



# frontline

The Official Monthly Publication of the Minnesota Grocers Association

December 2023

## 2024 Legislative Session & Elections Ahead

The 2024 legislative session along with the upcoming elections will create a very interesting backdrop for the year. We anticipate that legislative leaders and the governor will attempt to build on their extensive policy victories of the last session and will look to build momentum for the transition into the fall campaign season. This will be a shorter session with a start date of February 12, 2024, so committees will have to work fast to get bills across the finish line. We're expecting another year of rapid movement and condensed timelines, meaning the session will get off to a fast start.

The state of Minnesota has a biennial legislative session, which means the odd year is a budget year while the even-year historically deals with policy and bonding. The state is experiencing another budget surplus that will also add to legislative leadership's vision for this session. State agencies are putting

together their policy priorities and the MGA is having meetings to ensure that industry's voice is heard. In looking at the structure for the year and the items at play, the MGA is confident that there will be opportunities to advance industry priorities. The January newsletter will provide our legislative preview with a webinar to follow on February 8, 2024.

The 2024 elections are less than a year away. All 134 members of the House will be up for election and the outcome will have a profound impact on industry and the state of Minnesota. The MGA is planning an aggressive strategy to help restore balance and elect legislators who understand that their decisions impact your operations and the baskets of Minnesotans. For a successful session and election, the MGA will need engagement from all members. Please stay tuned for additional engagement opportunities and answer the call if you receive it. **SB**

## 2024 MGAF Scholarship Program Grows

The Minnesota Grocers Association Foundation (MGAF) is excited to announce that we will be awarding 25 \$2,000 scholarships for 2024 - this reflects a \$500 increase per scholarship. Your terrific support of the MGAF Golf Event and silent auction has allowed us to increase these awards, providing more dollars to deserving students. Thank you to all our event-sponsoring companies, and to all those who donated and purchased items at this outstanding event.

Our scholarship program is open to all Minnesota Grocers Association (member companies' employees and their dependents who are high school seniors, college freshmen, sophomores, or juniors. The MGA is continuously striving to improve the scholarship program and make the process as streamlined as possible. All promotional materials will be offered early to help promote the program during holiday staffing (please note that the application will not be available until January 15). Materials are available on the MGA website at <https://www.mngrocers.com/members/scholarship-main/>. Promotional materials will also be mailed out in your membership renewal packets by the beginning of January. Materials will include FAQs, an application guide that will provide you with the tools you'll need to fill out the online application, a small scholarship poster, and a full-size poster to hang in the break room or any other central location. This year's program is open from **January 15 – March 15, 2024. ST**



## 2024 Legislative Sponsorships

Becoming an MGA Legislative Sponsor supports our efforts in advocacy for industry in St. Paul. A legislative sponsorship is an investment in your business. Sponsors receive recognition throughout the year in all of our legislative updates, publications, and events. Thank you to **Jerry's Enterprises, Inc., Kowalski's Companies, Inc., Kwik Trip, Inc., Rush Foods, Inc., Russ Davis Wholesale, and Willie's Super Valu** for your sponsorships! See insert **SB**

## MGA Day on Hill/ Legislative Dinner 3.5.24

Save the date for the MGA's annual Day on the Hill will take place on Tuesday, March 5, 2024. The day will include informational briefings from the MGA Government Relations Team, meetings with legislators and agency leaders, the exciting Bipartisan Bag-Off, and Legislative Dinner. Mark your calendars to join us for this great opportunity to connect with decision-makers and help amplify industry's voice on legislative priorities. **SB**

## MGA Membership Expires 12.31.23



Your support of the MGA has allowed us to be your industry voice. The MGA is a necessary business partner and is the only organization speaking on behalf of the Minnesota food industry. We represent your interests at the Capitol, analyze vast amounts of information, and pass along the vital pieces to keep your business in compliance, saving you time and money. Our decades of hard work representing industry bring direct value to all businesses that play a role in the food industry of Minnesota. **Please submit your renewal today! KA**

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## Bag Hunger Campaign

The MGA would like to extend a huge thank you to all members who participated in our very successful 2023 Bag Hunger Campaign. It was so exciting to see vendors and retailers coming together to Bag Hunger in their neighborhoods. This year saw a drastic increase in online marketing - it was hard to miss when scrolling social media displays and consumer engagement during this three-week campaign.



