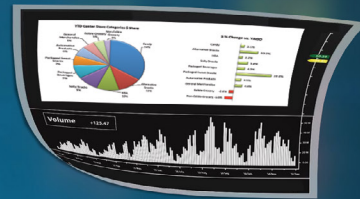




AMERICAN WHOLESALE MARKETERS ASSOCIATION

# The Convenience Distribution Association



2013 AWMA chairman Hugh Raetzsch  
congratulates 2014 chairman Mark Davenport.



AWMA is  
determined to  
provide its services  
as effectively  
and efficiently as  
possible for many  
years to come.



Team Sledd's Rob Sincavich, president and Randy Emanuelson, vice president, initiated a significant warehouse expansion on the heels of the Great Recession. They are pictured here in the Sleddsmart Convenience Learning Center, a fully-functioning c-store and main lobby of Team Sledd headquarters. Sincavich is AWMA's chairman for 2015.



2015 AWMA  
Chairman of  
the Board Rob  
Sincavich

**AWMA**  
AMERICAN WHOLESALE MARKETERS ASSOCIATION

# Adapting TO THE Forces of Change

In 1875, AWMA member company Atlantic Dominion Distributors, Virginia Beach, VA, was born when founder Leroy W. Davis launched a cigar manufacturing business, evolving later into a tobacco jobber with other lines added to satisfy a growing roster of retailer customers' needs. Today, in the fourth generation of family leadership, Atlantic Dominion has two 100,000-sq.-ft.-plus warehouses and serves seven states.

In 1935, in Rankin, PA, a little town near Pittsburgh, teenage entrepreneurs Albert and Joseph Silberman, with \$7 between them, sold candy and other items from a little red wagon pulled along the streets. Today, A.J. Silberman and Co. (AJS) serves 750 retailers over five states. Like many successful AWMA members, AJS uses AWMA's InfoMetrics data and computer technology to make the smart decisions that contribute to increased sales and healthier profits for itself and its customers.

Like many other AWMA distributor members, those companies were launched by entrepreneurs with vision and a determination to succeed, and often little else. They grew and evolved, updating their processes, gradually leveraging technology, and always focusing on providing the best possible customer service, their competitive edge.

Today, convenience distributors are coping with change that seems to be happening at breakneck speed.

Transformed by the influences of technology, and the tools it provides, they race to provide the insight c-store retailers need to meet their customers' often

Today, convenience distributors are coping with change that seems to be happening at breakneck speed.



**Scott Ramminger, AWMA president and CEO, addressed attendees of the AWMA Leadership Dinner.**



**The team from Barry's Gourmet Brownies gathered for an Expo Ice Cream Networking Break, at the 2014 Expo, which the company sponsored.**



**Above: Attendees gather to network at the 2014 AWMA C-Metrics Convenience Industry Outlook Forum.**

hectic and changing lifestyles. AWMA distributors understand that if they can provide that level of retailer support, they stand a good chance of retaining those customers and adding new ones despite intensified competition.

Helping to drive much of this change is a new generation of leaders within many AWMA member companies, men and women with increasingly sophisticated skills and a determination to maximize the potential of their businesses and build the bottom line. Like never before, they question everything—and their efforts are paying off.

If performance by AWMA distributors is an indicator, the convenience distribution industry is showing signs of strength. AWMA InfoMetrics data for the year ending Dec. 20, 2014, projected an overall sales increase of 1.65 percent, with non-tobacco products increasing 5.9 percent, other tobacco products (OTP), jumping by 6.8 percent, although cigarette sales declined 0.7 percent.

The final 13 weeks of the year were remarkably strong, according to InfoMetrics, with sales by distributors that report their data to InfoMetrics showing increases in every category, led by foodservice (+14.5 percent), alternative snacks (+13.1 percent), and OTP (+11.3 percent). Salty snacks and candy categories increased by 8.2 percent and 6.2 percent, respectively, and even the cigarette category, produced a 0.9 percent increase for the period.

Moreover, an online end-of-year member survey by AWMA revealed that 83.3 percent of respondents expect overall 2015 sales to increase, with 40 percent of those companies predicting sales hikes in the 5–10 percent range. Meanwhile, almost 67 percent predicted profit increases as well.

