FALL/WINTER 2026

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NGIA STAFF

ANSLEY FELLERS, *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*
AFELLERS@NEBGROCERY.COM

RICH OTTO, *DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS*
RICH@NEBGROCERY.COM

STACY MUEHLING, *OFFICE MANAGER*
STACY@NEBGROCERY.COM

Nebraska Grocery Industry Association, Inc.
635 South 14th Street, Suite #305
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
(402) 423-5533 • NEBGROCERY.COM

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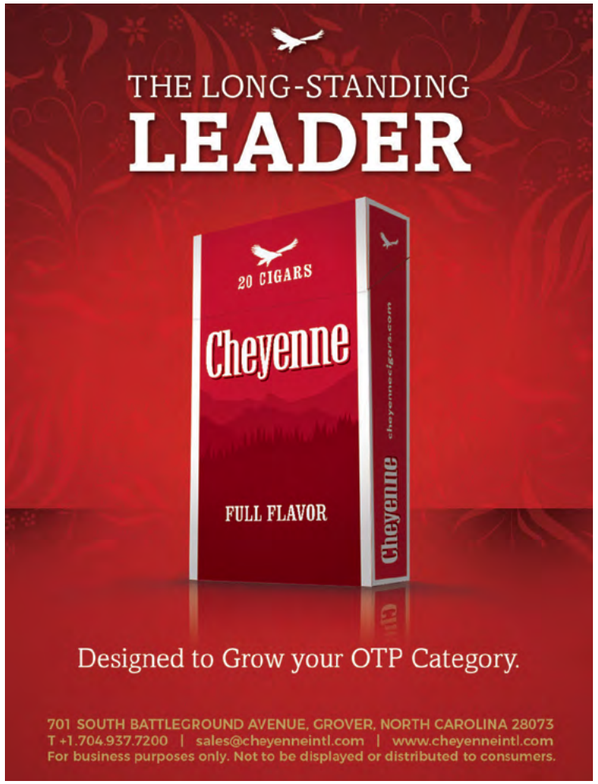
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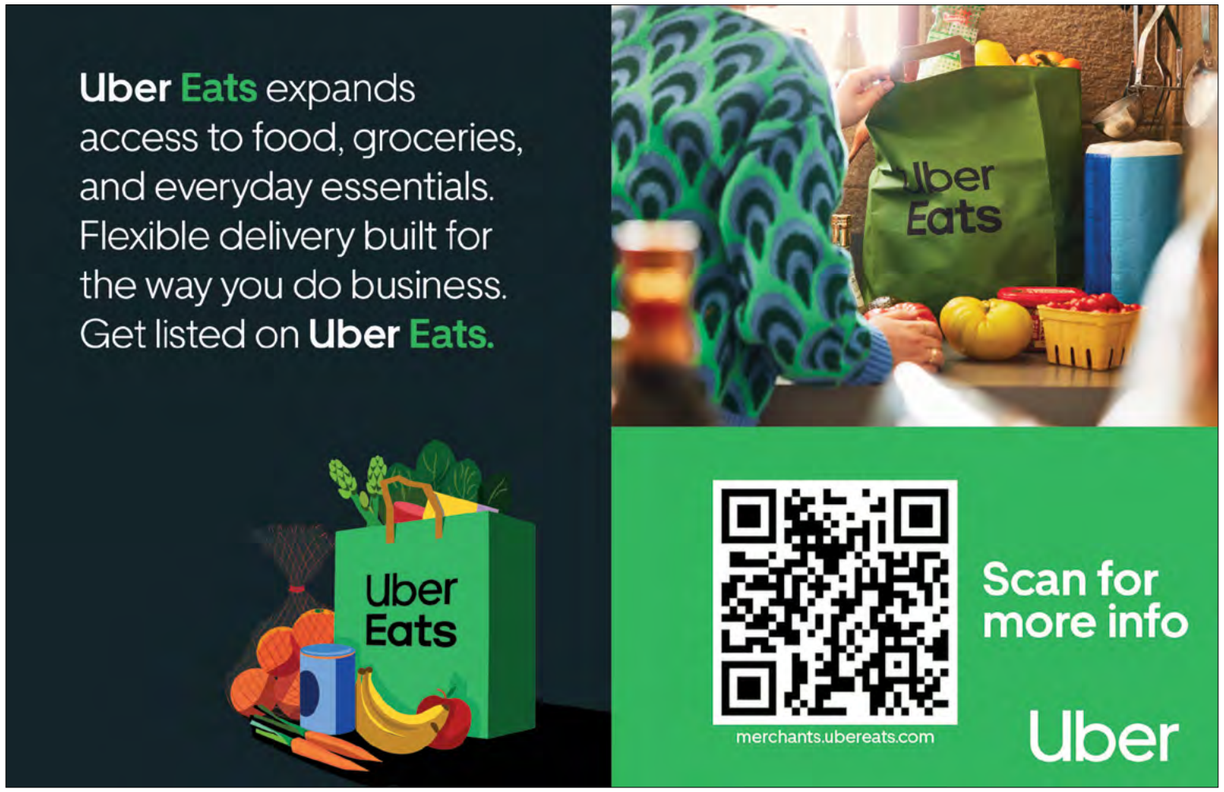
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UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION OF THE NEBRASKA GROCERY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

