

For Immediate Release

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**Vermont Retail & Grocers Association, Vermont Specialty Foods Association Offer Expanded
Guidance in Response to COVID-19**

Webinars include online marketing strategies, emergency business planning, e-commerce development

Montpelier, Vt. – As part of an effort to provide necessary assistance for retailers, grocers, and food producers throughout the state during this time of crisis Vermont Retail & Grocers Association (VRGA) and Vermont Specialty Food Association (VSFA) are offering an expanded series of webinars for members on topics related to operating during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Webinars are open to all VRGA and VSFA members, as well as prospective members for a limited time. The next will be “How to Stay Growth-Oriented and Resilient in Your Retail, Grocery, or Specialty Foods Business” on Wednesday, May 6th at 1PM. Presented by Sam Markewich of Downtown Up, this hour-long interactive online workshop will give you strategic tools, perspectives, and support to sustain and grow your business during the COVID-19 crisis and emerge strong once the crisis passes. The session will focus on realistic, immediate actions that can be taken to regain control over your business and gain an edge moving forward.

Additional upcoming webinars include a collaboration between VSFA and the Agency of Agriculture, Foods & Market have collaborated on a group of webinars; Webinar Wednesday: E-Commerce Series. Each webinar will focus on a different topic related to E-commerce programs; these sessions are designed for companies looking to expand, leverage, and grow their current e-commerce business. Lean Edge Marketing and KW Content will lead the sessions. The first of the three webinars, “Optimizing Your E-Commerce”, will take place on Wednesday, May 13th. All webinars will start at 1PM. You can find information on all webinars in the series (and register) at <https://bit.ly/vsfawebinars>.

Webinars are free, but registration in advance is required. To register, find these webinars on VRGA’s website at <https://vtrga.org/events/>, on VSFA’s website at <https://bit.ly/vsfawebinars> or on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/vtrga/#>.

Concluded webinars are recorded and posted to VTRGA.org or vtspecialtyfoods.org for members. For the benefit of the public in this unprecedented time of crisis, VRGA has made COVID-19 related webinars available to the general public. Find these pre-recorded webinars on their COVID-19 Resources Page at <https://vtrga.org/health-information>. Prior webinar topics include sanitation of businesses, general information on the COVID-19 Virus, setting up and utilizing online retail platforms, social media platforms and marketing, and information on federal stimulus efforts.

“In the changing landscape of retail, it’s becoming harder and harder for business owners to leave the store for a full day of training or networking,” said Erin Sigrist, president of VRGA. “Especially in the uncertain times we’re in, now more than ever our members and retailers around the state have the ability to stay close to home or work and participate in these discussions. We’re proud of our work in bringing this timely information to our members on topics that are important to their viability and the safety of their employees and customers. And if they can’t make the live webinar, members will have access to the recordings through our member web portal.”

VRGA is currently working with the office of Governor Phil Scott on his “RestartVT” task force, a working project on how to safely reopen retail throughout the state. In addition to these on-going efforts, VRGA provides access to an impressive array of benefits including payroll processing, credit-debit card processing savings, reduced-cost shipping programs, dental insurance plans, and Multi-State “Closed” MEP 401k Plan for retail employees. VRGA also provides full-time representation in the state house with opportunities to address legislators directly about retail and food business related issues.

To learn more about the work VRGA does, visit their website at www.vtrga.org, follow them on [facebook](#) & [twitter](#), call their office at (802) 839-1928 or visit them at 148 State Street Montpelier, VT 05602.

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About Vermont Retail & Grocers Association:

The Vermont Retail & Grocers Association represents approximately 800 Vermont retail stores and 250 suppliers to the industry, including members of the Vermont Specialty Food Association. VRGA is an association of merchants and trade partners united to promote the sustainable growth of the industry through the educational, economic and public policy needs of its members. The association is the leading voice in the legislature representing members when it comes to proposed changes in laws surrounding employment regulations, taxation, environmental regulations, and much more.