**Below: The 2014 AWMA Day on the Hill participants gathered at the Capitol Hill Club for breakfast before heading out to appointments with legislators.**



Recognizing the evolution of our industry, AWMA is reinventing itself, strengthening and sharpening services to distributor members and suppliers, improving core services and delivering them in a manner consistent with today's economic, business and lifestyle realities.

So, over the course of 2015, the association's members will experience a "new association," with improvements in our meetings and convention, educational services and programs, communications, industry affairs, government affairs services and more.

To lay the groundwork, AWMA President & CEO Scott Ramminger crisscrossed the country during much of 2014, meeting with both distributor members and manufacturers in their offices to discuss how AWMA can better serve them. It was an important part of AWMA's assessment of all programs, services and information the association offers to distributor members and their supplier and retail partners.

A major initiative is the creation of various "communities" and interest groups within AWMA, where members can share ideas and search for solutions to common problems, without having to wait for formal conferences or meetings. A staff member or industry expert will be assigned to manage each.

For example, we are creating the Next Generation Community for up-and-coming leaders in member companies and the InfoMetrics Users Community, for

category managers and others at member companies who are charged with leveraging the many advantages of AWMA's InfoMetrics for their companies and customers.

Other communities are being considered, including

- Small Distributor Community
- Executive Leaders Community
- STEPS 2.0 Alumni Community for graduates of AWMA's STEPS 2.0: Driving Sales & Profits at Retail educational program.

The objective is to facilitate communication and learning for distributors with similar interests in the most effective and efficient way possible. AWMA will fully leverage online technology, such as online virtual meetings and webinars to achieve this, and will provide convenient venues for in-person discussions, such as at the AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo.

Related to this is the new Women's Leadership Initiative, proposed by an AWMA member and implemented at the 2014 Expo, resulting in extremely positive feedback from participants. The Women's Leadership Initiative is being continued and expanded.

## A New, Vibrant Expo

In 2014, AWMA began a two-year process of reengineering its trade show, the AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo, to increase its effectiveness and value for both attendees and exhibitors. AWMA engaged a convention consulting company, Freeman

XP, which made numerous recommendations that were implemented for 2014.

Then, Freeman XP evaluated the Expo and spoke candidly with both exhibitors and attendees, resulting in further changes at the 2015 Expo, Feb. 24–26 at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino. The event will continue to evolve to bring both excitement and bottom line results for all participants involved.

The Expo also will play an increasingly important part in the delivery of AWMA's educational programming, with half-day seminars eliminating the need for travel just to attend such sessions, attracting new audiences who typically do not attend the Expo, and providing smaller group formats to encourage audience participation.

## Continuing the ABX Success

While the AWMA Summit & Business Exchange (ABX) is universally considered by participants to be the best and most effective event held in the industry each year, AWMA is working to further expand distributor company participation and attract more key manufacturers. The Summit portion of the event is being more sharply focused to provide more time for the ABX meetings between distributors and suppliers.



Scan QR code to view video providing an overview of AWMA's 2014 activities and plans for the future.



**Debbie Robins, Century Distributors Co., recommended AWMA's Women's Leadership Initiative and introduced speaker Marianne Cooper at the 2014 AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo.**



**Atkinson Candy Company met with Thayer Distribution at the 2014 ABX.**

The 2004 ABX in New Orleans attracted 43 distributors and 19 suppliers in 20 meeting rooms. Last year, there were 60 distributors and 52 suppliers participating in 63 meeting rooms. By ensuring the right balance of distributors and suppliers, this event will continue to grow and deliver a clear, positive return on investment for all participants.

### Communications Evolution

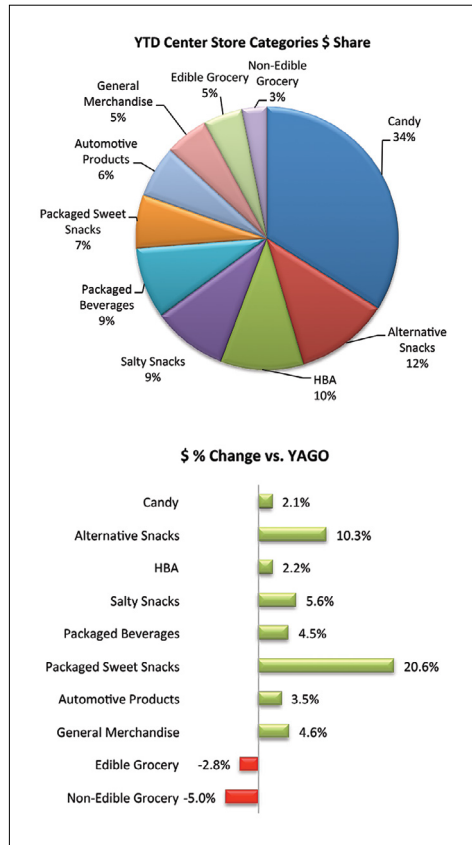
Recognizing that the world is changing at an astounding rate, principally led by the technology revolution and its impact on business and human behavior, AWMA will capitalize on many of the opportunities made possible by these developments, while recognizing the business challenges confronting member companies.

