

NEWS RELEASE



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Grocers Recognize 2019 Award Winners, Hall of Fame Inductee

St. Paul, MN – August 2, 2019 – The Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA) has a long-standing tradition of honoring the best of the best by annually presenting awards to those in the industry that demonstrate excellence, have made significant contributions to the industry, and are highly respected by their peers. This year's award winners are a testament to the vitality of the grocery industry in Minnesota. The awards were presented by MGA Board Chair, Kris Kowalski Christiansen, and MGA President, Jamie Pfuhl on July 28, 2019, at the MGA's Annual Conference in Brainerd, MN. This is the state's premier event for the food industry. The evening showcases the pride and tremendous accomplishments of those in the Minnesota food industry and was attended by more than 350 members of the industry.

The 2019 Outstanding Grocer award was presented to Kristi Magnuson Nelson, CEO and President of Hugo's Family Marketplace / Valley Markets, Inc. Hugo's currently has 10 supermarkets, five liquor stores, seven Caribou Coffee shops, and three pharmacies in North Dakota and Minnesota. This award is presented annually to a grocer who has successfully grown a company and must demonstrate contributions to the industry in the areas of government affairs, community service, and involvement in the MGA. Magnuson Nelson has created a thriving business by meeting the changing needs of the communities and has been an active supporter of the association. Magnuson Nelson's entrepreneurial spirit exemplifies what it means to be a grocer.

Mike Hajlo, Director of Retail Sales of PepsiCo Beverages North America in Burnsville, MN, was honored by the MGA with its 2019 Outstanding Vendor award. This award is given to those who show innovation in customer support, excellence in customer service, as well as involvement in the MGA. Hajlo has been with PepsiCo Beverages North America for 42 years. He started his career as a driver, moving through the ranks of the company to now overseeing six states as the Director of Retail. He is a leader and mentor within his company and serves on the MGA Board of Directors.

Gordy Farrington, retired President of Cub Foods, was inducted into the Minnesota Grocers Association's Hall of Fame in recognition of his outstanding service and exemplary contributions to Minnesota's food industry. Farrington has earned respect and admiration for a lifetime of outstanding commitment to the food industry. His outstanding leadership, industry service, and vision made this induction to the MGA Hall of Fame a well-deserved acknowledgement.

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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