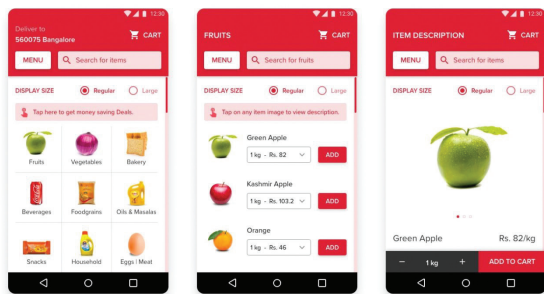


PHOTO FROM  
UX COLLECTIVE

resources into understanding how age impacts technology use.

"The big challenge when seniors are using e-commerce is, No. 1, dexterity with their hands and quality of their eyesight," said Sylvain Perrier, president and CEO of grocery e-commerce platform Mercatus Technologies.

Internet availability and smartphone penetration can also pose barriers. Among people ages 65 and older, 73% use the internet, while 53% own smartphones, according to The Pew Research Center in 2019.

To better serve senior shoppers, grocers and their tech firms may need to rethink design elements of their e-commerce sites, like adding screen readers — assistive technology that turns online text and images into speech or braille output — and increasing font sizes.

"Is the sign-up process easy? Is adding items to a basket easy? Are they getting the quantities right?" Perrier said. Mercatus has teamed up with Accessible360, a digital accessibility auditing firm, to help with the company with ADA compliance and uses tools like [usertesting.com](https://www.usertesting.com) to launch focus groups of specific demographics to receive user feedback.

Grocers often include a variety of features on their e-commerce websites, like coupons, flyers, recipes and more, but those additions can make navigating the digital aisles overwhelming and confusing

to older shoppers, Perrier said.

For seniors, "the big hump is the first order," he noted. Having features that allow seniors to shop items from a previous order or offer prepackaged product bundles make it easier to build their carts, he said.

"It's not a hard problem to solve from a web perspective and even a mobile perspective," Perrier said. "Is there enough money? Is it worthwhile for a retailer to do it?"

In a UX case study, Megha Goyal, a product designer for GoFood, an instant food delivery service under Indonesia-based Gojek, designed an e-commerce grocery product geared toward people ages 55-60, looking to solve three main challenges: vision, motor control and cognition.

To boost the visibility of relevant buttons, Goyal added icons to the "Cart" and "Search" buttons and spelled out "MENU" instead of using the hamburger menu icon. The display interface included both regular and large display size options. Additionally, Goyal included a scroll bar on the right side for users who might not be as familiar or comfortable with the scrolling gesture on touchscreen devices.

To make platforms more visually accessible, Goyal recommends keeping the font size 14 pixels or larger and buttons at least 48 by 44 pixels, picking a legible font, allowing for customizable display size and creating contrast between the background and text (see image).

Local Express, a grocery e-commerce platform provider, has had some retail partners request larger pictures of products to make it easier for shoppers to see them, said Dennis Acebo, the company's vice president of customer success. "We had some [retail partners] where we did have to enlarge the items so they can understand and see what that item is, so if they click on it, they can see the item, much larger," Acebo said.

One feature, in particular, that Acebo said is useful is allowing shoppers to write notes for each item when they add them to the cart.

Online grocery shopping has also opened up avenues to support budget-conscious seniors. Grocers can consider creating deals targeting certain age demographics. For example, Local Express offers retailers the ability to create special departments stocked with essential items for seniors as well as special discounts targeted to them.

## SENIOR SUPPORT SOLUTIONS

Key to engaging seniors online is helping them get past their first few orders, Bishop said, which tend to be most challenging. One of the ways grocers and e-commerce companies are doing this is by creating dedicated support lines.

Last spring, Texas grocer H-E-B and its on-demand delivery service Favor debuted a Senior Support phone line that allows shoppers ages 60 and older that live within eight miles of an H-E-B store to place same-day orders, along with a curated list of grocery essentials that's available to order over the phone and online. With the curated list, customers can select items like milk, eggs and bread, and add up to 25 custom items per order.

To help seniors who want to place online orders, Favor has a YouTube video showing how to place an order. While it's not clear how many people might use video tutorials, Bishop said they could help demystify the online shopping experience, along with well-written FAQs.