Computer technology is evolving at warp speed, altering expectations of relevance and customer service. People increasingly expect to get what they want when they want it, and those attitudes are engrained in the men and women who are moving into leadership positions in the workplace—including at AWMA member companies.

All of these developments, which make it possible for people with similar interests to easily collaborate online and learn from each other, will be leveraged by AWMA in the way information is disseminated to members, government officials, and the public at large.

### AWMA InfoMetrics

AWMA and InRhythm, Inc., developed the InfoMetrics data program to help distributors, suppliers and retailers maximize sales and profit through technology. Some 56 distributors contribute their weekly sales data and use InfoMetrics reports to improve their operations. Major manufacturers use the data to support category management for themselves and their customers.



To help strengthen InfoMetrics and increase both the base of companies that contribute data and actively use it in their operations, AWMA and InRhythm, Inc. have added a new staff member devoted to this initiative. AWMA is committed to building InfoMetrics into the go-to resource for convenience distribution product sales data.

AWMA and InRhythm, Inc. have aggressively worked to train users to take full advantage of InfoMetrics through workshops and seminars as well as on-site training.

Early in 2015, AWMA will roll out a series of online training videos to provide members with a convenient resource for honing their InfoMetrics skills. Other training sessions are offered, including at the 2015 Expo and via webinar.

Today, distributors and manufacturers alike use the

data provided by InfoMetrics to sharpen category management, eliminate out-of-stock core products, help customers understand their own increased sales and profit opportunities, and much more. Companies that use this data attest to the competitive edge that it provides, both for themselves and their customers.

### The Road Ahead

The year 2015 promises to be an exciting one for the convenience distribution industry as it is propelled forward in this rapidly changing business environment. It will also be an important and exciting year for AWMA, as the association takes on the challenge of adapting to the forces of change.

Regardless of how many convenience distributors there ultimately are, there is a strong need for AWMA, specifically in the areas of government affairs, industry affairs, distributor networking, education and training, and supplier/distributor collaboration. AWMA is determined to provide its services as effectively and efficiently as possible for many years to come.

For a review of key developments in 2014 and additional insight into what changes are ahead, please see the following pages.

## INDUSTRY AFFAIRS

# Responding to Challenge

Industry Affairs is more important today at AWMA than ever before.

Convenience distributors today are seeing challenges to their traditional role in the channel from both large chains looking at self-distribution and from club stores. Additional challenges have come as manufacturers in some segments (e-cigarettes, vaping, for example) attempt to bypass distributors and go direct to retail. Challenges from other models (based on Amazon-type fulfillment) that have the potential to cherry pick profitable items, are also a possibility on the horizon.

Consolidation in the manufacturing side of the industry has resulted in a changing relationship between distributors and manufacturers.

At the same time, issues like encrypted tax stamping and track and trace are blurring the lines between government affairs and industry affairs, creating the need for ongoing dialog between AWMA, its distributor members, the companies trying to sell these new technologies to state governments and federal agencies, and the state and federal agencies themselves.

All of these forces mean that it is more important today than ever for AWMA to champion the value of the convenience distributor in the channel, and to promote the kind of manufacturer, distributor, retailer cooperation that makes convenience distributors such a valuable asset in the channel.

AWMA spent 2014 reinventing itself to better address these challenges, launching a reinvigorated program, driven by AWMA's Industry Affairs Committee, that includes:

- Increased efforts to work with retailer organizations like the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS), and manufacturer associations like the National Confectioners Association (NCA) to increase channel collaboration and maximize industry resources.



