

Newsletter



During the first 18 weeks of the year, VRGA worked hard to represent the interests of retailers and grocers in the Legislature, successfully achieving the following:

Tax Victories: We prevented the Legislature from raising over \$30 million from taxpayers by targeting retailers and grocers as the tax collectors, including:

- Preserved tax exemption on clothing purchases over \$110 (\$6.8 million saved)
- Maintained business tax exemption on Software as a Service/the Cloud Tax (\$6 million saved)
- Blocked imposition of excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages (\$20 million saved)
- Prevented increase in already high tax rate on vape products

Legislative Wins:

- Defeated bill banning sale of flavored tobacco and tobacco alternatives (\$35 million in taxes)
- Helped pass legislation to monitor repeat offenders in the retail crime realm
- Pushed retail theft bill through passage, despite compromises

We continue to advocate for retailers and grocers of all sizes through the June veto session, focusing on opposing H.121, a bill that threatens:

- Elimination of loyalty programs
- Restriction of targeted marketing practices
- Undermining retailers' ability to cross-promote products

More information on the veto session will be coming soon in Friday Updates. If you have any questions in the meantime, please send them to info@vtrga.org.

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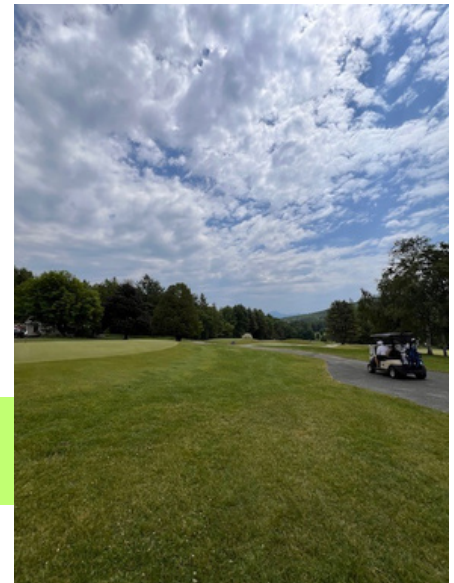
Association News

Newsletter- June 2024



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all sponsors, donors, and participants of the VRGA Scholarship Golf Tournament. Your generous support made it a remarkable day on the course at Williston Golf Club. Together, we surpassed our goals, raising over \$40,000 for the scholarship program and our future legislative endeavors. Your dedication to empowering the next generation and advancing our collective efforts is truly commendable. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and invaluable contributions.

THANK YOU SPONSORS



Send a Note to Senator Dick Mazza's family

Our deepest condolences to the family of Senator Dick Mazza as we mourn his recent passing. We fondly remember his unwavering dedication during VGA conventions, where he tirelessly visited exhibitors, engaged with members and constituents, and even presided over the bagging contest. Senator Mazza's warm hospitality extended to welcoming VRGA staff into his office at the back of his store and offering guidance whenever needed. His commitment, integrity, and leadership will be greatly missed both in the Senate and within the VRGA community. We offer our heartfelt strength and support to Senator Mazza's family during this difficult time.

Click [here](#) to send your message.

Funding & Education

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Business Basics: Connect, Learn, and Grow with CWEVT

Workshop: August 13, 12pm

Join CWEVT for an online meeting on managing your business. Get answers to your questions and connect with other entrepreneurs in this supportive session. Ideal for those starting a business, topics include registering, building your team, sales strategies, and more. Leave with immediate resources, answers, and connections. Prepare by listing your business concerns and defining your ideal customer and product/service. Led by CWEVT experts, each session addresses attendee questions organically.

Register [here](#).

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The NRF and Deloitte have released "Retail Circularity: An Action Guide for Retailers," detailing profitable circular business models that benefit the environment and communities. The guide helps companies identify actionable and influential circular activities, focusing on resale, repair, and recycling. A related webinar will be held by NRF on June 12 at 2 p.m. ET. See more [here](#), and read the full report [here](#).