Instacart launched its own Senior Support Service in late 2020 for people over the age of 60 in the U.S. and Canada. By offering a phone service, Instacart said that support staff and customers are able to have longer and more in-depth conversations, noting shortly after its launch that contacts with the Senior Support Service lasted on average 20% longer than traditional customer service contacts. The service aims to replicate the personalized, high-touch assistance seniors would get from friends

**GROCERS LOOK TO HELP SENIORS**  
*continued on page 28.*



# BIG CASH. BIG FUN.



Introducing new **Jumbo Cash Instant Games** from the Michigan Lottery. There are top prizes up to **\$2,000,000** and over **\$185 million** in total prizes.

We value your business, but your safety even more.  
So let's work to protect the health of us all.



Overall odds of winning \$50,000 Jumbo Cash: 1 in 4.63. Overall odds of winning \$500,000 Jumbo Cash: 1 in 4.17. Overall odds of winning \$1,000,000 Jumbo Cash: 1 in 3.77. Overall odds of winning \$2,000,000 Jumbo Cash: 1 in 3.51. Knowing your limits is always the best bet. Call the Michigan Problem Gambling Helpline for confidential help at 1-800-270-7117.







## GROCERS LOOK TO HELP SENIORS *continued from page 26.*

or family, a spokesperson said.

After placing one to two orders, seniors tend to need less support and go on to buy 25% more frequently than younger customers, the spokesperson said.

At the start of April, Instacart said nearly 300,000 seniors have learned how to use Instacart through the support center, which has been growing by roughly 1,000 senior customers daily. The service has had some of its largest concentrations of users in San Diego, Orange County and West Los Angeles, California; Boca Raton, Florida; New York City's Brooklyn and Queens boroughs; and Philadelphia, the spokesperson said.

shopping myself, I would have picked something a little farther out," Cope said.

On the other side of the country in Brooklyn, Ellyn Toscano, 65, said she stopped buying avocados "or something that's really fragile or temperamental" online due to issues with ripeness and quality. She switched her online grocery shopping to Whole Foods, which she said offered better quality produce.

For Toscano, produce quality is important because she is a vegetarian. After adjusting her shopping habits, she's found that online grocery shopping, for the most part, has met her dietary needs and, in some ways, inspired new meal ideas, along with saving her from carving out time in her busy work schedule for in-person shopping.

Bishop encourages grocers not to overthink solutions. "I almost think the simplest

"My siblings, we all take turns ordering for him," Acebo said. "He has access to the internet so he can look, but we know he would have a very difficult time trying to go through the ordering process."

Promoting services across age groups can also incentivize people helping seniors to shop online themselves, Acebo said. Local Express's discussion with grocery partners reveals there are a lot of people shopping for seniors who find pickup appealing.

Acebo said Local Express has turned to targeted email and messaging campaigns, along with ad campaigns through Facebook and Google Ads and Facebook posts to help stores reach seniors. Offline, Local Express helps stores create flyers, window stickers, bag stuffers and banners — strategies that can boost awareness of online offerings.

Word of mouth can also be effective. For example, Toscano credits her daughter with introducing her to Misfits Market, a subscription-based e-commerce site that sells "ugly" produce, about six months before the pandemic started.

Ahmadi of Community Foods said he relied on word-of-mouth, in-store signage and promotions with the help of local community organizations and senior home facility operators. He plans to start winding down the free delivery service in June unless a surge of COVID-19 cases prompts an extension. Looking forward, he expects some seniors will continue to shop online, while others will return to the store.

While Cope said online grocery shopping has "run very smoothly," she misses socializing with her friends while grocery shopping and has resumed her usual routine of going to Safeway, Sprouts Farmers Market and Trader's Joe now that she is fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

For others, like Toscano, grocery shopping has become a convenient mix of in-store and online.

"I still go to grocery stores but mostly for convenience, or when I don't have time, I order online from Whole Foods," Toscano said. ■

"Those over 65 are going to represent a larger share of the overall market from a consumer spending perspective. If we want to win in five years, we need to figure out how we can do a better job serving that portion of the market."