**Members of the Industry Affairs Committee met with Altria Group Distribution Company executives in Altria's Washington, DC offices before AWMA's Day on the Hill.**



**Meeting at City Wholesale Grocery Co., Birmingham, AL. L to R: Butch Dichiaro, Scott Ramminger, Nick Zaden.**



**AWMA President & CEO Scott Ramminger, along with AWMA's Bob Pignato, Meredith Kimbrell and Joel Brown met with Hershey executives Tom Joyce and Brent Cotten at The Hershey Global Customer Innovation Center in Hershey, PA, to discuss the many issues affecting the industry, while reinforcing AWMA's dedication to convenience distributors today and tomorrow.**



**Lawson Williams, president of M.R. Williams Co., visited with AWMA president & CEO Scott Ramminger during his recent visit to the company's Henderson, NC, headquarters. Ramminger has embarked on a series of member visits all over the country.**



**AWMA's Scott Ramminger (center) with Imperial Trading Co.'s Emile Cantrell (left) and Wayne Baquet (right) at their facility.**



**AWMA President Scott Ramminger visited with Nelson Parker (left) President, and Doyle Harbin, VP of Operations at Allison Wholesale of Paint Rock, AL.**

**Right: Visit to Long Wholesale: L TO R—Sam Long, Ray Long, Scott Ramminger, Randy Long.**



**AWMA's Anne Holloway (far left) and Bob Pignato (far right) met with Greg Kinnear, Michael Albin and Craig Galler with OpSec/XEROX at the AWMA office. At the meeting, but not pictured, were AWMA's Scott Ramminger and Joel Brown.**

- Specific efforts to communicate clear, well supported messages about the value of distributors directly to retailers and manufacturers.
- Better use of data from the association's InfoMetrics program to tell the distributor value story, both in larger meetings and Industry Affairs Committee meetings with manufacturers.
- Increased online access for members to training material designed to help them work better and smarter with manufacturer and retail partners.
- Collaborative industry affairs and government affairs efforts, such as the special meetings on digital tax stamping at our 2015 AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo.
- Ongoing efforts to work with both technology providers and organizations like the Federation of Tax Administrators, which is promoting the idea of electronic reporting by distributors and developing model standards for this reporting.





## AWMA Warehouse-Delivered Snack Committee

2014 was an important year for the Joint Industry Warehouse-Delivered Snack Committee (WDSC). The committee provides customer solutions to promote the benefits of warehouse delivered snacks. These solutions provide opportunities focused in meeting consumer demand in store, maximizing the snack category's performance and increasing retailer margin and profitability.

The committee promotes warehouse-delivered snacks, emphasizing their value, developing effective tools for merchandising, and sponsoring research designed to help distributors increase sales and profit. Using the results of this research developed by the committee's consultants, the committee encourages distributors to work with retailer customers to improve management of the snacks category within their stores and, thus, improve their bottom line. Warehouse-delivered snacks offer this opportunity, and the

committee provides the tools to help distributors take advantage.

In 2014, the committee developed a new multi-vendor endcap (MVE) merchandising solution program for AWMA distributor members. Working with AWMA member Dot Foods, three new MVEs were developed (small snack MVE, large snack MVE, candy MVE) making it simpler to order MVEs in smaller quantities. Distributor members now have the option to order just what they need. In 2015, the committee is updating the *How to Get Started Guide*. This guide, along with the three new MVEs, and a new video, will be available to view at the WDSC booth at the 2015 Marketplace & Solutions Expo in Las Vegas.

**AWMA's staffers, along with WDSC committee members, met at H.T. Hackney's Lenoir City, TN warehouse in December. The WDSC is developing several videos to reach retailers discussing the importance and benefits of warehouse-delivered products, category management and secondary locations for core items that includes MVEs.**

**Right: Multi-vendor end caps used for secondary merchandising in the c-store can help increase revenue.**



**Above: Kit Dietz moderated a Q&A for the WDSC, at the All Sweets & Snacks Expo with panelists (l) Larry Wilson, NCA vice president of customer relations; Tommy Thomas, vice president of sales at The H.T. Hackney Co.; Hilary Freedman, senior category manager for RaceTrac Petroleum; and Tom Cinnamon, Eby-Brown Co.'s vice president of merchandising.**



## AWMA EDUCATION

# Programming Targeted to Meet Today's Members Needs

Important changes have come to AWMA as the association has worked throughout 2014 to fine-tune both the content of its educational programming and the way valuable information is delivered to members.

