

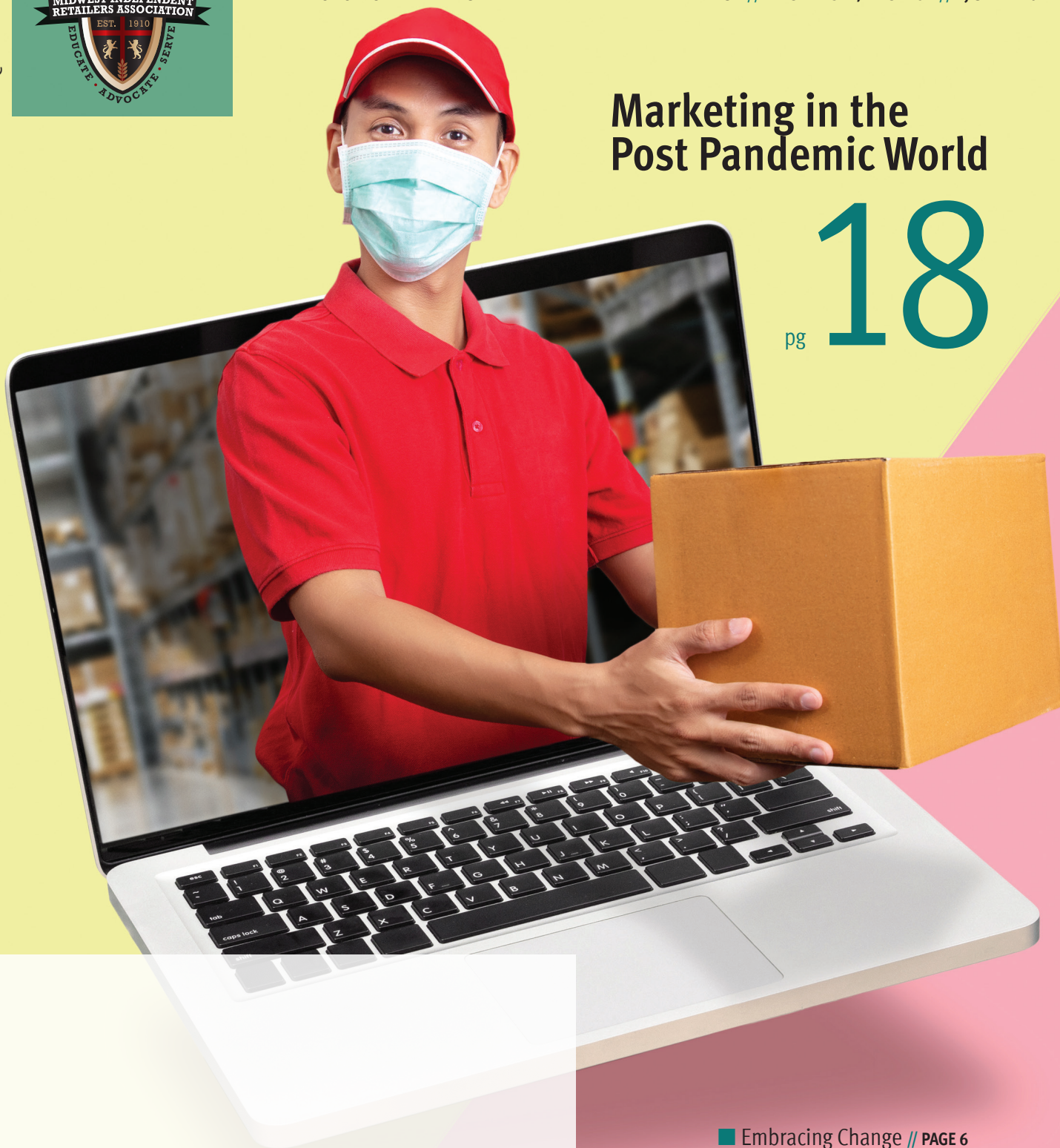
# BottomLine



THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS // VOL. 32, NO. 6 // JUNE 2021

Marketing in the  
Post Pandemic World

pg 18



■ Embracing Change // PAGE 6

■ The Routine to be Clean // PAGE 22

# YELLOWSTONE BOURBON

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\*From January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, Limestone Branch Distillery will donate to NPCA \$1 for each bottle of Yellowstone Whiskey sold a minimum guaranteed donation of \$20,000, up to \$30,000. Please Enjoy Responsibly. ©2021 Yellowstone® Select Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, 46.5% Alc/Vol (93 proof), Limestone Branch Distillery, Lebanon, KY.

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# BottomLine

THE VOICE OF MIDWEST INDEPENDENT RETAILERS  
VOL. 32, NO. 6 // JUNE 2021

## features



### EMBRACING CHANGE

I remember in early 2016 when we met as a group and one of the other wholesaler's longtime representative said, "They were calling it a career" and decided to retire. This person was well known in the industry and eased into retirement the last eight to ten years of their career. What I mean by easing into retirement is they were resistant to change and really was not interested in taking on any new challenges as the industry was evolving.



### COVER STORY // MARKETING IN THE POST PANDEMIC WORLD

In 2020 the phrase "social distancing" swept the nation and in 2021, "COVID fatigue" is now floating around. "People are ready to move past this pandemic," said Ed Weglarz, MIRA president and CEO. "However, our members need to have a post pandemic strategy. Online shopping increased during the shutdowns and that kind of shopping will continue."



### THE ROUTINE TO BE CLEAN

A good sale or a hot item is not the only reason customers open their wallets, clean bathrooms also increase spending inside a store.



# president's message

**EDWARD WEGLARZ** // MIRA PRESIDENT & CEO

## Tools for Future Success

**I**n the states where MIRA has members it looks like the COVID-19 infection case trend is on the decline. I know you all have been preparing for what is being called “the new normal”. I really don’t think we are going to see a return to a copy of 2019 habits and traditions. The transition will be choppy, and some customs will never return.

Business-wise now is the time to start making changes to attract the rejuvenated customer. And MIRA can help you do that.

Each MIRA member should access the MIRA website and review the “programs” section right on the homepage. We offer state-specific, regional, and nation-wide programs, and the offerings often change. Some providers change their programs and MIRA’s Business Development Director is constantly seeking new and different programs and providers. Some offer discounts, some offer rebates, some offer special deals that are unique to MIRA members only. I encourage you to review this section of the MIRA website monthly, just to keep up to date.

I regularly see the rebate checks being printed and sent out to our members and it makes me wonder about the members who are not taking advantage of these programs. You are not going to be able to take advantage of every program that is offered, but if you review the list, you will find those programs that can help make you better margin on the items you sell and save you money on the products and services you buy to operate your business.

I urge MIRA’s retail members to include a review of the MIRA offered programs as you plan for the “new normal”.

