



frontline

The Official Monthly Publication of the Minnesota Grocers Association

September 2023

Increase Your Legislative Engagement

Members who attended this year's Annual Conference heard from the MGA team about why member engagement is key to our collective success in promoting and advocating for industry. There are easy ways that your organization can aid the MGA in these important efforts by including the MGA team in your local events or helping us publicize the good work that you do in your communities. This is as easy as inviting the MGA team to your events or using the #MNGrocer hashtag in your social media post. Minnesota lawmakers are some of the most active in the country in their use of social media. It's important that they see the positive things you're doing in their districts, and for them to link that back to the MGA.

The strength of the MGA Government Relations Team is centered on the strong personal relationships that we've built over years of work. When legislators see us in St. Paul, we want them to think directly about you and the services that you provide for constituents in their districts. By connecting the MGA with your business, you are amplifying the important role you play in your communities and solidifying the link between the MGA and your operation.

One of the most impactful tools the MGA has at our disposal is legislative store tours. These tours give candidates and lawmakers the opportunity to meet you and your team and get an inside look at your operation and develop a better understanding of how their decisions in St. Paul impact your organization. With another impactful legislative session around the corner, the MGA will be busy educating key legislators and we will need member support.

The Food PAC of MN is another vital tool used by the MGA to support and elect industry-responsive candidates to office. We are nearing our aggressive goal for 2023, every dollar counts, so please consider donating.

The Minnesota Food Coalition is another way we support candidates. These donations can come from business funds and are used in our "Get Out the Vote" education efforts.

The MGA encourages members to educate their team by conducting a Capitol Carry Out. A Capitol Carry Out takes a hands-on approach to explaining the need for engagement, how the legislative process works, the basis for industry priorities, and the role individuals play. Active employees holding lawmakers accountable for their decisions will make a difference. The MGA can also invite local legislators to speak to the group. Capitol Carry Outs are 30 to 60 minutes in length and can be tailored to fit each company's needs and can be done in-person or virtually.

If you have any questions about how to get more involved don't hesitate to reach out to the MGA team. Your voice is critical to our collective success. **SB**

MGA Bag Hunger Campaign

Sign up today for the 2023 Bag Hunger Campaign and join the members of the Minnesota Grocers Association who've committed to Bag Hunger in their neighborhoods!



This year's campaign runs from **October 22 – November 11**. The Bag Hunger Campaign promotes sponsors' products and drives retail sales while producing tangible results in the fight to end hunger in our communities. Participation in this program is an excellent way to reinforce the role of grocers and our vendor partners in local communities and demonstrate how our industry works together to positively impact a crucial social issue. See insert to register. **KA**

THC/CBD Registration Now Open



The registration form for businesses selling hemp-derived cannabinoid products in Minnesota is now available at www.health.state.mn.us. All establishments that sell ANY lower-potency hemp products containing THC or CBD must register with the State by October 1, 2023. There is no fee to register.

Businesses not currently selling products but intending to do so in the future and businesses that open after October 1 must register before they sell any hemp-derived cannabinoid product. The Minnesota Department of Health has begun conducting inspections of retail establishments that sell hemp-derived cannabinoid products. Retailers are encouraged to prepare for an inspection by ensuring they are compliant with the regulations. A fact sheet is available to guide retailers in complying with sales rules. See insert. **SB**

Get Ready for 2024

Being a part of the MGA is essential to our collective success – not only for industry but for the entire state. The MGA is your voice, advocate, and resource. We have learned that strong leadership is invaluable - our decades of hard work representing our industry bring direct value to any company that supports the food industry of Minnesota. As you budget for 2024, contracts and membership renewals are now available. **KA**



- MGA 2024 Membership Renewal
- Minnesota Grocer Magazine Advertising
- MGA Annual Conference Sponsorship
- MGA Legislative Sponsorship



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Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year Contest

The MGA in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture has begun the 2023 – 2024 Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year program. This year's contest is based on promotional activities for locally grown foods, beers, wine, and spirits during a one-week showcase period running from **August 1 - September 29** and is a great opportunity to highlight your innovative marketing while supporting your local producers. Contest winners receive special rights to use the "Minnesota Grown" logo for one year. Promotional and marketing materials are available for free to retailers, distributors, and other institutions at www.minnesotagrown.com/minnesota-grown-retailer-year-contest/. **ST**



MGA Foundation Pallet Live Auction

The Minnesota Grocers Association Foundation (MGAF) was excited to host another live pallet auction at this year's Annual Conference. We exceeded our goals and raised nearly \$21,000 which will be used to fund expansion of the MGAF Carts to Careers Program.