AWMA provides members with educational tools and resources that help executives—both those moving up in the ranks and those currently in leadership positions—prepare for success in today's ever-changing, increasingly competitive and complex business environment.

The objective is to effectively and efficiently deliver relevant and sharply focused information, minimizing the need for travel to special conferences and events and maximizing program benefits. In 2015, this will be accomplished through new half-day seminars at the AWMA Solutions Marketplace & Expo in Las Vegas, via online training and webinars, and through streamlined education at the AWMA Summit & ABX.

Enhanced offerings at the Expo include Expo Café & Solutions Theater presentations and one-on-one Knowledge Bar discussions with experts—two innovations that were initiated at the 2014 Expo.

Another important educational component is the Women's Leadership Initiative, launched at the 2014 Expo to rave reviews from attendees. That program, proposed by Debbie Robins, Century Distributors Co., Inc., Rockville, MD, provides support for female employees who seek executive advancement within AWMA member companies.

This year's Women's Leadership Breakfast keynote speaker is Charlotte Beers, former Undersecretary of

We know that our industry and the way we do business continues to evolve and AWMA will be in the forefront of helping to prepare member companies so they can thrive and succeed into the future.



**Marianne Cooper addressed a full room on issues female executives face and how they can be better supported, during the first AWMA Women's Leadership Initiative breakfast session.**

State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, national advertising agency executive and author.

With all of this, AWMA is determined to provide educational opportunities and support that will



**Pine State's Zeno Corrigan discussed the value of the InfoMetrics Void Report to help retail customers recognize lost sales opportunities, at the 2014 AWMA Harmonizing Assortment program.**



**At the 2014 AWMA Harmonizing Assortment program, General Mills' Kelly Fulford said there is a great opportunity in c-stores for increased sales and profit by attracting Hispanic, millennial and female shoppers.**



**The 2014 AWMA Buyer's Program/Harmonizing Assortment Conference gave buyers and category managers tools and information to drive sales and profitability for all channel partners.**

help members move forward successfully, taking advantage of technology and existing events to do so. We know that our industry and the way we do business continues to evolve and AWMA will be in the forefront helping prepare member companies to thrive and succeed in the future.

## **STEPS 2.0: Understanding, Sharing, Selling**

Thanks to strong support from Altria Group Distribution Co., up-and-coming distributor sales personnel participated in AWMA's premier educational offering, held in November 2014 in Richmond, VA.

Facilitated by industry consultants Doug and Bill MacKay of The Glen Douglas Group, STEPS 2.0 is a new education program designed to provide the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for success with retail customers in today's highly competitive convenience channel.

The workshop was kept small to provide for easy interaction between attendees and the instructors, and among themselves. Attendees said the quality of the program provided insight that will help them as they seek to help build business for their companies.

"STEPS 2.0 is a great program that has far exceeded my expectations and met the goals that I had set for myself," commented Chad Trader, territory



**Not all c-store categories generate enough profit to cover their costs, noted consultant Jim Hachtel, but shoppers expect to find them so they must be rationalized correctly to keep the key performers.**



**Lou Lohs shared how Sledd Co. uses InfoMetrics data to work with their retailer customers and manufacturers to be sure the most profitable items are in stock.**



**Joey Hendrix, The Hershey Co., reiterated the point to attendees that they have to get the core right. All five speakers presented at the Harmonizing Assortment program.**



**STEPS 2.0 graduates in Richmond, VA with Blake Benefiel & Jim Duke of Altria, Doug & Bill MacKay of The Glen Douglas Group and AWMA's Meredith Kimbrell.**



**Viv Penninti, president and CEO of InRhythm Inc., started the Outlook Forum with a brief overview.**

manager, Atlantic Dominion Distributors, Hope Mills, NC. “One of the most important parts was getting to work with others in the industry from throughout the country. The exchange of knowledge has been very important throughout the program.”

STEPS 2.0's objective was to uncover a new way to drive sales and profits, a constant challenge for c-store distributors who are lucky to achieve 2 percent annual profits. The program provided a forum where people with similar responsibilities in non-competing companies could share ideas and experiences and find solutions to common problems.

Mark Hauer, sales representative at Chambers & Owen, Janesville, WI, said STEPS 2.0 helped him gain a better understanding of the convenience store industry and improve his account presentations.

“There is real benefit in talking to people, learning about things they are doing in their market, and certainly learning from the presenters things I can do to be more valuable within my company,” he said.