Furthermore, I truly believe that our supplier/wholesaler/associate members have been passing up a golden opportunity by not taking advantage of some of the MIRA Supplier Programs. I strongly recommend that our supplier/wholesaler/associate members review and evaluate the programs that are listed on the MIRA website ([www.miramw.org](http://www.miramw.org)) to determine where they can save money, especially on the products and services that everybody uses in business (uniforms, cleaning supplies, office supplies, insurance, etc.).

Just think about how many sales you need to close to make a dollar; when you can save a dollar on products and services you are going to need to operate your business.

In the meantime, stay safe, and remember that MIRA is here to help! ■

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| <b>Vanessa Denha</b>  | Magazine Writer, Epiphany Communications & Coaching |
| <b>UHY-MI</b>         | Certified Public Accountant                         |

# Two locations. Fast deliveries.

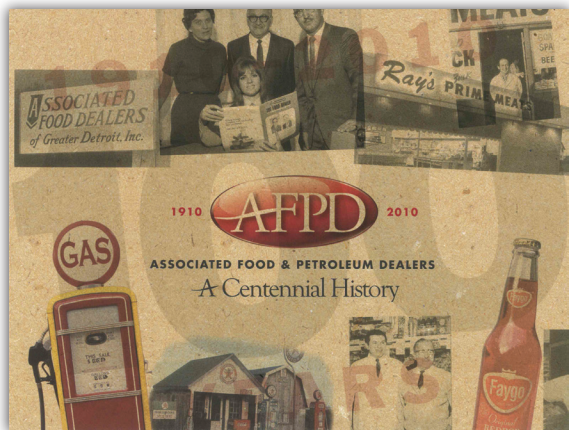


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## Recapping 2020 in MIRA's 2nd Edition History Book; Publishing Event



COVER IMAGE  
FROM OUR  
1ST HISTORY BOOK

The plan was to publish MIRA's 2nd Edition History Book in early 2020 but when COVID-19 hit, the world changed. Everyone had to pivot, including MIRA and its members. Nothing seemed "normal" in 2020. Stories about the pandemic and how it affected the industry filled the pages of our monthly magazine Bottom Line for most of the year. So, because of what 2020 entailed, we decided to include that year in the 2nd Edition History Book.

Social distancing, essential workers and face masks became common phrases around the country. Retailers faced not only product shortages, but staffing issues. Shelves were wiped empty of toilet tissue, Clorox wipes and bottled water.

The federally funded relief packages paid employees who were laid off \$600 a week. Even though food retailers remained opened, many employees chose to stay home or work limited hours forcing businesses to close early or open later in the day.

Each state had different mandates. Some shut down businesses longer than others.

In the Midwest, Michigan shut down restaurants, bars, gyms, recreational centers, movie theaters, bowling alleys among many other businesses. It all started in March and what many thought would only last a couple of weeks, lasted months and into 2021 for some states. The protocols around the country seemed to be divided down political lines with red states opening long before blue states. MIRA members were considered essential and were not forced to close their doors even though some chose to do so.

Throughout 2020, MIRA was sharing updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the federal government regarding COVID-19 protocols like social distancing and mask mandates. Stores responded with floor sticker marks throughout buildings and at the checkout lines indicating 6-feet-apart. Many businesses set up sanitation stations throughout their stores and others checked the temperatures of customers at the door.

Even when restaurants were permitted to open again, it was with strict guidelines including limited capacity and because of the pandemic mandates, hundreds of restaurants permanently closed their doors.

Meanwhile, food retail sales increased. People were not traveling and with restaurants closed, people were forced to eat at home. Many grocers have prepared food sections in their business and the sales of these

products increased, as well as liquor, beer and wine sales. The area of the business that retailers wanted to shut down because of the traffic was the lottery, but the State of Michigan refused to shut down the machines. In fact, casinos in Michigan opened while so many other businesses were mandated to stay closed.

Even though Ohio and Michigan were part of a coalition of states, including Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Indiana and Kentucky, that agreed to coordinate their economic reopening, Michigan did not follow suit. Ohio began to open a few weeks after the initial shutdown starting with cosmetic surgeries followed by manufacturing, distribution and construction sectors.

In June of 2020, Michigan Governor, Gretchen Whitmer, lifted the state's stay-at-home order and allowed bars and restaurants to reopen at 50% capacity. A political fight ensued in the courts.

In October 2020, the Michigan Supreme Court denied Governor Whitmer's request to delay the effect of an opinion that ruled her executive orders on the coronavirus pandemic were unconstitutional.

In the fall of 2020, the court ruled that Governor Whitmer, a Democrat who is a former prosecutor and a first-term governor, had no authority to issue or renew executive orders

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**2ND EDITION HISTORY BOOK**  
*continued on page 26.*



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**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*



## c-store news & views

JIM GREEN // MIRA VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### Embracing Change

Prior to becoming part of the team at MIRA, I worked for a couple of convenience store wholesalers. With one of those wholesalers, I spent thirty-three years and we were part of a large buying group. Being part of this group, it required us to meet as a group several times per year to review programs that would be beneficial to our customers and us. I remember in early 2016 when we met as a group and one of the other wholesaler's longtime representative said, "They were calling it a career" and decided to retire. This person was well known in the industry and eased into retirement the last eight to ten years of their career. What I mean by easing into retirement is they were resistant to change and really was not interested in taking on any new challenges as the industry was evolving. We all congratulated this individual and reminisced about how much the industry has changed over the last thirty years. We then talked about how most of us would likely be retiring in the next ten years as well. There were several comments like "I'm going to ride it out" and "The finish line is in sight". For those that have read some of my previous articles it should come as no surprise that I was the one that threw cold water on those comments. I explained there would be no riding off gracefully into the sunset, riding out the storm, or winding it down. Convenience store leaders and executives would have to learn and adapt more in the next ten years than they did in their entire careers.

If you are an independent convenience store owner right now you can probably relate to what I said to that group. Think about all the changes that are occurring right now in the convenience store

industry. You have curbside pick-up, delivery, digital marketing, contactless payments, EV's, recharging stations, future of gas and diesel sales, consumer's changing expectations with fresh and foodservice offerings, loyalty programs, decline in combustible cigarettes and keeping up with the rise of other nicotine delivery products, etc. Yes, the digital transformation was accelerated by the pandemic, but progress was being made in this area and was going to require independent operators to find a solution. It just happened a little quicker than anticipated.

For the independent retailer there is no "riding out" the evolution that is occurring. You are being forced to adapt and evolve your business to meet changing consumer expectations. This can seem overwhelming. I would like to encourage every independent retailer to stay positive and leave you with some thoughts on this subject. First, everyone is facing the same set of challenges. There is some peace in knowing you are not alone in your desire to adopt the very best solutions that can help your business. I know that does not provide you answers but it does provide reassurance you are not the only operator facing these challenges. Second, anytime you have a period of disruption and change, you have an opportunity to hit the reset button. When you reset, new opportunities emerge. Embrace those new opportunities and do not be afraid to evolve and take advantage of them. Finally, MIRA can help you with these challenges. MIRA has programs and partnerships that can help provide many of the solutions you are looking for. The one thing I have learned in my first three years with MIRA is that many retailers do not take advantage of the programs and distributors in our network that can be off service. I encourage everyone to take a second look at what the MIRA programs can do for you! Please contact our staff to see what solutions we can suggest or feel free to contact me directly. I would be happy to discuss your needs and how our programs can be of service! ■

— REBATES —  
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# 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

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Your **Retail** Partner!