As we approach the end of another busy year, I'm reminded that the grocery industry is more than the products on our shelves; it's the people and relationships that keep our industry strong. It's also an industry facing tremendous pressure.

Rising labor, insurance, energy, and operating costs continue to challenge retailers, particularly independent grocers operating on thin margins. "Affordability" was the buzzword of election season, and retailers increasingly find themselves in the crosshairs, with some policymakers blaming grocery pricing practices for higher consumer costs. We expect that scrutiny to continue in 2027, with surveillance pricing proposals at both the state and federal levels and the possibility of renewed efforts to increase the federal minimum wage.

Meanwhile, SNAP restrictions and an ever-changing regulatory environment add to the challenges. Much of the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association's (NGIA) work this year has focused on reminding policymakers that even well-intentioned policies carry real costs for retailers and ultimately their customers.

One important legislative accomplishment was our work on minimum wage policy. NGIA supported a more predictable schedule of future increases, along with youth and training wage provisions. Nebraska's minimum wage increases again Jan. 1, 2027, and employers should review the reminder on Page 23 of this issue.

NGIA also helped lead opposition to a proposed ballot initiative that would raise the legislative threshold for amending voter-approved initiatives from two-thirds to four-fifths, significantly limiting lawmakers' ability to address unintended consequences.

The challenges facing our industry are especially evident in rural Nebraska. On Page 34 of this issue, we highlight the opening of Home Plate Market in St. Paul alongside grocery store closures in the Panhandle. Both stories underscore the importance of local grocers and the need for an environment in which they can afford to operate.

Fortunately, there's plenty worth celebrating, too.

Our fourth annual Grocery Industry Summit brought together approximately 70 industry professionals and supporters. We also awarded nine deserving students $1,500 scholarships and celebrated our third annual Best Bagger Competition. Our Hackers & Snackers golf outing and Governor's Tailgates provided more opportunities to connect with members and industry partners. We're especially grateful to the sponsors who make these programs possible.

Looking ahead, the 110th Nebraska Legislature convenes Jan. 6, 2027, with new faces, leadership changes, and familiar policy challenges. Be sure to read our separate election update on Page 8 for a closer look at the results and their implications for Nebraska's grocery industry.

NGIA will remain focused on advocating for a competitive business environment, sensible regulation, and policies that recognize the economic realities facing Nebraska grocers.

I hope you'll join us for our Day at the Capitol and Legislative Dinner on Feb. 16, one of our best opportunities to connect directly with lawmakers.

Thank you for your membership, involvement, and the work you do every day to serve Nebraska communities. It's a privilege to represent this industry, and I look forward to tackling the opportunities and challenges of 2027 together.

Angley Fellers

Executive Director,
Nebraska Grocery Industry Association

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ELECTION 2026: POLITICAL CHANGES IN NEBRASKA & NATIONWIDE

As this magazine goes to print, election results remain unofficial. The following reflects information available as of November 4, 2026.

The Nov. 3 midterm elections brought some significant political changes to Nebraska and across the country. Incumbent state senators lost hard-fought races, Democrats captured Omaha's congressional seat, and voters nationwide returned control of Congress to Democrats.

NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

Some of the biggest changes came in Nebraska's officially nonpartisan Legislature.

Two incumbent senators appear to have lost reelection: Sen. Brad von Gillern (LD 4) to Cindy Maxwell-Ostdiek and Sen. Merv Riepe (LD 12) to Christy Knorr. Incumbent Rick Holdcroft (LD 36) appears to have held onto his seat in Gretna. Several open-seat contests were also extremely close. Bill Bowes won LD 14 by just 231 votes, Jess Goldoni won LD 18 by 367, and Tim Anderson led LD 38 by 410 votes. In LD 2, Dean Helmick held a 292-vote lead over Caitlin Knutson, with some precincts still partially reporting Wednesday morning.

These margins are a reminder that a few hundred votes can make a significant difference.