There is real benefit in talking to people, learning about things they are doing in their market, and certainly learning from the presenters things I can do to be more valuable within my company.

STEPS 2.0 helped Tim Deane, sales consultant at Merchants Grocery Co., Inc., Culpeper, VA, gain insight into how his company's customers grow their businesses and how to help them improve profits. He and other attendees, including Keith Myers, vice president of sales at Gummer Wholesale, Inc., Heath, OH, appreciated the intimacy of the small group and the fact that competitors were not in the room.

Max Flashner, sales manager at Garber Bros., Inc., Randolph, MA, said the STEPS 2.0 program provided “a unique outlook on how people should go about selling product. It challenges you to meet the issues you face on a day-to-day basis, and helps you to become a better sales person.”

### **C-Metrics™ Outlook Forum Delivers Info & Insight**

The 2014 C-Metrics™ Convenience Industry Outlook Forum, held June 24 in Chicago, delivered exclusive sales data and insight into what's hot and what's not in the c-store industry.

Exclusive industry sales data provided at the session helped attendees improve company revenue and profitability. Viv Penninti, president and CEO of InRhythm, Inc., developer of AWMA's InfoMetrics data program, stressed the importance of companies using the best data available to sharpen category management and make sound business decisions.

“In this information era, understanding the data is the most critical thing for success,” he said. “This industry is being changed like never before. We are in a tremendously challenging environment. You have to

embrace information and technology if you want to compete. There is no way around that.”

The Forum provided category reviews, with InfoMetrics data showing trends and offering insight into steps distributors can take to improve sales and profit, both for themselves and their retailer customers.

Forum keynote speaker Bonnie Herzog, managing director, tobacco, beverage & convenience store research at Wells Fargo Securities, was “bullish” on the future of e-cigarette and vaping products, repeating her prediction that they would overtake sales of combustible cigarettes within a decade.

However, Nik Modi, managing director, RBC Capital Markets, LLC, cautioned that those products do not appeal to the c-store’s core consumer, the working class male, who finds it much easier to reach into his pocket for a pack of smokes. Modi presented an in-depth analysis of e-cigarettes and vaping products.

“I thought the Forum was great,” commented Jode Bunce, executive vice president, cigarettes, Eby-Brown Co., Naperville, IL. “I especially liked hearing the different perspectives on the future growth of the e-cig/vapor category from Nik Modi and Bonnie Herzog. Both of them had interesting perspectives.”

#### OTHER CATEGORY ANALYSTS WERE:

- Cigarettes & OTP—David Bishop, managing partner, Balvor, LLC.
- Candy—Kit Dietz, principal, Dietz Consulting LLC
- Salty & Alternative snacks—Steve Montgomery, president, b2b Solutions.

Said Jonathan Guyer, business planning manager, General Mills, Inc., “I enjoyed learning how the distributors were leveraging the store level reporting to grow their sales and fill voids of top selling items across the category.”

Susie Douglas Munson, chief operating officer, Douglas Cos., Conway, AR, said “The information learned from the category breakouts was very insightful and a useful tool as we come back to our company and plan for our next analysis of SKU rationalization and store planograms.”

David Barkett, district sales manager, S. Abraham & Sons, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI, said, “The Forum was great and gave me a chance to further my knowledge of InfoMetrics. The presenters also did a great job of providing different

### What is C-Metrics™?

C-Metrics™ is an outgrowth of AWMA InfoMetrics, which collects weekly sales data from AWMA participating distributors. C-Metrics™ then projects warehouse-delivered product sales from 28,000 c-stores to the universe of 151,000 stores across the nation.

“It is our best estimate of what’s happening at retail,” explained Viv Penninti, president and CEO of InRhythm, Inc. “It is a robust indicator of what is happening in the market.”

### 2015 Category Breakouts at Expo

As part of AWMA’s effort to consolidate its educational offerings for the convenience of members, key Category Spotlight Sessions will be offered at the AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo Wednesday, Feb. 25 and Thursday, Feb. 26 in the AWMA Solutions Café & Theater on the show floor.