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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)



## opinion editorial

CHRISTOPHER JONES // SVP OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND COUNSEL FOR THE NATIONAL GROCERS ASSOCIATION

### Economic Discrimination Threatens Independent Grocers and the Urban and Rural Communities They Serve

**T**he days of fighting over toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and non-perishable foods seem to be behind us, but retailers — and grocery stores and their customers in particular — are not out of the woods yet. That's because the pandemic revealed the underlying problem of economic discrimination in the grocery industry. This problem started even before COVID-19, and its effects will continue to hurt independent businesses, suppliers, and grocery shoppers long after the pandemic is gone.

Big box stores and e-commerce giants use their size and unprecedented control of the market to force suppliers into giving them better prices, better products, and better promotions. This manipulation is not only illegal, it forces suppliers to offer less competitive prices and fewer products to their smaller, independent customers. NGA represents more than 1,700 independent grocery retailers who account for nearly 9,000 store fronts across the country, including at least one in every congressional district. These stores and their independent wholesalers play a crucial role in American communities. They compete to offer lower prices, higher food quality, better service, more accessible and convenient locations, a greater variety of products, and good jobs.

This isn't just bad for independent grocers; it's bad for their customers, who are disproportionately people of color and people living in rural areas. As local grocery stores are squeezed, people are forced to pay higher prices or travel farther distances to get the staples they need.

When the pandemic strained supply chains, market manipulators turned up the heat on their

suppliers, forcing them to under deliver for their independent customers. Walmart controlled at least 50% of grocery market share in metropolitan areas across the country in 2018. In September, they used this growing marketplace dominance to require their suppliers to deliver their products on time and in-full 98% of the time or pay 3% of the cost of goods. During a pandemic, when the supply chain is dealing with its own delays and higher costs, this is a difficult goal for suppliers to meet without hurting themselves or their other customers. Those types of anticompetitive tactics have left independent grocers unable to secure many must-have products, like cleaning supplies, paper products, and canned food. When they did receive deliveries, they paid prices as much as 53% higher than what the industry behemoths sold the same product for at retail.

Eventually, these maneuvers can leave entire communities without any access to fresh healthy food. Northern Tulsa, Oklahoma's more than 15,000 residents have no full-service grocery store. They do, however, have access to more than 50 dollar store locations across the city. These stores, which offer a narrow selection of ultra-processed and unhealthy food, are heavily concentrated in predominantly Black communities in the city's north, where life expectancy is 14 years lower than the white communities to the south.

Economic discrimination during a pandemic, when money is tight and leaving the house is dangerous, can leave even more communities without fresh grocery options. When market manipulators force suppliers to agree to impossible delivery terms, local, independent grocers are unable to stock their shelves with high-demand products. A parent may then be forced to drive longer distances to get the products they need, taking time away from work or family and costing more money.

Unless Congress and regulators crack down on these illegal tactics economic discrimination will continue to harm competition, as well as American

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**OPINION EDITORIAL**  
*continued on page 26.*

**From our Family to Yours  
Happy Father's Day**



*Beef, Pork, Poultry, Processed Meats, Lamb, Veal, Seafood,  
Deli, Full Line of Dairy and Eggs, Bakery, Frozen Foods,  
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# government relations report

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

## What's the Buzz

*"...The state is a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has attached to the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you. You will not easily find another like me, and therefore I would advise you to spare me."*

– SOCRATES

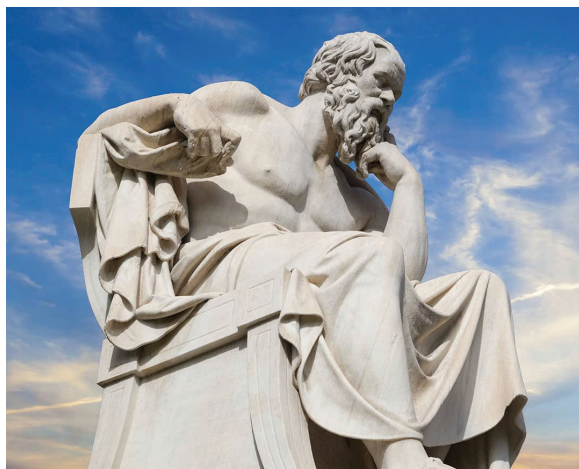
With all the new changes or returns to normalcy occurring these days, it's easy to forget the fights we have had in the past year with legislators and regulators. I am reminded of Socrates defense of why he should be allowed to live. He equated himself to a gadfly that buzzes around to remind the State of their duties and always questioned their logic. I don't want to minimize our role as an association to a gadfly but I liked Socrates point.

We are here to remind our legislators about the impact their legislation will have your business. We are here to ensure regulators are fair and enforce the rules with equity. We may not get the results we always strive for but we continue to fulfill our duty.

### MICHIGAN

By the time this article is printed, the Governor of Michigan will have signed the dreaded liquor bills that will move some drinks into the beer and wine category. We will work with regulators on the delivery language so that it does not lead to the Amazons of the world delivering spirits with no oversight like in California. The franchising of ready-to-drink products below 13.5% will be the new norm in Michigan. The liquor bills were SB 141-144.

We also working on legislation to help our member suppliers that are bottlers through SB 178.



This bill would allow the State of Michigan to issue refunds to bottlers to offset over redemption liabilities.

And finally for Michigan, we are working on securing food safety grant money from the State of Michigan to help our members train their employees at a reduced or zero cost. With Covid introducing new expectations in sanitation and increased prepared food being sold by our members, we felt this was necessary to prepare for the post pandemic world.

### OHIO

We are borrowing from the Michigan's effort so we are working on securing food safety grant money from the State of Michigan to help our members train their employees at a reduced or zero cost. The current appropriation bill calls out MIRA as the recipient of the training money.

We continue to monitor the talks of expanding the local county tax on cigarettes.

### ILLINOIS

We are working with our non-profit partner, The Experimental Station, to help partner them with MIRA members for the Link Match Pilot Program. This program will be like the Michigan Double Up Food Bucks program. The unique take on the Illinois model is the incentives for EBT customers to purchase healthy foods to get the produce voucher. ■

# 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.





# michigan lobbyist report

MATT MINER // CAPITOL STRATEGIES GROUP

## Delta 8 THC to be Regulated by the Marijuana Regulatory Agency

The House Regulatory Reform Committee began deliberation on a package of bills that would restrict the sale of hemp derived THC to licensed marijuana dispensaries. Over the last year, hemp derived THC, or Delta 8 THC has made its way to the market via gas stations and convenience stores. It is not currently regulated by the state via the Marijuana Regulatory Agency, but a package of bills introduced in the Michigan House of Representatives would regulate Delta 8 in the same fashion as marijuana based THC.