We would like to thank the donating companies: KEMPS, Keurig / 7UP, Pepsi Beverages Company, Reyes Coca-Cola, and Russ Davis Wholesale. We would also like to thank the supporting companies: **Hugo's / Valley Markets, Inc., Jerry's Enterprises, Inc., Kowalski's Companies, Inc., and Teal's Management.** **ST**

MGAF Carts to Careers Program

One great program that the Carts to Careers initiative supports is the Retailer Management Certificate (RMC), which is run by Alexandria Technical & Community College. It is an online, nationally recognized, industry-endorsed, 8-course education certificate. The RMC is an accredited business education program and most participants complete it in two years or less. The application is open, and the cost-share program makes this an affordable way to provide an educational benefit to your employees (\$2,750 per student). To apply simply fill out the form application available at www.mngrocers.com. **JP**



MGA Legislative Impact Series

In response to the volume of new regulations signed into law during the 2023 session, the MGA Government Relations team has prepared a series of educational opportunities regarding the changes that are coming. We are engaging with state agencies and commissioners in order to get you the pertinent information to ensure that you're complying with the new laws. Issue area informational materials and calls are recorded and available to easily share with your team members at www.mngrocers.com. **SB**

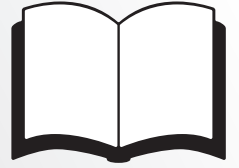
WeCard Awareness Month

September is WeCard Awareness Month. This creates a valuable opportunity to retrain your employees about the importance of compliance. Additionally, the campaign will allow you to highlight your regulatory compliance with customers. Using resources to increase awareness and highlight support is important. Visit the WeCard website at www.wecard.org to get updated material. **SB**



HR Corner

Child Labor Laws – Back to School



With students returning to school, use the insert in this newsletter to refresh yourself on child labor law practices. Current law bars high school students under the age of 18 from working between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. on a school night without written permission from a parent or guardian. With a note, "The student may be permitted to work until 11:30 p.m. on the evening before a school day and beginning at 4:30 a.m. on a school day". A high school student age 18 or older can make a written request to the employer to not work during the restricted hours. The notice must be given two weeks in advance before any restricted hours begin. Laws change with the start of the school year, and it is critical you are following those laws. See insert. **SB**

FMI's Family Meals Month

September is National Family Meals Month – a nationwide event designed to underscore the benefits of family meals and the challenge for us all to pledge to share one more meal at home per week with our families using items purchased from the grocery store. This educational program is sustained by the FMI Foundation, which supports the role of food retailing and focuses on research and education in the areas of food safety, nutrition, and health. Join the movement and commit to one more meal at home per week this September for #FamilyMealsMonth! Visit www.fmi.org/gamily-meals-month.



Sales & Use Tax Updates

Beginning October 1, 2023, the following new local sales and use taxes will go into effect. Be sure to make the required changes to local tax rates if they apply.

- Fergus Falls Sales and Use Tax 0.5%
- Metro Area Sales and Use Tax for Housing 0.25%
- Metro Area Transportation Sales and Use Tax 0.75%

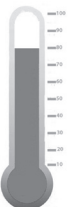
Note: CBD Topicals Not Subject to 10% Cannabis Tax. Nonintoxicating topical products are not subject to the 10% Cannabis Tax, however, they are subject to the 6.875% state general rate sales tax and any applicable local sales taxes based on where the transaction takes place. Nonintoxicating topical products are any product that: "Contains nonintoxicating cannabinoids and is meant to be applied externally to a part of the body." **SB**

Food PAC of MN

Thank you to those who purchased mulligans and donated to the Food PAC at this year's Annual Conference! Those dollars and our newest PAC donors have pushed the Food PAC to over 80% of our 2023 fundraising goal. The 2024 election cycle is right around the corner, and it's critical that the MGA has the resources to continue its role in advocating for the food industry. We have set a big goal and we need your support to achieve it. Thank you to those who have already donated and for your continuing support of our efforts! **SB**

The Food PAC of MN needs you in

The Food PAC of MN has raised 80% of its election goal! Thank you for your support! Invest in Your Business Donate today!



WASHINGTON NEWS

NLRB to Scrutinize Employee Handbooks

The National Labor Relations Board recently issued a ruling under which it will begin increasingly evaluating employer handbooks for labor law violations. Under this standard, the NLRB has the right to scrutinize employee handbooks for all policies that could be construed to restrict employee speech and actions inside or outside of the store. This could include policies that restrict employee use of social media, restrict criticism or negative comments and disparagement of company management, policies that promote civility, and policies requiring confidentiality of investigations and complaints.