Republicans entered the election with 33 of the Legislature's 49 seats – the number needed to overcome a filibuster. While senators are elected on a nonpartisan ballot and do not always vote along party lines, the new makeup of the Legislature could change the dynamics surrounding taxes, labor policy, business regulation, spending and other issues important to Nebraska grocers.

These results also leave something of a leadership gap heading into the 2027 legislative session. With Speaker John Arch term-limited and Revenue Committee Chair Brad von Gillern's loss, two of the Legislature's most influential positions will change hands. Mike Jacobson from North Platte is widely viewed as a leading candidate for Speaker, but Kathleen Kauth has stated publicly that she will be seeking the position.

New leadership, turnover among committee members and the loss of von Gillern from Revenue will require senators to reshuffle committee assignments and chairmanships, potentially changing the balance on committees that determine which tax, workforce, and business proposals reach the floor.

Leadership and elections matter well beyond the personalities involved.

OMAHA FLIPS

Nebraska's congressional delegation will have a new look as well. Democrat Denise Powell defeated Republican Brinker Harding in the 2nd Congressional District, succeeding retiring Congressman Don Bacon.

Elsewhere, Republicans continued to perform strongly. Adrian Smith won another term representing the 3rd District, while Mike Flood led Democratic challenger Chris Backemeyer in the 1st District. Republican U.S. Senator Pete Ricketts also maintained a substantial lead over independent challenger Dan Osborn.

The takeaway: Republicans remain strong statewide and throughout rural Nebraska, while Omaha and Lincoln, along with other population centers, remain much more competitive.

BALLOT INITIATIVES

Nebraska voters also had several major policy questions to decide. Statewide, voters rejected a proposal to extend legislative term limits from two terms to three and defeated both measures needed to legalize online sports betting. Voters did approve Initiative 442, the "Fairness for Girls" measure establishing restrictions on participation in girls' school sports.

Lincoln voters supported moving city elections to even-numbered statewide election years along with City Council term limits, with the two-term limit receiving more votes than the competing three-term proposal. The one Lincoln measure that failed would have allowed residents of the city's three-mile extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction to vote in city elections.

Several of the Lincoln charter proposals were backed by those seeking to alter the political balance in a city government that has leaned Democratic in recent years, particularly by moving them onto the higher-turnout general election ballot and limiting the tenure of incumbent officeholders.

Like the candidate races, these results remain unofficial until certified.

A NATIONAL SHIFT

Nationally, Democrats gained control of both the U.S. House and Senate, creating divided government for the final two years of President Donald Trump's term.

Economic issues were prominent throughout the campaign. The change in congressional control will have implications for federal spending, regulatory oversight and the administration's ability to move legislation through Congress.

For what it's worth, Roger Marshall's shellacking in Kansas could dim the prospect of the Credit Card Competition



WHAT IT MEANS FOR NEBRASKA GROCERS

For NGIA, elections change the people around the table, but not our job. An evolving Legislature will mean new relationships to build on workforce policy, taxes, regulation and state spending. In Washington, divided government could affect everything from SNAP and food affordability to labor costs and federal regulation.

Through all of those changes, NGIA's focus remains advocating for policies that allow Nebraska's grocery retailers, wholesalers and industry partners to compete, serve their communities and keep food affordable for Nebraska families.

We look forward to working with both returning and newly elected officials in Lincoln and Washington in 2027.

NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE 2026 ELECTION RESULTS

STATE SENATE

LD	WINNER	OPPONENT	VOTES	MARGIN
2	**Dean Helmick**	Caitlin Knutson	7,878 - 7,580	+292*
4	**Cindy Maxwell-Ostdiek**	Brad von Gillern (*inc.*)	8,739 - 8,447	+292
6	**Patrick Leahy**	Nate Ostdiek	7,816 - 5,797	+2,019
8	**Erin Feichtinger**	Josh Livingston	9,120 - 3,373	+5,747
10	**Cindy Johnson**	Rebecca Rens	7,687 - 5,405	+2,282
12	**Christy Knorr**	Merv Riepe (*inc.*)	6,464 - 5,151	+1,313
14	**Bill Bowes**	SuAnn Witt	7,633 - 7,402	+231
16	**Ted Japp**	Cindy Chatt	9,849 - 5,609	+4,240
18	**Jess Goldoni**	Taylor Royal	7,755 - 7,388	+367
20	**John Fredrickson** (*inc.*)	Chris Anderson	9,501 - 6,150	+3,351
22	**Dawson Brunswick**	*Unopposed*	9,268	—
24	**Jana Hughes** (*inc.*)	Dan Winter	11,010 - 2,950	+8,060
26	**George Dungan** (*inc.*)	Tobias Howard	7,057 - 3,484	+3,573
28	**Patty Pansing Brooks**	Colby Woodson	8,643 - 2,837	+5,806
30	**Cally Ideus**	Janet Bock	9,809 - 6,924	+2,885
32	**Mark Schoenrock**	Shay Smith	8,513 - 5,384	+3,129
34	**Loren Lippincott** (*inc.*)	Ben Blodgett	9,151 - 5,126	+4,025
36	**Rick Holdcroft** (*inc.*)	Darin Tompkins	8,504 - 7,768	+736
38	**Tim Anderson**	Janell Anderson Ehrke	8,040 - 7,630	+410
40	**Barry DeKay** (*inc.*)	*Unopposed*	14,105	—
41	**Joe Johnson**	Jeremy Heneger	7,578 - 4,396	+3,182
42	**Mike Jacobson** (*inc.*)	Shaylee Scranton	9,945 - 3,440	+6,505
44	**Teresa Ibach** (*inc.*)	*Unopposed*	10,214	—
46	**Danielle Conrad** (*inc.*)	*Unopposed*	5,069	—
48	**Brian Hardin** (*inc.*)	Jessica Landers	6,695 - 3,564	+3,131