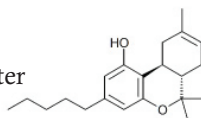
Delta 8 is a highly concentrated hemp derivative which has psychoactive effects, but its current classification allows it to be sold with little to no regulation. Representative Mike Mueller (R-Linden) spoke of a constituent who recently questioned him regarding the selling of Delta 8 at the gas station he owned and operated. The attempt to regulate it like other psychoactive substances spawned several other bills, as the product would have to somehow be reclassified to align with marijuana products, despite being made entirely of hemp.

The committee also discussed applying dram shop laws to marijuana sales, which would hold a business liable for serving or selling marijuana products to minors or intoxicated persons who later cause death, injury, or property damage to another person. These would mirror the current liquor laws.

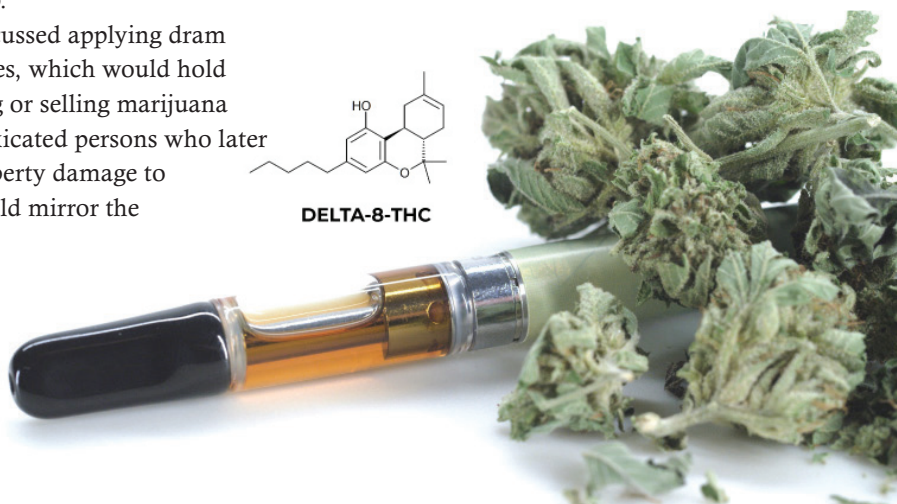
This package is a bipartisan work in progress, spearheaded by Representatives Jim Lilly and Yousef Rabhi. House Bills 4517 and 4740-4746 are making

their way through the legislature and should be on the Governor's desk by summer break:

- HB 4517: Representative Yousef Rabhi (D-Ann Arbor) Marihuana: other; definition of industrial hemp; modify. Amends sec. 3 of 2018 IL 1 (MCL 333.27953). This bill just received a substitution, dropping its tie-bar and turning it into a vehicle for several other bills required to regulate Delta 8.
- HB 4740 (Rep. Pat Outman) Marihuana: other; certain definitions in the Medical marihuana facilities licensing act; modify.
- HB 4741 (Rep. TC Clements) Marihuana: other; certain definitions in the industrial hemp growers act; modify.
- HB 4742 (Rep. Tenisha Yancey) Marihuana: other; certain definitions in the marihuana tracking act; modify.
- HB 4743 (Rep. Julie Calley) Marihuana: other; certain definitions in the public health code; modify.
- HB 4744 (Rep. Richard Steenland) Marihuana: other; certain definitions in the industrial hemp research and development act; modify.
- HB 4745 (Rep. Jim Lilly) Marihuana: other; certain definitions in the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act; modify.
- HB 4746 (Rep. Roger Hauck) Liquor: other; definition of marihuana in the liquor control code; modify. ■



DELTA-8-THC



— DISCOUNTS —



# MIRA MEMBER EXCLUSIVE

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



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Exchange Price:  
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*\*If you are already a Tank Traders® customer, we will adjust your cost to these rates.*

*From fill to till and back again, we oversee the entire product lifecycle to serve you better. By controlling our operations, we're able to ensure that every tank is:*

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- Delivered on time by licensed drivers
- Decommissioned and recycled for scrap metal at the end of its life

*As a participating retailer, you'll:*

- Expand your product line to include propane sales
- Eliminate the need for specialized training and certified propane attendants
- Increase repeat business and return consumer traffic
- Earn extra revenue without losing indoor shelf space
- Provide a new service for customers that encourages repeat business
- Offer an environmentally friendly recycling service at no charge
- Eliminate the need for your customers to wait for tanks to be filled

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We will walk you through the application process, obtain licensing on your behalf where applicable, and get you all set up so that you can start selling propane.

2

### Training & Displays

Once you're all set up, we'll train your staff on the program and its benefits and outfit your store with a 24-tank, or larger, storage display cage, promotional signage and marketing collateral.

3

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# michigan liquor report

PAT GAGLIARDI // CHAIR, MICHIGAN LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

## Public Support Remains High for State Alcohol Regulations and Three-Tier System According to Latest National Survey

Every two years, the Center for Alcohol Policy commissions a national survey on public opinion surrounding state alcohol regulations in the U.S. It is a look at core attitudes on several dimensions of alcohol regulation which have been tracked since 2008. The Center's 2021 National Alcohol Regulation Sentiment Survey

results show – as they have repeatedly in the past – that alcohol is a product that needs to be regulated. Support remains high for state regulation of alcohol. More broadly, Americans are satisfied with current alcohol regulation and distribution in their state, including the three-tier system.

Notably, this support is solidly bipartisan across party lines with 85% of Republicans, 81% of Democrats, and 83% of Independents expressing support for alcohol being regulated at the state level. This bipartisan support is remarkable given the heightened political polarization of today.

Americans strongly believe that alcohol-related problems (particularly drunk driving and underage drinking) are of serious public concern and they want laws that prioritize public health and safety over convenience and price.

Lastly, although many states temporarily loosened some alcohol laws in response to the pandemic, most Americans agree that states should evaluate impacts on their communities before making any alcohol law changes permanent.

### HERE ARE A FEW SPECIFIC FINDINGS:

#### THE THREE-TIER SYSTEM WORKS WELL AND IS VIEWED POSITIVELY

- 83% support states setting their own alcohol laws and regulations that require alcohol to be sold under the three-tier system.
- 80% agree that the three-tier system works well (up five points since 2019).
- 64% (about two-thirds) agree with the reasoning behind the three-tier system that separates producers, distributors, and retailers because it prevents big companies from creating a monopoly, pushing out smaller producers like craft brewers, local wineries and craft distillers and ensures there are strong safeguards over how alcohol beverages are handled at every step in the system.

#### AMERICANS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT STATE REGULATION OF ALCOHOL

- 83% support the individual state regulation of alcohol.
- 87% agree that it is very important to keep the alcohol industry regulated (88% in 2012).
- 79% agree that alcohol is different than other products and should be regulated differently.