—DAVID BISHOP, BRICK MEETS CLICK

## MEETING EXPECTATIONS OFFLINE

Experienced grocery shoppers may be less forgiving of the rough spots of grocery e-commerce. Online shopping's appeal to older consumers can become hindered if the product quality and grocery bag hand-off doesn't match shoppers' expectations.

When the pandemic hit, Jeanne Cope, 67, and her husband, who are at high risk of severe complications from COVID-19, turned to Instacart — first with Safeway and then Raley's — for contactless delivery to their home in the California Bay Area.

Over the past year, the Copes have experienced some hiccups with their online orders, like a missing bag of groceries that was resolved through customer service, and a package of moldy grapes. For one order, the expiration date for the milk was a few days after the delivery date. "If I was

answer actually will come from seniors helping seniors."

To that end, he said grocers could rely on seniors as ambassadors to promote e-commerce.

"I think the idea of using like individuals, in terms of age, as the brand ambassadors is really important and not to be understated, simply because they'll communicate and relate to each other in a very different way in terms of their orientation to use of technology [and] to their empathy to one another," Bishop said.

Acebo of Local Express said grocers should include younger age groups when marketing their e-commerce services for seniors, since elderly shoppers often get assistance from friends and family. Acebo cited his 90-year-old father as an example.



# SUMMER SPOTLIGHT

PRESENTED BY **ROCKSTAR**  
ENERGY DRINK



**BUY & SCAN**  
FOR AN AUGMENTED  
REALITY EXPERIENCE



**UNLOCK**  
CUSTOM SPOTIFY  
PLAYLISTS



**ACCESS**  
AN EXCLUSIVE CONCERT  
EXPERIENCE WITH CODE  
UNDER TAB

**PLUS VOTE FOR MORE FROM YOUR FAVORITE ARTIST  
AT [ROCKSTARSUMMER.COM](https://rockstarsummer.com)**

Valid 5/24/21 - 8/15/21.

ROCKSTAR, RR Star & Design and SUMMER SPOTLIGHT are trademarks of PepsiCo, Inc. 26279004



# make sure to support these mira supplier members



Indicates a supplier program that has been endorsed by MIRA

**M** Indicates supplier only available in MI

**O** Indicates supplier only available in OH

**I** Indicates supplier only available in IL

## BAKED GOODS DISTRIBUTORS

Cateraid, Inc. .... (517) 546-8217  
Chicago Sweet Connection Bakery ..... (773) 283-4430  
Kordas' Metropolitan Baking Company ..... (313) 875-7246

## BANKING, INVESTING & CONSULTING

First Business Bank ..... (616) 201-7177  
Mercantile Bank of Michigan ..... (248) 434-5928  
The State Bank. .... (248) 835-4463

## BEER DISTRIBUTORS

Eastown Distributors. .... (313) 867-6900

## BOOKKEEPING/ACCOUNTING CPA

UHY Advisors-MI ..... (248) 355-1040

## BUSINESS BROKERAGE

Global Petro Advisers ..... (614) 332-8762

## BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC RELATIONS

Comcast Business ..... (734) 277-9731  
Tamar Designs, LLC ..... (248) 760-7211

## C-STORE & TOBACCO DISTRIBUTORS

**McAneny Brothers, Inc.** ..... (304) 559-1510  
**S. Abraham & Sons, Inc.** ..... (616) 453-6358  
**Team Sledd** ..... 1-800-333-0374  
Apollo Eyewear. .... (630) 260-5100  
Capital Sales Company ..... (248) 542-4400  
H.T. Hackney-Grand Rapids. .... 1-800-874-5550  
Seaway Cash-N-Carry. .... (216) 361-5757

## C-STORE MISC. TAXABLE MERCHANDISE

Detroit Beer Gifting Company ..... (248) 396-7830  
Li'l Drug Store/Associated Distributors ..... (319) 393-0454

## CCTV/NETWORK SOLUTIONS

Competitive Network Management ..... (734) 301-3370

## CHECK CASHING

Pre Paid Ventures ..... (516) 455-2940  
Secure Check Cashing, Inc. .... (248) 548-3020