FEDERAL & STATEWIDE OFFICES

FEDERAL OFFICES	
U.S. SENATE	**VOTES**
R **Pete Ricketts**	**370,411**
I Dan Osborn	321,218
L Mike Marvin	15,848
G Robin Richards	18,937
C Chuck Conboy	8,846
U.S. HOUSE – DISTRICT 1	**VOTES**
R **Mike Flood**	**121,374**
D Chris Backemeyer	113,134
L Nik Sandman	4,380
I Dan Hartong	4,184
U.S. HOUSE – DISTRICT 2	**VOTES**
D **Denise Powell**	**138,733**
R Brinker Harding	100,895
L Eric Michael Foreman	6,310
U.S. HOUSE – DISTRICT 3	**VOTES**
R **Adrian Smith**	**170,650**
D Becky Kelly Stille	48,035
L David J. Else	6,910
I Macey Budke	6,693
G Mark Cohen	7,848

STATEWIDE OFFICES	
GOVERNOR & LT. GOVERNOR	**VOTES**
R **Jim Pillen / Joe Kelly**	**373,465**
D Lynne Walz / Ben Steffen	311,363
L Rick Beard / Keenya Barnes	19,532
I Brett Lindstrom / Michael Picard	32,362
SECRETARY OF STATE	**VOTES**
R **Scott Peterson**	**390,653**
D Sarah J. Slattery	292,270
L Paul Rumbaugh	22,343
I Bob Krist	18,636
STATE TREASURER	**VOTES**
R **Joey Spellerberg**	**418,609**
D Daniel Ebers	296,251
ATTORNEY GENERAL	**VOTES**
R **Mike Hilgers**	**403,371**
D Jocelyn Brasher	313,405
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS	**VOTES**
R **Mike Foley**	**488,286**
A John Knight	165,626
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DISTRICT 2	**VOTES**
D **Wendy DeBoer**	**84,500**
R Dennis McCann	39,509

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS — 99.02% of PRECINCTS REPORTING — UPDATED NOV. 4, 2026, 5:58 A.M. CT







TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

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NGIA AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

THE NEBRASKA GROCERY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (NGIA) AWARDED NINE $1,500 SCHOLARSHIPS IN 2026.

The scholarship program recognizes and aids deserving students who are related to Nebraska's food industry by virtue of their parents' employment or their own part-time employment by businesses which are dues paying members of the association.

It was established as an expression of appreciation to the members of NGIA and as a service to our members.

Funds that are raised from the silent auction held during the Legislative Dinner each year and money raised from raffles and mulligans during association golf outings are used to fund the scholarships.

Congratulations to the winners, we wish you the best in your academic endeavors!



Meet the 2026 NGIA Scholarship Winners



OLIVIA GARDNER

Olivia Gardner is currently enrolled at the University of Iowa, in Iowa City, Iowa. She is pursuing a degree in nursing. Olivia was named a Conway Scholar in Fall 2025 and was honored on the Dean's List and received the Iowa Scholars Award for the 2024-2025 academic years. She attended Iowa Western Community College in 2023, 2024, and 2025. Olivia is a returning scholarship recipient from NGIA. She is the daughter of Anthony Gardner, who works for D&D Foods, a subsidiary of Hy-Vee.



NOAH HALL

Noah Hall is a graduate of Bennington High School in Bennington, Nebraska. He was highly involved in golf, basketball, acapella, and choir in high school. He worked at the Fareway Meat & Grocery in Omaha for four years as well as the Stone Creek Golf Course throughout high school. Noah is continuing his education at Creighton University with a major in business and focus in pre-med.