#### AMERICANS ARE SATISFIED WITH ALCOHOL REGULATIONS IN THEIR STATE

- A record-high 85% of Americans continue to be satisfied with the current system of alcohol regulation in their state (a slight increase in recent years).
- 71% say that their state's alcohol regulations are "just right" (up from 63% in 2017).
- 88% are satisfied with the variety of alcohol products available.
- 87% trust in the safety of alcohol products sold in their state – that products are not tainted or counterfeit.
- 76% are satisfied with the number of places where alcohol can be purchased in their community (up eight points since 2017).
- 57% say increasing the number of outlets selling alcohol would cause more problems for a community.

#### AMERICANS WANT ALCOHOL LAWS TO PRIORITIZE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 64% say that more needs to be done to reduce the potential harm caused by alcohol.
- 90% say drunk driving is the most serious

alcohol-related problem and 74% rank reducing drunk driving as the top concern lawmakers should address when setting alcohol regulations.

- 78% believe that loosening regulations will make underage drinking problems worse.
- 85% support keeping the legal drinking age at 21 years old.
- 68% believe that higher alcohol content of liquor poses a greater health risk than beer or wine.
- 63% agree that products with higher alcohol content should be more strictly controlled than lower alcohol content products.
- 89% support background checks of licensed alcohol stores and owners.
- 77% support requiring license holders to be a resident of their respective state.
- 76% agree that alcohol sold should come through a licensed system for tracking.
- 56% agree that states should evaluate the impact of COVID-19 inspired deregulations before making them permanent.

*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.*

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# ohio lobbyist report

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## Back to Work for Ohio General Assembly

**T**he Ohio General Assembly wasted no time in getting right back to work with numerous hearings and bills including the most important bill, HB 110, the states two year operating budget. The bill has passed the House and is now being heard by the Senate Finance Committee. MIRA has an amendment pending in HB 110, that would have state appropriate \$150,000 to MIRA for food safety training. The money would be split over the two year budget period if adopted. MIRA is working with Senator Mark Romanchuk (R-Ontario) who is offering the amendment on MIRA's behalf. Another possible amendment is not good, it would raise the cigarette tax to pay for the arts in Cleveland. MIRA, as a

member of the tobacco coalition, is working to defeat any such proposal.

Other bills of interest include SB109, which has passed both Houses and is awaiting the Governor's signature. The bill would make available a \$10,000 grant through the Developmental Services Agency for businesses started after January 1, 2020.

As previously reported, SB 9, which would require the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review to work with all state agencies on reducing the number of regulatory requirements and report back to the Ohio General Assembly, is currently being heard in the Ohio House.

Another bill previously reported on, SB 13, limiting the time lawsuits may be filed, was signed by the Governor and will be in effect in late July.

SB 22, which gives legislature the ability to overturn both the Governor and health department rules was passed and vetoed by the Governor but the veto was overridden and the bill will be effective June 23rd.

SB 40, dealing with a minimum markup of cigarettes by wholesalers, passed the Senate and is in House Committee.

Lastly, for MIRA members who may have a towing service, both SB 79 and HB 132, which would limit the number of mailings required to be sent to owners of towed vehicles to two, is pending in Senate Transportation Committee.

On the political front, long time Congressman Steve Stivers announced he was leaving the congress to become President of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. The Governor has set a date in August for a primary election and November for general election to fill the seat.

The Census Bureau has finally completed work on population and Ohio will lose one Congressional seat going from 16 to 15, beginning in 2022. The General Assembly has yet to set a date for completion of both Congressional and State legislative districts, but filings for 2022. As is usually the case in redistricting, the courts will usually have final say. ■





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# Marketing *in the* Post Pandemic *World*



**I**n 2020 the phrase “social distancing” swept the nation and in 2021, “COVID fatigue” is now floating around. “People are ready to move past this pandemic,” said Ed Weglarz, MIRA president and CEO. “However, our members need to have a post pandemic strategy. Online shopping increased during the shutdowns and that kind of shopping will continue.”

Yes, mail delivery and curbside pickup trends started before the pandemic. “The first way we look at the impact of the pandemic is it mostly took trends already happening, and accelerated them about five years in one month,” said Dr. Russell J. Zwanka, Professor- Food

Marketing at Western Michigan University.

“We were already moving to a hybrid model of in-store, pickup, and delivery. If the retailer did already have a plan in place, then Amazon was just going to keep eating away commodity by commodity. If Amazon solves “almost instant” delivery, and they are working hard to do that, they take away the time utility that has always favored bricks and mortar stores.”

Post-pandemic marketing strategy are not different from pre-pandemic strategies. “Understand what your target customer wants, optimize your assortment for efficiency and effectiveness, and make your most loyal customers feel like platinum customers,” said Zwanka.



That doesn't change. "Now, operationally, tactics have changed, like being able to be as contact-free as possible, using self-checkout or scan and bag while shopping, eliminating hot bars, loose bins, anything ready to eat that did not previously have packaging (like artisan bread). A little extra safety stock in the supply chain is probably here to stay. We've been preaching just-in-time supply chain management for years, and that was blown out of the water pretty badly."

The sector demolished by the pandemic is the restaurant industry. "They had time to reinvent themselves," said Zwanka. "It was out of necessity, but the ones that survived had time to re-think their go to market strategies, while the grocery industry was fighting every day to stay in stock on bath tissue."

Restaurants are shrinking their footprints, eliminating as much in-restaurant seating, becoming more "to-go and takeout" facilitators. "That's much more efficient than they were pre-pandemic," said Zwanka. "And now, with the labor shortage being seen in all retail and service sectors, they are in better shape to operate with less people more profitably."

Delivery and curbside pickup have been playing significant roles in the food industry and the pandemic accelerated this process. "We still think it will shale out at around 10-12% of total sales," said Zwanka. "Not everyone wants to pay a delivery fee, and people really don't want to wait around for a two -hour window for delivery. The way to think about it, is a value pre-pandemic is still a value post-pandemic, and vice versa. Meal delivery kits were not a value pre-pandemic, they picked up out of necessity, and now are right back in the "no value" category for customers."

The other aspect is what to do about Instacart, Shipt, DoorDash and others. "The workers for these companies have no loyalty to the chain they are actually buying for, so are getting in the way in the aisles, are quite pushy, and it's going to become an issue," said Zwanka. "I'd expect to see more "ghost stores" in the future, where chains take back control of the entire process of providing delivery and pickup, and run stores solely for that picking process."

Experts are also encouraging businesses to look at getting their own digital online ordering experience and they need to own their data. "Customer data is the gold of the internet because of its impact on remarking back to your own customers in a simple, cost-effective way by utilizing a simple email and/or text campaign as an example," said Al Zara, CEO and Founder of Geek

Town USA. "Business owners need to be very careful of who owns their data, especially these days. DoorDash sounds like a good choice for a restaurant that wants to get more exposure but that restaurant probably doesn't know that all these orders, demographics, and the habits of those customers orders are being owned by DoorDash and being used to help other businesses that are on the DoorDash platform."