## CHIPS, NUTS, CANDY & SNACKS

**Lipari Foods, Inc.** ..... (586) 447-3500  
Better Made Snack Foods ..... (313) 925-4774  
D&B Grocers Wholesale. .... (734) 513-1715  
Devon's Mackinac Island Fudge ..... (231) 436-5356  
Frito-Lay, Inc. .... 1-800-359-5914  
Motown Snack Foods  
(Jays, Cape Cod, Tom's, Archway, Stella D'oro). .... (313) 931-3205  
Sugar Foods Corporation ..... (830) 515-0981  
Western's Smokehouse LLC ..... (503) 551-8799

## CLEANING CHEMICALS, UNIFORMS, LINENS & SUPPLIES

**Detroit Chemical & Paper Supply / 1st Impressions** ..... (586) 558-8805  
**UniFirst Corporation** ..... (888) 256-5255 ext. 232  
Socks Galore Wholesale ..... (248) 545-7625

## COFFEE

Goodwest Industries, LLC (Bulk Cream/Iced Coffee) ..... 1-800-948-1922

## COUPON REDEMPTION/MONEY TRANSFER/ BILL PAYMENT

**MIRA Coupon Redemption** ..... 1-800-666-6233  
..... (405) 525-9419  
DivDat Kiosk Network ..... (248) 399-0715

## CREDIT CARD PROCESSING

**MIRA Credit Card Processing** ..... 1-800-666-6233

## DELI & MEAT MANUFACTURERS & DISTRIBUTORS

**Lipari Foods, Inc.** ..... (586) 447-3500  
Concord Premium Meats Ltd. .... (905) 738-7979  
Premier Snacks Distributors. .... (248) 289-1088  
Harvest Sherwood ..... (313) 659-7300  
Wolverine Packing Company ..... (313) 259-7500

## ENERGY, LIGHTING & UTILITIES

DTE Energy ..... 1-800-477-4747  
DTE Your Energy Savings ..... 1-855-234-7335  
Inovis Energy ..... (313) 600-1458  
Running Right ..... (248) 884-1704

## FOOD EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY & KIOSKS

Taylor Freezer/Broaster Chicken ..... (734) 525-2535

## FOOD MANUFACTURER

Barilla America ..... (847) 405-7575  
Nino's LLC ..... (847) 685-0478  
Pastificio Fabianelli SPD ..... luca@fabianelli.it

## FRANCHISING OPPORTUNITIES

DCT Enterprises-Little Caesars Pizza ..... (989) 792-0322  
Jopatico-Little Caesars Pizza ..... (989) 686-3600

## GAS STATION BRANDING & MAINTENANCE

**Oscar W Larson Co.** **M I.** ..... (248) 620-0070

## GASOLINE WHOLESALERS

Central Ohio Petroleum Marketers ..... (614) 889-1860  
High Pointe Oil Company, Inc. .... (248) 474-0900  
Markham Oil Company, Inc. .... (517) 861-7366  
Obie Oil, Inc. .... (937) 275-9966  
Teer Management LLC, Exxon Mobil ..... (810) 584-7975

## GREETING CARDS

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

## GROCERY WHOLESALERS & DISTRIBUTORS

**Lipari Foods, Inc.** ..... (586) 447-3500  
D&B Grocers Wholesale. .... (734) 513-1715  
International Wholesale ..... (248) 353-8800  
SpartanNash ..... (616) 878-2248  
T.I. Spices, Inc./Amal Distributing ..... (586) 790-7100  
UNFI West Region. .... (262) 942-3387  
Value Wholesale Distributors ..... (248) 967-2900

## HISPANIC PRODUCTS

La Preferida, Inc. .... (773) 254-7200

## HOTELS, CONVENTION CENTERS & BANQUET HALLS

Genoa Banquet Center ..... (517) 545-1000  
Penna's of Sterling. .... (586) 978-3880  
Petruzello's ..... (248) 879-1000  
Suburban Collection Showplace ..... (248) 348-5600

## ICE CREAM SUPPLIERS

**Prairie Farms Ice Cream Program** **M** ..... 1-800-399-6970 ext. 200  
**Velvet Ice Cream Co.** ..... (740) 892-3921  
Blue Bunny Ice Cream ..... (616) 453-6358  
Pointe Dairy Services. .... 1-800-858-7707