EMMA KING

Emma King is a graduate of Summerland Public School in Ewing, Nebraska. She was involved in her church, theatre, and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America. She also worked at a gas station and a grocery store supporting inventory and data management. Emma is continuing her education at Wayne State College and plans to focus on business administration with a concentration in human resource management. She is the daughter of Brian King, who works for Associated Wholesale Grocers in Norfolk, Nebraska.



BRAYDEN LOSEKE

Brayden Loseke is a graduate of Leigh Community Schools in Leigh, Nebraska. He was involved in Future Business Leaders of America, FFA, speech, band, the local Youth Advisory Council, and St. John's LCMS youth group in high school. He also worked at Steve's Madhouse Market in Leigh. Brayden is continuing his education at University of Nebraska – Lincoln to study mechanical engineering with a focus in the aerospace industry.



NATALIA THOENDEL

Natalia Thoendel is a graduate of David City High School in David City, Nebraska. She was involved in National Honor Society, FFA, Stay-U, volleyball, cross country, basketball, and an active member of Bellwood United Methodist Church. Natalia is continuing her education at Wayne State College and plans to focus on applied human and sport physiology and eventually earn a doctorate in occupational therapy. She is the daughter of Marcus Thoendel, who works for Super Saver in Columbus, Nebraska.



MACKENZIE WATENPAUGH

Mackenzie Watenpaugh is currently enrolled at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln, Nebraska. She is pursuing a degree in athletic training with a double major in psychology. She is a student athlete on the women's basketball team and member of the Athletic Training Student Association and a Student Athlete Advisory Committee representative. She was part of the university's Honor Roll in 2025 and 2026, and Blue Key Honor Society Member. She currently works at the Hy-Vee Pharmacy in Lincoln, Nebraska.

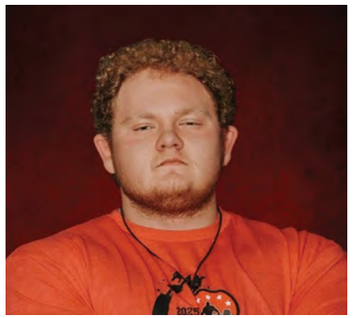
Seeking Applications for 2027 Awards

NGIA members are asked to help promote the scholarship program to eligible high school seniors, undergraduate college students, and non-traditional students.

Apply before May 15, 2027.

Complete eligibility details and application forms can be found at **nebgrocery.com/membership/member-programs/scholarship-program.**

Meet the 2026 NGIA Scholarship Winners



BRODEN WESTOVER

Broden Westover is currently enrolled at Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs, Iowa. He is studying exercise science and criminal justice. He is a powerlifting champion and holds multiple state, national, and world records in lifting. He works seasonally at Henderson's IGA in Valentine, Nebraska, and is the stepson of Derek Hawthorn who is a long-term employee of Henderson's IGA.



ANDREW WIEST

Andrew Wiest is currently enrolled at University of Nebraska – Lincoln, in Lincoln, Nebraska. He is pursuing a degree in education with a major in secondary education in business, marketing, and information technology. He was the Chase County High School Class of 2025 Salutatorian and named Omaha World-Herald Class of 2025 Academic All State Honoree. He works part time seasonally at Hill's Family Foods in Imperial, Nebraska, and is a returning NGIA scholarship recipient.



EMMA WILCOXON

Emma Wilcoxon is currently enrolled at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota. She is studying communications sciences and disorders and Spanish. She has been named to the university's Dean's List for academic excellence and received the MacQuillen language award. She works seasonally at Hy-Vee in Omaha, Nebraska, as an Aisles Onlines shopper and as a deli worker.



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Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen issued a proclamation in support of "We Card Awareness Month" in September.

We Card is shining a light on responsible retailing of age-restricted products by encouraging retailers to make employee training a top priority. This focus encourages retailers to re-invigorate training of frontline store employees to boost compliance with federal, state, and local laws.



We Card and the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association strongly encourage retailers to take steps to help ensure age-restricted compliance. Visit our website for resources or **wecard.org.**



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2026 GROCERY INDUSTRY SUMMIT

HIGHLIGHTS OPPORTUNITIES AND ADDRESSES CHALLENGES

A successful fourth-annual Grocery Industry Summit on Aug. 20 brought together around 70 industry professionals and supporters for a collaborative day of panel discussions, legislative updates, and networking.

The event was hosted by the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association (NGIA) alongside the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center and the Center for Rural Affairs.

"It is a way to introduce our retailers to the on-the-ground resources, not just showing them how and where to find some of these things but also meet some of the people that can help them access resources to help them stay competitive," says Ansley Fellers, NGIA executive director.