Food retailers are marketing as the industry evolves and there are some approaches that every retail should be implementing. Customer relationships are essential. "Know your customer and show your top customers you value their loyalty," said Zwanka. "Retailers have so much data on their customers, and the best food retailers use targeted relationships with their best customers to stealthily build customer advocacy. If you think anyone reads your ad anymore, your mistaken. The ad is an excellent display planner for the store, but it's not a traffic driver."

It may seem obvious but the mistakes food retailers make are the opposite of the must marketing approaches. "Mistakes happen when retailers believe all customers act the same, and they treat the "drive by" customer with no loyalty the same as the one who shops there every week- and even tells her or his friends they should be shopping there," said Zwanka. "We call that the holy grail of marketing- brand advocacy."

What is lost when online shopping are the impulse purchases. "Some retailers are making up for this with online deals," said Weglarz. "They are also featuring products that customers might be interested based on their shopping habits."

Industry experts continue to look for tactics to increase sales and market products online. "It's almost indiscernible," said Zwanka. "Online orders, because customers tend to "batch" their orders, are usually four to five times larger than in-store shopping trips. But, having said that, the subscription services from Amazon (and now Walmart) and the "people who bought this also bought this" algorithms are pretty effective. Any reseller of anything could learn a lot from the impact of those tactics."

Don't discount habits. "People still love to shop," said Zwanka. "The sights and sounds and smells of food retailers will never go out of favor. Taking care of your most loyal customers and fully embracing your community will always be a winning combination." ■

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



## Cloverleaf Celebrating 60 Years of Service

■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING\*

**P**aul Lutfy's business has been a Southfield hot spot even before he was born. His father, Tony, bought Cloverleaf on the corner of 12 mile road and Telegraph in 1961, which was a two-lane highway at the time. Cloverleaf was a meat market when Tony Lutfy purchased it.

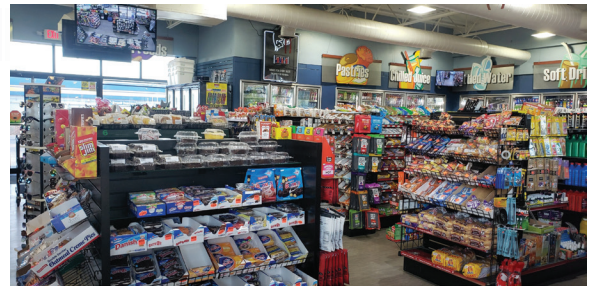
"My dad paid \$6,000 and \$100 a month for sixty months for the business," said Lutfy. "I still have the paperwork of the transaction."

Paul, 57, grew up in Southfield working the business with his four siblings. The store evolved over the years becoming a gourmet market that has catered to celebrities, notable venues and to politicians. "We catered Aretha Franklin's parties for the Grand Prix, events at Temple Bethel, the Detroit Institute of Arts and were known for catering weddings and many other events around town," said Lutfy.

The business evolved over the years and at one point Lutfy was at a cross roads. "I debated whether to expand my business - the wine, beer, deli, meat, or go in another direction," said Lutfy. "I realized I didn't have a life. I was working constantly waiting on wine customers, deli/meat customers and catering customers, worrying about big inventory and the labor. I decided to focus on the gas station and a convenience store concept, more of the in-and-out and grab-and-go type of business."

He rebuilt the business in 1998 and expanded the business with a convenience store. He opened as an Amoco in 1999 and eventually purchased property near his property including the building that housed the old Michigan National Bank.

The business has been a busy business since it's renovation into a gas station and c-store. He invested about \$1.5 million into the location. His dad became a member of the association when he purchased the business in 1961. "MIRA is a great association,"



said Lutfy. "I love being a member and be able to talk to people who understand my frustrations and challenges, who I can bounce ideas off of and just talk shop. Cliff Denha has been bugging me for years now to be a board member and I think I will carve out the time to offer my serve to the association."

Cloverleaf is not your typical c-store. Along with the coolers of pop and last-minute convenience products, Lutfy still sells sandwiches with high quality deli meats, fresh fruit cut up on-site, high end snack foods, breakfast sandwiches, boiled eggs, and most recently he added a new shake machine.

"I believe in offering the best hotdogs and best deli meats," said Lutfy. "We are always adding and changing things as we are in tune with what the customer wants. Our store is a commuter location. We get a morning wave of construction workers picking up with coffee, Red Bulls, and sandwiches."

Cloverleaf is also known for its cleanliness. On any given day and any time of the day – they are opened 24 hours a day, seven days a week – it wouldn't be unusual to see Lutfy and his employees mopping floors, cleaning the counters and tidying up the bathrooms.

For Lutfy, his business philosophy is simple; he focuses on employee engagement. He staffs each shift with two to three people at the counter. "Some people question how I staff my business because I have more than the average store working at any given shift, but for me it's all about customer service," Lutfy said. "We cater to our customers and we keep our store very clean."

When he's not at the store working, Paul and his wife Nadia are involved in the community and their church. They also like to entertain. "We enjoy sitting on a patio, turning on the grill and enjoying a glass of wine," said Lutfy. "I also like to garden and just be outside." ■

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

### RETAILER: CLOVERLEAF

**Location:** Southfield, Michigan

**Founded:** 1961

**Employees:** 16

**MIRA Member Since:** 1961

**Slogan:** "It's all about customer service. We cater to our customers and we keep our store very clean."



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## The Routine to be Clean



■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING\*

A good sale or a hot item is not the only reason customers open their wallets, clean bathrooms also increase spending inside a store.

That is according to a 2020 research study that showed that the number of Americans who will “definitely” or “probably” shell out more cash in response to clean restrooms has climbed to 62% from 45% in a two-year period.

“We hear from our customers daily that the cleanliness of our restrooms is important to them,” said Bob Kolen Sales & Marketing Director for USA 2 Go Quick Store in Wixom. “They feel if we keep our restrooms clean and well-lit that they can count on the rest of our store to be the same.”

The bathrooms are not the only part the store that needs regular maintenance.

As the saying goes – “You only get one chance at a first impression”. And that is more so today with all the public safety concerns,” said William Jayne, Director of sales and marketing for the Detroit Chemical & Paper Supply. “Customers want to feel comfortable and safe when they choose where to spend their time and resources.”

This includes most of all – the restroom’s

cleanliness. Dispensing systems for paper and hand-care products, included. “You can really differentiate yourself from your competition by showing your customers that you care about them,” said Jayne.

They have done just that at USA 2 Go.

“One of the key strategies for our chain is to have a clean well-lit store,” said Kolen.

“When customers walk in, they recognize the pride and commitment our staff has in the presentation of our offerings, and it starts with a clean store.”

The things that seem insignificant like your dispensing systems for paper and hand-care products can actually make a huge impression. “These items enable you to give your current customers a reason to be happy and they tell their family and friends, and we all know how ‘word of mouth’ is so positive – and even worse – negative word of mouth,” said Jayne.