The NLRB decision may also include rules addressing insubordination, safety, use of company communication resources, recording of meetings or interactions, circulating petitions or complaints, meeting with co-workers, comments to media or government agencies, or the use of cellphones or other devices.

US Fiscal Rating Downgraded

Fitch Ratings has downgraded the United States of America's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) to 'AA+' from 'AAA'. The rating downgrade of the United States reflects the expected fiscal deterioration over the next three years, a high and growing general government debt burden, and the erosion of governance relative to 'AA' and 'AAA' rated peers over the last two decades that has manifested in repeated debt limit standoffs and last-minute resolutions.

Another Shutdown Showdown

When they come back to the U.S. Capitol following the August recess, Congress will have a number of priorities waiting for them – including a potential looming government shutdown at the end of September. To avoid the shutdown, the two chambers of Congress must come to an agreement on a spending bill before Fiscal Year 2023 ends on Sept. 30. In the Senate, 12 appropriations bills have all made it out of committee with bipartisan support, setting up a relatively simple passage in the evenly divided Senate. But House Republicans will no doubt balk at the nearly \$14 billion price tag.

Credit Card Competition Act Vote Expected

It is anticipated that there will be a vote on the Credit Card Competition Act (CCCA) when Congress returns from its August recess. The CCCA would bring competition to the credit card network routing market. Under the legislation, a credit card would be required to have more than one network option to route financial data. Retailers are required to pay expensive processing fees to accept credit and debit cards as payments from their customers. The hidden processing fees negatively impact U.S. consumers, costing the average American family over \$1,000 per in increased costs. Network routing competition from additional vendors, aside from just Visa and Mastercard, can help mitigate these processing fees. Watch for a call-to-actions from the MGA when the date of the vote is eventually scheduled.

MGA Winter Minnesota Grocer Magazine Spotlight

The winter issue of the *Minnesota Grocer* magazine is right around the corner. This issue of the magazine is incredibly important as the MGA uses it to introduce elected officials to the food industry of Minnesota. The highlight of this issue is the employee anniversary listing. This issue is a great tool for showcasing the entire industry and celebrating your employees' accomplishments. Last year we honored employees with a collective 25,530 years of service! To be included in this publication send us your employee anniversaries in five-year increments. The deadline is **Friday, October 13**. See insert for more information.

There is still space available for advertising in this issue. The last publication for 2023 highlights all aspects of our industry. Join us as we celebrate consumers, careers, and communities. It's the perfect opportunity to get your company front and center this year. Space is limited – get your contract in today! **KA**



THANK YOU 2023 Annual Conference Sponsors

Thank You Sponsors

Support those that support the MGA!

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UNFI & Cub Foods

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Reyes Coca Cola
Russ Davis Wholesale

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Country Hearth / Pan-O-Gold Baking Co
Frescadoes Premium Tortillas
Holiday Stationstores, Inc.
Hormel Foods
JB / No Name Steaks
KeHE Distributors
Land O'Frost
Lipari Foods
Littler Mendelson, P.C.
Mason Brothers Company
Miller Poultry
Post Consumer Brands
Pure Prairie Poultry
SCR / Hill Phoenix
Sparboe Companies

BLUE FLAG

ALDI
PHT Systems

We are planning another fantastic event for July 28-30, 2024 – can we count you in? "Early Bird" sponsorships are available for a limited time. Signed contracts are due September 30. **KA**



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August 1 – September 29

Minnesota Grown
Retailer of the Year Contest
Statewide
MGA Program

September 30

Annual Conference Early Bird
Sponsorship Deadline

October 22 – November 11

MGA Bag Hunger Campaign
Statewide
MGA Program

January 1

MGA Membership
Renewal Due

February 12

Legislative Session Begins
St. Paul, MN



The Minnesota Grocers Association Foundation (MGAF) offers a supplemental scholarship program for any dues-paying MGA members. The MGA Foundation Piggyback Scholarship Program allows members to have all the benefits of their own personalized scholarship program without any expenses. The only cost to you is the scholarship itself, (the minimum award is \$500.00).

Any of your employees who complete the application will automatically be considered for both the MGAF and your scholarship. This will double their opportunity while only completing one streamlined application. Contract due by **December 1, 2023. ST**



You Asked it

Q. Why should I be an MGA Legislative Sponsor?

A: Becoming an MGA Legislative Sponsor shows your commitment to industry by supporting the work of the MGA Government Relations team. The MGA is the only organization that is solely dedicated to advancing the priorities of Minnesota's food industry. It is critical that we speak with one voice to decision-makers in St. Paul, and this is only possible with the ongoing support of our membership. Sponsors receive recognition throughout the year in all of our legislative updates, publications, and events. See insert.

Questions? Call MGA 1-800-966-8352



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