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## MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

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### **MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION HOLDS 23<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL BEST BAGGER CONTEST**

The Minnesota Grocers Association held its 23<sup>rd</sup> annual statewide Best Bagger Contest on Saturday, August 13, 2011 at the Mall of America. The first place winner in the competition was Blake Westling of Byerly's in Eagan, winning \$500 cash, a trophy and a trip to Las Vegas to represent Minnesota at the National Best Bagger Championship on February 13, 2012. Second place was awarded to David Kulberg of Cub Foods in Plymouth and third place was awarded to Kassy Kueker of Village Market in Prior Lake.

This contest is important to the MGA and its membership because it showcases the talents of one of our key employees. Not only is this 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 retail food industry's dedication to customer service.

The twelve 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 retail food industry's commitment to consumer choice and the well-being of the communities we serve, baggers used the ever-popular reusable bags!

Contestants ranged from 17 to 41 years of age and came from the following participating companies: Byerly's in Eagan, Chris' Food Center in Sandstone, Coborn's Superstore in Little Falls, Cub Foods in Plymouth, Fareway Stores, Inc. in Stewartville, Hy-Vee Food Store in New Ulm, Jerry's Foods in Edina, Jubilee Foods in Mound, Kowalski's Grand Market in St. Paul, Lunds Marketplace in Minneapolis, Mackenthun's Fine Foods in Waconia, and Village Market in Prior Lake.

Four of the twelve baggers were also given Bagger Excellence Awards. Kassy Kueker of Village Market in Prior Lake received the Balance Award; David Kramer of Kowalski's Grand Market in St. Paul received the Spirit Award; Blake Westling of Byerly's in Eagan received the Style Award; and Vanessa Lewis of Coborn's Superstore in Little Falls received the Traveler Award.

*The Minnesota Grocers Association is a state trade association representing the food retail industry since 1897. We have over 200 retail members with nearly 1,100 stores statewide, as well as approximately 100 manufacturers and distributors. Our member companies employ over 125,000 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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