The summit featured a keynote address from Congressman Adrian Smith (NE-03), as well as discussion on grocery resources, SNAP waivers, antitrust, alternative payments, and wholesale opportunities for local products.

NGIA THANKS THE SUPPORTERS, SPEAKERS, AND ATTENDEES WHO MADE THIS EVENT A SUCCESS.



FIND RESOURCE MATERIALS FROM THE SUMMIT HERE.





NEBRASKA BEST BAGGER COMPETITION

CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE WHO KEEP NEBRASKA GROCERY STORES MOVING!

Nebraska's best baggers brought their A-game to the third-annual Nebraska Grocery Industry Association (NGIA) Best Bagger Competition, held at the Tiburon Golf Club on Tuesday, Oct. 6.

Congratulations to Jozlyn Bartunek of Fareway Stores for taking home the win. The 10 contestants are judged by speed of bagging, proper bag-building technique, weight distribution between bags, as well as style and attitude. The top three competitors went home with cash and every bagger got to take home bags full of groceries.

Jozlyn will go on to represent Nebraska at the National Grocers Association (NGA) Best Bagger Championship at the NGA annual convention in Las Vegas in February. The national winner will be awarded a $10,000 grand prize. The competition is sponsored by PepsiCo and is the culmination of yearlong contests across the nation.



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Scan to register & learn more about NDA's RFSI program.
Registration Deadline: November 24th
Hosted by:
Nebraska Department of Agriculture
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NGIA REMINDER: PAID SICK LEAVE

As we approach year-end, now is a good time to review payroll systems and paid sick leave balances to ensure compliance with minimum wage and paid sick leave laws.

MINIMUM WAGE

Nebraska's minimum wage increases to $15.26 on Jan. 1, 2027. The statewide youth wage remains $13.50 for 14- and 15-year-olds, while the training wage increases to $13.70 for eligible employees ages 16–19 during their first 90 days of employment.

The Attorney General continues challenging minimum wage ordinances in Lincoln and Omaha. A Lancaster County judge temporarily blocked Lincoln's ordinance, keeping state rates in effect. In Omaha, a judge preliminarily allowed CPI-based increases but blocked the city's higher youth wage requirement. As of this publication, Omaha's minimum wage will be $15.55 in January, compared with $15.26 elsewhere. Both cases remain unresolved, with further developments possible in December.

PAID SICK LEAVE

ACCRUING AND REPORTING SICK LEAVE

- Employers with 11–19 employees must provide up to 40 hours annually; employers with 20 or more must provide up to 56 hours.
- Eligible employees accrue at least one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked, beginning after 80 hours of consecutive employment.
- Each regular pay period, employers must provide employees with their available sick leave balance, hours used, and sick leave pay received.
- This information may appear on a paystub, an attachment, or an accessible online payroll system.

CARRYOVER INTO THE NEXT YEAR

- Unused accrued sick leave must carry over into the following year.
- There is no statutory maximum on the accumulated carryover balance.
- However, employers may limit annual use to 40 or 56 hours, depending on business size.
- Alternatively, employers may pay out unused sick leave at year-end and provide the required amount of leave for immediate use at the beginning of the new year.
- Employers with an existing PTO policy that satisfies the law may follow that policy's accrual and carryover provisions.

PAYING OUT UNUSED SICK LEAVE

- Employers are NOT required to pay out unused, separately tracked sick leave when an employee leaves employment.
- However, if sick leave is combined with vacation into a general PTO bank, Nebraska wage laws generally require payment of all earned, unused PTO upon separation.
- Employers should carefully distinguish sick leave from vacation or combined PTO in their written policies and payroll systems.

Everyone should verify that payroll systems accurately track accrued hours, usage, and carryover. Employers should also review whether their sick leave policies are separate from vacation/PTO policies or understand payout requirements if left combined.

Questions? Contact Ansley Fellers at afellers@nebgrocery.com.



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LAND O' FROST



GET TO KNOW NEBRASKA GROCERY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (NGIA) SPONSOR LAND O' FROST IN THIS Q&A WITH **THOM BRITTENHAM**, CUSTOMER BUSINESS MANAGER AND ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE NGIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Q: CAN YOU GIVE READERS A LITTLE HISTORY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

A: Land O' Frost has been a family-owned U.S. company since it began in 1941. It is the #3 lunchmeat brand in the U.S. Other Land O' Frost brands include Fairbury, Wimmer's, Ambassador, Colameco's, and Wellshire.

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST VALUABLE ABOUT BEING PART OF NGIA?

A: Finding ways to connect NGIA members and non-members with information that impacts them beyond their day-to-day operations.