Start with a strategy and a schedule to clean the business on a regular basis followed through by the vision for the business. This included using proper products, tools and equipment to perform efficiently to maintain your vision for clean store.

“We have a dedicated staff committed to stock and floor maintenance; these roles are important to the visual presentation of the stores,” said Kolen. “Additionally, there are weekly walk throughs with district managers and an extensive review conversation with the store manager, a punch list is presented and expected to be cleared before the next week’s walk through.”

Some common mistakes that business owners and operators make include, “not having high expectations or knowledge to keep a business clean and safe,” said Jayne. “They don’t spend much resources

in this area as well as having a specific plan and strategy in place. Like the movie, *Field of Dreams* “If You Build It, They Will Come”. Kind of corny – but true – a specific plan or strategy is extremely important!”

Each business is different in many ways, grocery, convenience and gas station, however in all three areas, customers expect a clean and safe environment. And, COVID-19 impacted all businesses. “The most dramatic adjustment from the virus precautions has been in consumer anxiety and staffing shortages,” said Kolen. “We have increased the frequency of our cleaning and sanitizing schedules, as well as adding the mist guards at the registers.”

Detroit Chemical & Paper Supply reward MIRA members for their focus on cleanliness. “We enjoy our relationship as a MIRA member, and reward a 4% rebate on products,” said Jayne. As Michigan’s Leading Janitorial & Sanitary Supply Company, we’re professionals in the products and cleaning space and would like the opportunity to assist in creating your business’s personal image.”

Keeping the store clean, for many businesses, is just part of the daily routine. “It should come as no surprise to anyone operating a retail fuel or convenience store operation, that customers will be more inclined to frequent a well maintained, well lit, clean facility,” said Kolen, “especially when the business is presented as a convenience store. The idea of convenience isn’t just reflected in the location alone. Consumers remember those things that often get overlooked from the operator.” ■

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## The Popularity of Microbreweries and Craft Beers in the Midwest



■ BY EPIPHANY COMMUNICATIONS AND COACHING\*

Microbreweries and craft beers have been growing industries in Michigan and the Midwest. That trend prompted Western Michigan University (WMU) in Kalamazoo to create a Microbrewery program for people who want to develop a solid foundation in the biochemistry and microbiology involved in fermentation. It allows students to obtain first-hand experience going through the process of brewing, from “grain to glass.”

“We did a couple of years of market research and listening to people before we launched the program in the fall of 2015,” said Steve Bertman, professor environment and sustainability and currently director the sustainable brewing program at WMU.

According to the Brewers Association, a Boulder, Colorado-based trade association for independent craft breweries, the craft beer industry has a \$2 billion economic impact on Michigan.

“The landscape on higher education is in flux and we are trying to figure out how to balance

the cost of higher education with the change in technology and change in demographics of people who are looking for employment after college,” said Bertman. “WMU understands the sustainability and the vibrant craft beer scene here in Kalamazoo.”

WMU developed a four-year bachelor level program in brewing science to meet the need and interest and recently created a marketing and business track for people interested in the industry from a management and business perspective.

They are also collaborating with Kalamazoo Valley Community College where students earn a Sustainable Brewing Certification and then transfer to the University for the bachelor’s degree. “Students are involved in a hands-on brewing experience in the program,” said Bertman. “These are hardcore science courses that are even more hardcore than what premed students take in college.”

Students engage in analytic science, bio science, microbiology, fermentation and then finish the program with a capstone project. “We also have nearly a 100% job placement track record,” said Bertman.

There is also tremendous competition for shelf space in retail businesses for the beer industry. “The craft beer industry started out as hobbies for many people inside garages,” said Bertman. It grew and the industry has become sophisticated and people’s palates and tastes have become more sophisticated. Our program is rigorous, helping students solve

problems and develop skills. Brewers can’t make mistakes and think they can sell their products. Our students have an advantage with the depth and scope of their knowledge, experience and skills.”

Craft brewing industry has a long history and continues to grow.

Bells Brewery in Kalamazoo is one of the biggest and oldest breweries.

However, according to Trip Advisory, The Frankenmuth Brewery in Michigan is America’s oldest Microbrewery and Michigan’s Original Craft Brewery since 1862!

Most craft brewers produce less than 1,000 barrels a year. They are producing for small local businesses like walk-in pubs.

The industry showcases their products at the many beer festivals during beer festival season. Michigan Brewers Guild Summer Beer Festival suggests selection of almost 1,000 different types of beers. Hundreds of Michigan breweries participate in various festivals.

Detroit’s Fall Beer Festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 23 of this year at Eastern Market. In Detroit’s Fall Beer Festival there is a selection of almost 700 different types of beers. More than 80 Michigan breweries participate in the festival.

“We still do not know the total impact COVID-19 has had on the industry,” said Bertman. “However, the craft beer industry is strong and vibrant.” ■

*\*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.

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## 2ND EDITION HISTORY BOOK

*continued from page 4.*

relating to COVID-19 beyond April 30th.

Governor Whitmer had extended the state's coronavirus emergency declaration by executive order on April 30th after the Republican-controlled legislature advanced a bill that would not have renewed the original declaration.

Whitmer cited the Emergency Management Act of 1976 (EMA) and the Emergency Powers of the Governor Act of 1945 (EPGA) as authority, with two lower courts subsequently dismissing legal challenges to her actions.

As the year came to end,

the Michigan governor started to use the authority of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to issue mandates and they once again closed restaurants for a few weeks.

Some restaurant owners sued the state because of COVID-19 regulations and for issuing violations.

All this was happening during a presidential election, which added to the already existing tension and stress caused by the pandemic. As if that wasn't enough to wish 2020 away, the George Floyd attack hit the media and for weeks, people hit the streets in what was labeled "peaceful protests." Some of those turned into rioting, looting and complete destruction in some parts of the country including

in MIRA territory of Chicago, Illinois. Donald Trump lost the election to Joe Biden. Stories of voter fraud emerged with mail-in ballots permitted. The country became further divided down political lines and the goal post to get back to a pre-Covid life kept getting pushed back.

Like the rest of the world, MIRA moved into 2021 hoping to put the pandemic behind them. Gas prices went up and employee shortages continued.

You can read about 2020 and the history of MIRA in the 2nd Edition History Book being published later this year. We will launch the book with a fundraiser to benefit the Midwest Independent Retailers Foundation (MIRF). The event will take place sometime in December. Stay tuned for details. ■

## OPINION EDITORIAL

*continued from page 8.*

consumers and producers. That's why NGA has been convincing lawmakers that the time is now to conduct oversight and take legislative action.

Congress should conduct hearings on anticompetitive behavior in the grocery marketplace and hold these bad actors accountable if they continue to manipulate suppliers using their buyer power. If the existing laws like the Robinson-Patman Act, Clayton Act, and Sherman Act, which were drafted specifically to prevent anticompetitive tactics

like economic discrimination from creating an uneven playing field, fail to properly curtail discriminatory practices, then Congress should update them to better enforce today's antitrust abuses.