Recover Your Portion of Swipe Fees from the VISA/Mastercard Settlement

The deadline to submit your claim has been extended and is now August 30, 2024

VRGA has collaborated with DCAP Claims to aid members pressed for time in reclaiming swipe fees from the \$5.54 billion VISA/Mastercard settlement. If you've yet to file and seek assistance, DCAP is available to lend support. VRGA recently conducted a concise 20-minute webinar to furnish members with details regarding the service. Access the webinar [here](#) and reach out to DCAP for further assistance.

Watch it [here](#). Contact DCAP [here](#).

Master Financial Forecasting: Essential Workshop for Business Planning

Webinar: June 12, 10am

Learn data-driven financial forecasting techniques in this Live Online Workshop. You'll:

- Get real-world examples
- Develop two forecasts
- Explore four forecasting templates
- Discover free and low-cost resources
- Receive actionable next steps with SCORE's help

[Register here.](#)

USDA's Commitment to World Food Safety Day: Ensuring Safe Food for All

On June 7th, World Food Safety Day was observed, with the USDA committed to ensuring safe food through collaboration with partners and experts. The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) utilized science and data to prevent, detect, and respond to threats in meat, poultry, and egg products. Governments globally focused on strengthening food safety systems and communication with the public. The U.S. Codex Office drafted international food standards, while the Foreign Agricultural Service aided in building regulatory capacities for safe food trade. Continued cooperation among stakeholders was emphasized to minimize the public health impacts of unsafe food. Read more [here](#).

Grocery Shopper Trends

The latest annual survey by FMI – The U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends Food Industry Association, reveals that shoppers still enjoy food shopping despite ongoing concerns about inflation. The survey found that grocery shopper sentiment remains high, with more than half expressing positive feelings toward grocery shopping, even amid price inflation. Shoppers are prioritizing value, focusing on quality and optimizing purchases for enjoyment, convenience, and waste reduction. Supermarkets lead as the main store choice, and while online grocery shopping frequency has returned to pre-pandemic levels, shoppers increasingly value digital tools for smart shopping. Read the full article [here](#).

Future Shopping Trends: Insights from Kroger's Data Report

A new report from 84.51°, Kroger's data research arm, indicates that the future shopper demographic will be older, more ethnically diverse, and likely to reside in one-person or multigenerational households. These shifts will significantly impact shopping behaviors, influencing what consumers purchase and how they make those purchases. Predicted trends include an aging population, a decline in the Caucasian population coupled with increases in the Hispanic and Asian populations, and income inequality affecting economic growth. By 2033, millennials are expected to peak at 74.9 million, while Gen Z's income will surpass millennials' by 2031. Additionally, the report details the most and least frequently purchased products by generation, highlighting differences in shopping preferences. Notably, Gen Z shoppers demonstrate a preference for convenient, portable snacks and are more inclined towards online shopping for pickup services compared to other generations. Read more [here](#).



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Our Store Equipment and Design team provides planning and support services for our customers.
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 Associated Grocers of New England is a full service Cooperative Grocery Wholesaler supplying Supermarkets and Convenience Stores from Maine to New York.

In addition to cardboard, recycling of paper and containers (metal, plastic, and glass) [is required in Vermont](#), so you'll need to set up a system to keep paper and containers out of the trash too.

Does a hauling company pick up your cardboard? Confirm with the hauler that you can put other recyclables in your recycling dumpster or cart.

Do you back-haul the cardboard? If you're not able to back-haul and recycle the additional materials, ask your trash hauler if they offer recycling pick-up or find a recycling hauler at VTrecycles.com or [from your local experts at 802recycles.com](http://from.your.local.experts.at.802recycles.com).