Q: WHAT SETS YOUR PRODUCTS/SERVICES APART?

A: Wimmer's and Fairbury brands are high-quality products made since 1934 and are the #1 combined brands in Nebraska. Land O' Frost lunchmeats combine quality and value to meet the needs of a wide audience.

Q: WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT THE INDUSTRY THIS YEAR?

A: Product innovation, as well as working with our retailers to provide value for their customers and profit for the stores.

Q: WHO SHOULD GROCERS CONTACT IF THEY'RE INTERESTED IN USING YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES?

A: Our broker, Cruise Marketing, at 515-564-0990, or Land O' Frost directly at 708-474-7100.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THOM!

We'd like to share a special shout-out to Thom for emceeing the 2026 Nebraska Best Bagger Competition and for helping bring the fun to our summer Sand Baggers Golf Outing with the iconic Der Viener Schlinger hot dog cannon.

IN MEMORY OF RON COSE

RON COSE HAD A SUCCESSFUL 38-YEAR CAREER WORKING FOR WELLS BLUE BUNNY. HIS WORK LED HIM AND HIS FAMILY TO LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, IN 1984.



The Nebraska Grocery Industry Association (NGIA) remembers Ron Cose with gratitude and appreciation for his contributions to Nebraska's grocery industry.

In 2013, Ron was honored with the NGIA Vendor of the Year Award, recognizing his service and contributions to the industry. His recognition reflects the important role vendors play in supporting Nebraska grocers and strengthening the relationships that make our industry successful.

Ron will be remembered by those who knew and worked with him. NGIA extends its heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time.

Ron is survived by his wife of 53 years, Karla Cose; daughter and son-in-law, Stacy and Matt Gutschenritter; son and daughter-in-law, Chad and Brooke Cose; and daughter and son-in-law, Jill and Dan Watkins; all from the Lincoln area. Grandchildren; Mitchell and Kate Gutschenritter; Landon, Kendal, and Hadley Cose; MaKenna and Devin Watkins; and brother, Larry Cose (wife Doris). Five nieces and nephews and many extended family members and friends who will miss him dearly.

He will be missed, and his memory will remain a part of the Nebraska grocery industry.





HACKERS & SNACKERS GOLF OUTING

The Nebraska Grocery Industry Association hosted its annual Hackers & Snackers golf extravaganza at the Tiburon Golf Club in Omaha on Oct. 6.

Nearly 100 members and grocery industry professionals enjoyed a fun day of networking, camaraderie, and competition on the course. Special raffles and mulligans during the event help fund the annual NGIA scholarship awards.













Thank you to our sponsors!

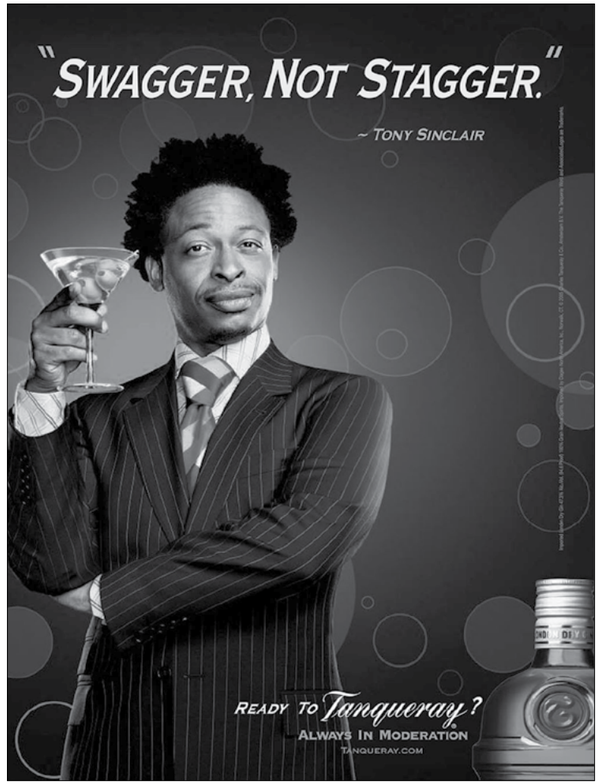
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NEBRASKA SNAP UPDATE: WAIVERS & RETAILER REQUIREMENTS

Soda & Energy drink Waiver

Nebraska has submitted a new waiver request following the federal court ruling. Implementation depends on USDA approval:

Dec. 1: No implementation without November approval.

Jan. 1: Possible if approved by mid-December.

Feb. 1: Possible if approved later in January.

