



MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION HOLDS 31st ANNUAL BEST BAGGER CONTEST

St Paul, MN – August 20, 2019 - The Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA) held its 31st annual statewide Best Bagger Contest on Saturday, August 17, 2019 at the Mall of America. The first place winner in the competition was Alex Finch of Chris' Food Center, Sandstone, winning \$500 cash, a trophy, and a trip to San Diego, CA to represent Minnesota at the National Grocers Association Best Bagger Championship in February, 2020. Second place was awarded to Emma Kiffmeyer of Kowalski's Market, Woodbury, and third place was awarded to Cody Sik of Mackenthun's Fine Foods, Waconia, both also receiving trophies and cash prizes.

This contest is important to the MGA and its membership because it is a fun, fast-paced, and entertaining competition, but most importantly, this event showcases the talents of one of the industry's key employees. Baggers are the people responsible for the last experience customers have in a store, and the contest's focus on these top baggers truly exemplifies the food industry's dedication to customer service.

The nine participating contestants were judged on speed, style, attitude, proper bag-building technique, and weight distribution between the bags. Contest attendees witnessed the art of "bagging" by some of Minnesota's best. To showcase the food industry's commitment to consumer choice and the well-being of the communities we serve, baggers used the ever-popular reusable bags!

Contestants came from the following participating companies: Chris' Food Center, Sandstone; Coborn's, Clearwater; Fareway Stores, Inc., Owatonna; Hy-Vee Food Stores, Oakdale; Jerry's Foods, Woodbury; Jubilee Foods, Mound; Kowalski's Market, Woodbury; Lunds & Byerlys, Minneapolis; and Mackenthun's Fine Foods, Waconia.

Four of the nine baggers were also given Bagger Excellence Awards, and a cash prize. The "Traveler" award was granted to Alex Finch of Chris' Food Center, Sandstone, for traveling the longest distance to the contest, nearly 98 miles. The "Balance" award was captured by Michael MacDonald of Jubilee Foods, Mound, whose two bags had only .63 pounds difference between them. Alex Hepler of Hy-Vee Food Store, Oakdale captured the "Spirit" award, with his many friends, family, and fans cheering him on. Finally, the "Style" award was presented to Bethany Koster of Fareway Stores, Inc., Stewartville, who best exemplified the image and style of the baggers in the contest.

The Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA) is the only state trade association that represents the food industry of Minnesota from farm to fork. We are one of the oldest trade associations in the state, celebrating over 120 years of advancing industry. We have over 300 retail, manufacture, and wholesale members supporting nearly 1,300 locations statewide. Our member companies employ over 150,000 union and non-union Minnesotans. We actively advance the common interest of all those engaged in any aspect of the retail food industry as a leader and advocate in government affairs.

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