Protect Small Businesses: Urge Congress to Reform the American Privacy Rights Act

Congress is considering the American Privacy Rights Act (APRA), which could expose small businesses to lawsuits from trial lawyers for privacy violations by their service providers. This legislation aims to address privacy concerns related to big tech, but instead, it may burden small businesses with costly lawsuits while sparing larger tech companies. Retailers use consumer data to enhance services and target their marketing, but the APRA could hinder their growth and competitiveness by attaching legal risks to their data usage.

Action Item for Retailers: Contact Congress to advocate for a national data privacy law that protects small businesses from frivolous lawsuits and ensures all businesses have consistent obligations to protect consumer data. This law should make businesses responsible for their own conduct, without holding them liable for their service providers' violations, and ensure transparency and equal privacy standards across all sectors.

Father's Day Spending Soars to \$22.4 Billion

Father's Day spending is projected to reach \$22.4 billion, the second-highest in history, close to last year's \$22.9 billion, according to an NRF and Prosper Insights & Analytics survey. Half of consumers plan to buy gifts for fathers or stepfathers, with significant spending also on husbands, sons, brothers, friends, and grandfathers. Shoppers will spend an average of \$189.81, with the highest spending among ages 25-34 at \$275.67. Popular gifts include greeting cards, clothing, outings, gift cards, and personal care items. Online shopping remains dominant at 42%. The survey included 8,580 consumers, conducted May 1-8. Read the full article [here](#).

Historical Father's Day Spending Plans

Average expected spending per person (2013-2024)



Source: NRF's 2024 Annual Father's Day Spending Survey, conducted by Prosper Insights & Analytics

Member Spotlight

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Brattleboro Food Co-op



The Brattleboro Food Co-op began as a small buying club in 1975. Many remember its first home on Flat Street, where the Vermont Center for Photography is today. In 1988, we moved to a building in the rear of the parking lot. After an extensive redevelopment project, we re-opened in our current location in June 2012.

Currently, the Co-op is a 14,580-square-foot natural foods market and deli encompassing the ground floor of a four-story building. The second floor is home to our business offices, a commissary kitchen, a cooking classroom, a community room, and a conference room. The building also houses 24 apartments owned and managed by the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust.

Our beautiful building resulted from a collaboration with the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust and Housing Vermont, and now a beautiful anchor of downtown Brattleboro. It boasts many environmentally friendly features, such as reutilizing refrigeration waste heat to heat apartments and the store, an array of solar panels on the roof, and more.

Over 9,000 active shareholders currently own the Co-op. As a community-owned business, an important goal is to be an open and welcoming marketplace for everyone in the community and beyond.

The Co-op is now nearly half a century old and is proud and humbled to be such a dynamic presence in downtown Brattleboro. The store has become well-loved as a community meeting place (especially in the café, which often has live music from local musicians).

It is easily accessible to travelers and tourists as it's right across the street from the Amtrak train station and around the corner from the bus transit. Locals and vacationers truly enjoy the attractions and unique shopping nearby, as well as landmarks such as the historic Lachis Hotel and movie theater and the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center.

We are all about the food. But that's not the whole story. We strive to provide the best and highest quality foods (many local and organic from over 470 local producers) at reasonable prices. We strive to make your shopping experience a relaxed, welcoming, and friendly visit.

Member News

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New Members



Ruthless &
Wellington

Moon Scones



Looking for
something from a
previous newsletter?

[CLICK HERE](#)

Classifieds

Botanica Florals just launched our first online store. Now you can shop Botanica Florals online as well as in our store, located at 10 State Street in downtown Montpelier. This project was part of the \$25,000 Enhancement grant we were awarded from the Backing Small Businesses program presented by @AmericanExpress, in partnership with @Natlmainstreet. We are excited to have you shop with us online or in person. Here is the [link](#) to our online store and happy flower shopping!



Congrats to Stowe St Cafe on 9 Years!

Your dedication to providing delicious food and a welcoming atmosphere has made a significant impact on the local area. Here's to many more years of success and community enrichment!



Association Staff is here to help!

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