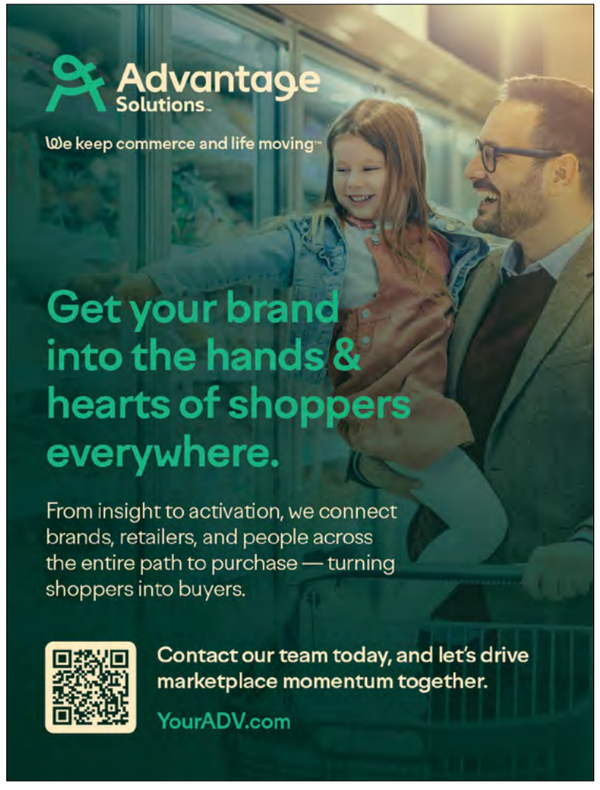
The state is expected to use the previous product list, limiting additional retailer adjustments.

Candy Waiver: Implementation is anticipated March 1, 2027. Retailers are still awaiting the state's product list.

Out-of-State SNAP Transactions: As of November, Nebraska SNAP EBT cards are blocked from out-of-state transactions by default. Cardholders can temporarily disable this restriction on a monthly basis.

Stocking Requirements: New USDA stocking requirements took effect Nov. 4, 2026. SNAP-authorized retailers must maintain at least seven varieties of staple foods in each of four categories: dairy, grains, proteins, and fruits and vegetables, with additional perishable food requirements. We encourage retailers to review the USDA guidance to ensure compliance.

Authorization & Reauthorization: Retailers experiencing authorization, reauthorization, or compliance issues should contact NGIA for assistance.









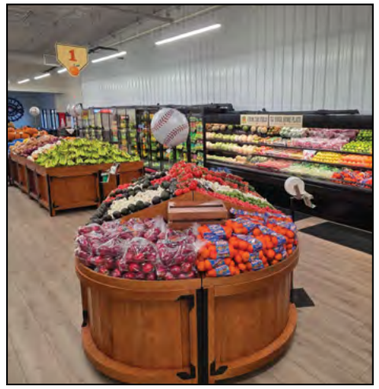




NGIA MEMBER NEWS

Home Plate Market Opens in St. Paul

OCTOBER 6, 2026



A new grocery store, Home Plate Market, opened Tuesday, Oct. 6, in St. Paul, Nebraska. The store includes freshly cooked meals and standard grocery store items. The owner, Blake Schwartz, previously ran a smaller store in St. Paul, but he believed customers needed a bigger store, so he built Home Plate Market.

Read more at **ksnblocal4.com.**

Hy-Vee Honors First Responders on Sept. 11

SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh convenience stores honored first responders by offering them a free medium coffee or medium fountain drink as the nation marks 25 years since the Sept. 11 attacks. Hy-Vee is grateful for the service and bravery these men and women provide every day in our local communities.



NGIA Joins Accel Golf Outing

Executive Director Ansley Fellers joined Accel Entertainment for a golf outing this fall. Accel is a Gold Sponsor of NGIA.

Panhandle's Small-Town Grocers Fight to Stay Open

OCTOBER 13, 2026

A convenience store in Bayard is stocking milk, bread, and potatoes after the town's only grocery store closed this month. Al's Market is the latest small-town grocery store in or near the Nebraska Panhandle to shut down in the past year.

Chadron lost its Safeway on Nov. 7 last year, which left the city with one full-service grocery store: a Walmart. Mitchell's Fresh Foods, which opened in May 2024, closed in May 2026 after only two years.

The state lost about 30% of its independent rural grocery stores between 2016 and 2021, and closures have continued, according to the Center for Rural Affairs, a Nebraska nonprofit that studies rural issues.

Read more at **starherald.com.**

Celebrating Family Meals Month

The Nebraska Grocery Industry Association joined Gov. Jim Pillen in declaring September "Family Meals Month" in Nebraska. The proclamation is a commitment to encouraging family health and stability across the state.



Nebraska Grocery Industry Association, Inc.
635 South 14th Street, Suite #305
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

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