As a result of this campaign, we have a lot to be proud of - but the work isn't over quite yet! Please help us tell the whole story by submitting your campaign collection forms to the MGA by **December 8** at <https://form.jotform.com/202855010715144>. We must obtain numbers from all participants to tell an accurate story about the work our industry is doing to bag hunger. This one stop form is also where you submit photos of your best display(s) to the MGA for a chance to win a coveted Silver Plate Award and more hunger relief for your communities. **KA**

## 2024/2025 Guidebooks and Employment Posters

The MGA provides several resources to members to ensure they are up to date on the latest regulations that impact the industry. The refreshed 2024-25 MGA Business Regulations Guidelines book will be available for members after the first of the year. This is a user-friendly resource to ensure your business complies with the multitude of regulations governing our industry. In addition, the state minimum wage is set to increase on January 1, 2024. As a member service, the MGA will send each member location one complimentary 2024-25 MGA Business Regulations Guidelines book and an All-in-One updated employment poster. These tools give your team a one-stop resource to manage the complex layers of government rules and regulations and keep you in compliance. **KA**



## Carts to Careers (CTC) Tuition Support Program

The Retail Management Certificate (RMC) program is a nationally recognized, industry-endorsed 8-course education certificate program offered by Alexandria Technical and Community College. The RMC is an accredited business education program completed 100% online in two years or less. The program is designed to meet the educational requirements of the food industry and provide valuable skills in all areas of business. To support industry careers, the MGAF has a CTC grant opportunity, through a State of Minnesota appropriation, that supports RMC students. The application deadline for the Spring Semester is **December 20**. See insert for more information. **KC**



## Advertising Package - Get Noticed

Make the MGA a part of your marketing plan for the coming year. Whether you're looking to reach grocery retailers, suppliers, or wholesalers, our community of engaged c-suite executives is the perfect, high-value audience for your marketing efforts. The Minnesota Grocer magazine features authoritative insights and opinions that cover all facets of the state's grocery business. Discover why advertising in the Minnesota Grocer is your ticket to reaching your target audience. MGA's extensive membership ensures your advertising reaches the top Minnesota grocery retail decision-makers. **KA**



## HR Corner



### Minimum Wage Increases

On January 1, 2024, the state's minimum wage will increase. This is an annual adjustment for inflation. Large employers (over \$500,000 in annual sales) wage is \$10.85 an hour while the small employer (under \$500,000) wage is \$8.85. A 90-day training wage for 18 and 19-year old's will be \$8.85. A youth wage for employees under 18 years of age will be \$8.85. The state minimum-wage rates will not apply to work performed in the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, which have higher minimum-wage rates.

It should be noted that these changes could also trigger the need for employers to provide an updated employee notice. As part of MN wage theft requirements, employers are required to provide each employee with written notice of any change before the change takes effect, including a change to the employee's rate of pay. **SB**

### PFML Actuarial Report

Included in the Paid Family Medical Leave bill that passed last session was a provision requiring a third-party actuarial analysis be performed to study the sustainability of the program. That report was completed in October and released to the public. As anticipated by the MGA, the analysis predicts that the initial .7% payroll tax rate that will begin in 2026, will not be adequate to fund the projected benefits paid out to PFML applicants.

The analysis, performed by Milliman, Inc., predicts that the payroll tax rate will need to be increased to .78% for years 2026-2028 and then .83% from 2029-2033 in order to keep the program solvent. The legislation allows the director of the PFML the ability to raise the tax rate to 1.2% without legislative approval. If you would like a copy of the report, contact the MGA Government Relations Team. **SB**

### All-In-One Posters

New mandatory employee postings are expected to be released by the Minnesota Department of Labor, shortly. This will include the new Earned Sick and Safe Time posting, which will be part of your 2024 Federal/State all-in-one poster. The posters will be mailed to each MGA member location to meet the January 1, 2024 posting requirement. This is a benefit to all MGA members.

### Handbooks

The MGA has updated its office handbook to ensure compliance with all of the new state requirements if needed. The MGA can provide sample language for your company handbook updates. **JP**



May Your Holidays  
Be Happy!

JAMIE, KAREN, KARLY, SHELBY & STEVE

# WASHINGTON NEWS

## New Speaker Elected and Another Potential Shutdown

After 22 speakerless days, House Republicans finally elected Mike Johnson of Louisiana as Speaker of the House. Johnson, a four-term Congressman, was the fourth candidate for Speaker and is largely unknown to the Washington establishment. With a Speaker finally installed, the House of Representatives can begin to move legislation including a foreign aid package and government funding bills. Johnson has little time to ease into his new role, as Congress is faced with another threat of a government shutdown if lawmakers fail to pass another continuing resolution (CR) before the November 17 deadline – which is when the CR passed to avoid the last shutdown threat in September will expire

## Federal Farm Bill Gets One Year Extension

Despite the looming threat of a government shutdown, a bipartisan agreement to extend the current Farm Bill until September 30, 2024 was reached by Congressional leaders in mid-November. The agreement continues to fund USDA programs while also securing funding for hunger programs including SNAP and WIC. All the elements of the agreement had not been released as of the printing of this newsletter.