The Federal Trade Commission, Department of Justice, state attorneys general, and other federal agencies should use their authority to measure the effect of economic discrimination on the economy, consumers, and small businesses. They should consider how independent grocers, farmers, and ranchers benefit communities through job opportunities, access to healthy food, and economic development.

With your support and the support of small business advocates like MIRA, we can make sure that state and federal legislators and organizations take action against anticompetitive behavior. We can bring competition back to the grocery marketplace, independent retailers back to rural and urban communities, and healthy foods back to minority communities. Antitrust is not just a concern for Silicon Valley companies, it's a kitchen table issue for independent retailers and the communities they serve. To learn more and to join our fight, please visit [www.nationalgrocers.org/antitrust](http://www.nationalgrocers.org/antitrust). ■



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Check Casher Money Machine ..... 1-800-333-0374  
Pre Paid Ventures ..... (516) 455-2940  
Secure Check Cashing, Inc. .... (248) 548-3020

## CHIPS, NUTS, CANDY & SNACKS

Lipari Foods, Inc. .... (586) 447-3500  
Better Made Snack Foods ..... (313) 925-4774  
D&B Grocers Wholesale ..... (734) 513-1715  
Frito-Lay, Inc. .... 1-800-359-5914  
Motown Snack Foods  
(Jays, Cape Cod, Tom's, Archway, Stella D'oro) .... (313) 931-3205

## CLEANING CHEMICALS, UNIFORMS, LINENS & SUPPLIES

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

## 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

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

## FOOD EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY & KIOSKS

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

## FOOD MANUFACTURER

Barilla America ..... (847) 405-7575

## GAS STATION BRANDING & MAINTENANCE

Oscar W Larson Co. ..... (248) 620-0070

## GASOLINE WHOLESALERS

Central Ohio Petroleum Marketers ..... (614) 889-1860  
Markham Oil Company, Inc. .... (517) 861-7366  
Obie Oil, Inc. .... (937) 275-9966

## GREETING CARDS

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

## GROCERY WHOLESALERS & DISTRIBUTORS

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D&B Grocers Wholesale ..... (734) 513-1715  
SpartanNash ..... (616) 878-2248  
T.I. Spices, Inc./Amal Distributing ..... (586) 790-7100  
UNFI West Region ..... (262) 942-3387

## HISPANIC PRODUCTS

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

## HOTELS, CONVENTION CENTERS & BANQUET HALLS

Penna's of Sterling ..... (586) 978-3880  
Suburban Collection Showplace ..... (248) 348-5600

## ICE CREAM SUPPLIERS

Prairie Farms Ice Cream Program ..... 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. ..... (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 ..... (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 ..... 1-800-837-3200 ext. 7188

## LEGAL SERVICES

Cummings, McCloy, Davis & Aho, PLC ..... (734) 261-2400  
Kullen & Kassab, PC ..... (248) 538-2200  
Willingham & Cote, PC ..... (517) 351-6200

## LIQUOR SHELF TAGS

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

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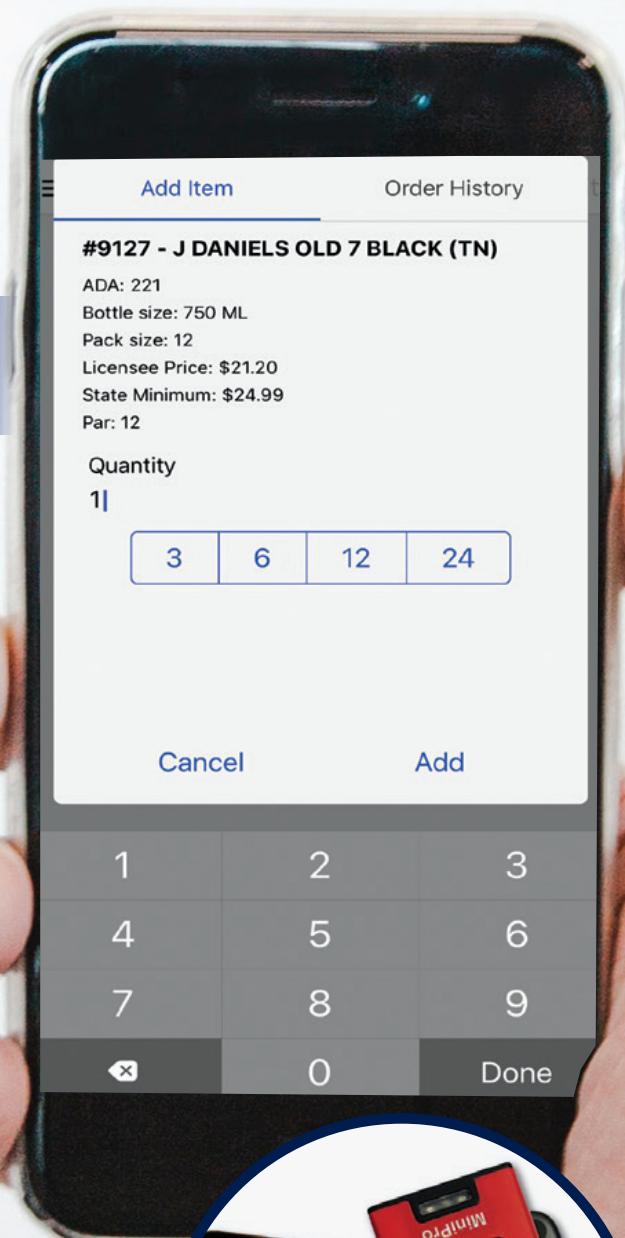
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 Michigan Lottery ..... (517) 335-5648  
 Ohio Lottery ..... 1-800-589-6446

## MILK, DAIRY & CHEESE PRODUCTS

 Borden Dairy  ..... (855) 226-7336  
 Lipari Foods, Inc. .... (586) 447-3500  
 Prairie Farms Dairy Co.  ..... (248) 399-6300  
 Harvest Sherwood ..... (313) 659-7300  
 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

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  
 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  
 Pace Custom Printing ..... (248) 563-7702

## PRODUCE DISTRIBUTORS

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

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 Tank Traders Midwest ..... (877) 429-5797  
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 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  
 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

Commercial Waste Systems *(Cardboard recycling buyers)*  
 ..... (219) 663-5678  
 Midwest Recycling *(Clothing recycle boxes)* ..... (313) 304-9099

## WINE & SPIRITS COMPANIES

Benchmark Beverage Co. .... (734) 744-6132  
 Cornerstone Wine Distributor ..... (586) 839-2552  
 Luxco ..... (313) 333-4637  
 Proximo Spirits ..... (810) 278-0599  
 Tito's Handmade Vodka ..... (248) 885-3424  
 Wise Men Distillery ..... (616) 805-7003

## WINE & SPIRITS DISTRIBUTORS

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

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