## ICE PRODUCTS

**U.S. Ice Corp.** **M** ..... (313) 862-3344  
Arctic Glacier Premium Ice. .... 1-800-327-2920  
Home City Ice ..... (513) 598-3738  
Taylor Ice Co. .... (313) 295-8576

## INSURANCE SERVICES: COMMERCIAL

**Conifer Insurance Company (Liquor Liability)** (248) 559-0840  
Bisson Agency - Farm Bureau Insurance. .... (248) 590-2116  
Canopy ..... (313) 662-3522  
Globe Midwest/Adjusters International ..... (248) 352-2100  
Insurance Advisors, Inc. .... (248) 694-9006

## INSURANCE SERVICES: HEALTH & LIFE

**BCBS of Michigan** **M** ..... (313) 448-2756  
**Blue Care Network** ..... (248) 799-6300  
Business Benefits Resource, LLC. .... (248) 482-8282

## INSURANCE SERVICES: WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Conifer Insurance Company** ..... (248) 559-0840  
**Sedgwick** **O** ..... 1-800-837-3200 ext. 7188

## LEGAL SERVICES

Bellanca Beattie, PC ..... (313) 882-1100  
Cummings, McCloy, Davis & Acho, PLC. .... (734) 261-2400  
Dawda, Mann, Mulcahy & Sadler, PLC ..... (248) 642-6961  
Denha & Associates, PLLC. .... (248) 265-4100  
Kullen & Kassab, PC ..... (248) 538-2200  
Lippitt O'Keefe Advisors, LLC ..... (248) 646-8292  
Willingham & Cote, PC ..... (517) 351-6200

## LIQUOR SHELF TAGS

**Saxon, Inc.** **M** ..... (248) 398-2000



## LOTTERY

All-Star Gaming ..... (855) 772-4646  
IGT Global Solutions ..... (517) 272-3302  
Michigan Lottery ..... (517) 335-5648  
Ohio Lottery ..... 1-800-589-6446

## MILK, DAIRY & CHEESE PRODUCTS

 **Borden Dairy**  ..... (855) 226-7336  
 **Lipari Foods, Inc.** ..... (586) 447-3500  
 **Prairie Farms Dairy Co.**  ..... (248) 399-6300  
Cedar Crest Dairy, Inc. .... (616) 797-1103  
LaLa Branded Products (*Lipari*) ..... 1-866-648-5252  
Harvest Sherwood ..... (313) 659-7300  
Pointe Dairy Services ..... 1-800-858-7707

## MONEY ORDERS

 **Retailers Express Money Orders** ..... 1-800-666-6233

## OFFICE SUPPLIES & PRODUCTS

 **Office Depot** ..... (855) 337-6811

## PAPER PRODUCTS & PACKAGING SUPPLIES

Cartotecnica Cambianese Srl .....  
daniele@cartotecnicaCambianese.it  
Rolly Receipts LLC ..... (937) 344-3242



## PET SUPPLIES MISC.

 **Great Lakes Pet Treats** ..... (810) 715-4500

## PIZZA SUPPLIERS

 **Omni Food Concepts**   ..... 1-888-367-7829  
Hunt Brothers Pizza ..... (615) 259-2629

## POINT OF SALE & RETAIL TECHNOLOGY

 **Great Lakes Data Systems** (*LOC Software*)  
..... (248) 356-4100 ext. 107  
 **Petrosoft LLC** ..... (412) 306-0640  
BMC-Business Machines Company ..... (517) 485-1732  
Success Systems ..... 1-800-653-3345

## PRINTING, PUBLISHING & SIGNAGE

 **Saxon, Inc.**  ..... (248) 398-2000  
Ahearn Signs, Inc. .... (734) 699-3777  
EGI Solutions ..... (586) 978-9630  
Fisher Printing ..... (708) 598-1500  
Pace Custom Printing ..... (248) 563-7702


## PRODUCE DISTRIBUTORS

Anthony Marano Company ..... (773) 321-7500

## PROPANE

 **Blue Rhino** ..... (989) 345-0170  
Planet Propane ..... (248) 647-0000  
Tank Traders Midwest ..... (877) 429-5797

## REAL ESTATE

 **Sell Your Business Program** ..... 1-800-666-6233  
Planet Propane ..... (248) 647-0000  
Trade World Consulting ..... (614) 332-8762