## Menthol Cigarette Ban Proposed

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently submitted a final version of its proposed ban to the White House's budget office, the last step before issuing a regulation. The move has been years in the making amid concerns that menthol were more addictive than traditional cigarettes. Menthol products account for more than a third of tobacco sales in the United States. There is concern over the ban. History shows that bans will promote growth of the illicit tobacco market while increasing sales of unregulated products. This will also have a detrimental impact on brick and mortar that legally sell tobacco products. Any new rules are expected to face a legal challenge in court.

## PBM Reform

A bipartisan proposal passed its first major hurdle when the Better Mental Health Care, Lower-Cost Drugs, and Extenders Act passed the Senate Finance Committee 26-0. The bill includes provisions requiring the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to define contract terms and conditions that are "reasonable and relevant" under Medicare Part D and force PBMs to comply while creating a process for pharmacies to report problematic contract terms or potential violations.

## NLRB Finalizes Joint Employer Rule

Recently, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued their final Joint Employer Rule. The rule establishes two or more employers as joint employers if they 'share or codetermine' key employment conditions such as pay, scheduling, employee discipline policies, and workplace safety. This reworks the legal standards to make it easier for workers to be considered employed by more than one entity for labor relations purposes. Grocery franchise relationships, marketing alliances, or licensing arrangements may be found to have a joint employment relationship where the larger entity may be found liable for workers they don't employ and workplaces they don't have control over. Employers will need to brace for this revised rule that will be more unforgiving to franchises and the stores under their banners.

## SNAP Card Skimming Update

USDA has announced that SNAP households will have added protection from stolen benefits through Sep. 30, 2024, as the agency officially approved all SNAP state agencies' plans for replacing benefits stolen via card skimming, card cloning and other similar crimes. To bolster SNAP's security and address fraud that targets SNAP recipients, other actions USDA has taken include trying pilot programs using mobile contactless payments in SNAP. This technology has the potential to help protect families from having their SNAP benefits stolen because of card skimming.

## MGA Coupon Clearing House to Close 12.31.23

After many decades, the MGA Coupon Clearing House is set to close as of **December 31**. We have been proud to provide this service to you, our members, but we know you will be better served by a more efficient and cost-effective program focused solely on coupon processing. For more information, email [mgainfo@mngrocers.com](mailto:mgainfo@mngrocers.com).



## 2024 MGA Annual Conference July 28-30, 2024

Get ready for the 2024 MGA Annual Conference – the largest and only event focused on the entire Minnesota food industry. This conference brings together the top retail decision-makers, who represent the broad spectrum of the state's food industry to meet with leading supplier companies for a one-of-a-kind event.



## THANK YOU

We Appreciate the 2024 Annual Conference Sponsors

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*\*as of 11/10/2023*

Sponsoring the Annual Conference elevates your company and shows your commitment to the food industry of Minnesota. You receive tremendous name recognition not only during the conference but throughout the entire year. MGA publications highlight your organization multiple times, including the monthly Frontline newsletter, the quarterly Minnesota Grocer magazine, and the MGA Annual Member Directory. Sponsorship is open for the 2024 MGA Annual Conference. Thank you to the above companies who have supported the MGA and are committed to industry. **KA**





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## bulletin BOARD

### December 20

CTC Application Deadline  
*MGA Program*

### January 1

MGA Membership Renewal Due

### January 15 – March 15

MGA F Scholar Program  
*MGA Program*

### February 12

MN Legislative Session Begins  
St. Paul, MN

### March 5

MGA Legislative Day  
St. Paul, MN  
*MGA Program*



The MGA's Legislative Impact Series is available to members on the MGA website. The MGA Government Relations Team distributed detailed briefings regarding major issue areas and changes that occurred during the 2023 session. We also hosted numerous conference calls relaying this important information to industry. The recordings of the conference calls are posted under the 'Legislative Wrap-Ups' tab on the MGA website and available for you or your team to access at any time, visit [www.mngrocers.com](http://www.mngrocers.com). **SB**

## You Asked it

**Q.** Where can I get more information on the required Certified Food Manager & Recertification Training?

**A:** New online certification and recertification courses, available from Safe Food Training, have been updated for 2024. With numerous locations and courses available, it has never been easier. Visit <http://www.mngrocers.com/index.php/members/training> to get signed up city for any additional licensing requirements or regulations. **ST**

**Questions? Call MGA 1-800-966-8352**



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