## REFRIGERATION SOLUTIONS (COMMERCIAL)

Cooler Fabrications ..... 1-800-396-1480  
Raves Cooler Doors ..... (248) 887-0648  
Sprint Business ..... (248) 893-8017

## RETAIL CONSULTING

White Knight Marketing ..... (901) 494-1352

## RETAIL FIXTURES, DISPLAYS & FLOORING

 **Display Max** ..... (810) 494-0400

## REVERSE VENDING MACHINES & SERVICE

UBCR, LLC ..... (248) 529-2605

## SECURITY, SURVEILLANCE & MORE

Defense Alarm Systems ..... (586) 777-7222  
Netco Services ..... (248) 850-2228

## SODA POP, WATER, JUICES & OTHER BEVERAGES

 **Coca-Cola Refreshments** (*Metro Detroit program*)  
..... **Metro Detroit**  (313) 868-2008  
..... Belleville  (734) 397-2700  
..... Flint  (810) 237-4000  
..... Cleveland  (216) 690-2653  
 **Faygo Beverages, Inc.**  ..... (313) 925-1600  
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

## TOBACCO ALTERNATIVES

E-Alternative Solutions ..... (904) 843-3731  
Grinds Coffee Pouches ..... (412) 414-3155  
Swisher International ..... (904) 607-7405

## TOBACCO COMPANIES & PRODUCTS

Altria Client Services ..... (513) 831-5510  
Fully Loaded, LLC ..... (877) 728-2547  
R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company ..... (336) 741-0727

## WASTE DISPOSAL & RECYCLING

 **Midwest Recycling**   (*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.** ..... (734) 744-6132  
Cheurlin Champagne ..... (312) 929-2699  
Cornerstone Wine Distributor ..... (586) 839-2552  
Endless West ..... (313) 590-7491  
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  
Tito's Handmade Vodka ..... (248) 885-3424  
Wise Men Distillery ..... (616) 805-7003

## WINE & SPIRITS DISTRIBUTORS

European Wine Imports of Ohio, LLC ..... (216) 426-0979  
Great Lakes Wine & Spirits ..... 1-888-860-3805  
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) 926-2646  
Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank -  
Cadillac ..... (231) 779-0056  
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) 482-5528

### OHIO

Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank .... (330) 535-6900  
Cleveland Foodbank ..... (216) 738-2265  
Freestore Foodbank ..... (513) 482-3663  
Mid-Ohio Foodbank ..... (614) 277-FOOD  
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 ..... (513) 874-0114  
The Foodbank, Inc. .... (937) 461-0265  
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







**JUNE 15, 2021**

**MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS  
FOUNDATION'S 13TH 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.

*Shenandoah Country Club // West Bloomfield, MI*



**JULY 14, 2021**

**MIRA'S 45TH 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*



**AUGUST 4, 2021**

**MIRA'S 16TH 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*



**SEPTEMBER 21, 2021**

**MIRA'S 22ND 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

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.

**CONTACT:**

**T: (800) 666-6233**

**F: (866) 601-9610**

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

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

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

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

*MIRA works closely with these associations:*







# SpartanNash®

Support Services Group

## YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

- Advertising Support
- Asset Protection
- Category Management
- Customer Service
- Financial Services
- Food Safety
- Graphic Services
- Marketing
- Merchandising
- Pharmacy
- Pricing
- Reclamation
- Retail Development
- Retail Technology
- Retailer Education
- Shelf Technology
- Supply Solutions

**CONTACT US TODAY AND LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS!**

Visit [SpartanNash.com](https://SpartanNash.com) or Call:

Jim Gohsman 616-878-8088 | Ed Callihan 330-903-8076 | Roger Delemeester 989-245-0337



# Here for Michigan. Now more than ever.



Confidence comes with every card.®

At Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, we're committed to caring for Michigan and everyone who calls it home. For our members, it's a commitment to provide you with the ability to see a doctor from your home, and the option to speak to a nurse anytime you need them. Now more than ever, we will stand behind the care you need. Like we've done for 81 years. Find out more info at **[bcbsm.com/coronavirus](https://www.bcbsm.com/coronavirus)**.

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