Tailored specifically for distributor personnel who make buying and purchasing decisions, those sessions will include:

- Candy—presented by Kit Dietz, principal, Dietz Consulting, LLC
- Cigarettes & OTP—presented by Nik Modi, managing director, RBC Capital Markets, LLC
- E-Cigarettes & Vaping—presented by David Bishop, managing director, Balvor, LLC and Ray Johnson, operations manager, Speedee Mart, Inc.
- Salty & Alternative Snacks—presented by Kit Dietz, principal, Dietz Consulting, LLC

insights to the various categories in the c-store marketplace. All of our team members will take this information to be sure each customer has the right item mix and is educated when making category management decisions.”

## New AWMA Communities for Peer-to-Peer Learning

An important new component of AWMA's education initiative is the creation of AWMA Communities, designed to bring together people with similar interests and/or roles in the industry for learning and networking opportunities. Community members will meet both on-line and in person at industry events, including half-day seminars at the AWMA Expo.

As this process evolves, AWMA distributor members will be able to select the Communities in which they wish to participate, enhancing their motivation to actively participate. Initially, the Communities include:

- Next Generation Community for young industry leaders, designed to develop leadership potential via interactive seminars and open to both distributors and manufacturers.

## AWMA DEF Ray Foley Memorial Scholarships

AWMA was pleased to announce the winners of the 2014-2015 AWMA DEF Ray Foley Memorial Scholarship. Each year, two scholarships are presented to college attending dependents of AWMA distributor member company employees. The scholarship winners are selected based on academic achievements, extracurricular activities and essays outlining their career goals. The 2014 winners were:

**Shira Rodman**, daughter of Lori Rodman of Century Distributors, Rockville, MD, is a freshman attending Miami University in Oxford, OH.

**John Flickinger**, son of Margo Flickinger of S. Abraham & Sons Inc., Grand Rapids, MI, is a freshman attending Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, NY.



**Shira Rodman**

### Thanks from Shira:

*Thank you to the American Wholesale Marketers Association for awarding me the 2014 Ray Foley Memorial Scholarship. This amazing scholarship will help me immensely in the pursuit of enriching my business education.*

*As far back as I can remember, I have always had an intense interest in business and cannot wait to expand my business knowledge while I*

*attend the Farmer School of Business at Miami University. I plan to use this funding to study Finance and International Business Relations. My goal is to use what I will learn in college, internship opportunities, and world experiences, to become a valuable contributing member of my family's wholesale distributing company. I know that my grandparents, the founders of our family business, are looking down on me and are so very proud of this astonishing accomplishment. Thank you again for this prestigious honor.*

### Thanks from John:

*Thank you for awarding me the 2014 AWMA/DEF Ray Foley Memorial Scholarship. This fall I will attend Mercy College's Honors Business program in New York. Here I will focus on a career in accounting and business.*

*I would like to thank the committee and the entire AWMA organization for supporting my education. I would also like to thank S. Abraham & Sons Inc. for being a member of the AWMA.*

Congratulations to this year's winners who received \$5,000 from the AWMA Distributors Education Foundation (DEF).



**John Flickinger**



**The AWMA Buyers Program/Harmonizing Assortment Conference gave distributor attendees the tools to make informed, data driven category decisions.**

- InfoMetrics Users for regular users of the InfoMetrics program, providing a forum for discussion, idea sharing, and solutions. Three separate seminars will be held at the 2015 Expo, with hands-on, real life demonstrations showing how to use the data for sales presentations with retailers, do market comparisons, and more.

Additional, potential Communities include:

- Executive Leaders Forum for senior level executives, such as owners, presidents, CEOs, and vice-presidents of convenience distribution companies. Small distributors would be included in this group, which would be led by experienced executive coaches.
- Small Distributors. The concept here is for this group to meet in an interactive/roundtable/peer group format, focusing on such topics as operations, financial concerns, employee retention, profit improvement and more. At the Expo, an Operations Roundtable will be held.
- STEPS 2.0 Alumni: Driving Sales and Profits at Retail. An Expo workshop will follow-up on November's STEPS 2.0 program and provide an opportunity for attendees to continue conversations, sharing success stories and challenges.

Communities will be assigned a staff member or an industry expert in a particular subject area to help guide their activities, which will be ongoing throughout the year.

“The overarching goal is to respond to members’ needs and bring something unique and new to the table—and for AWMA to continue to adapt and change based upon what our members need and desire,” explained AWMA President & CEO Scott Ramminger.

Depending on member’s interest, AWMA will develop additional communities, such as operations and government affairs.

“It’s all about making connections, networking and building relationships,” said Ramminger. “It’s a fluid process that can change based on what members want. We will take direction from our members regarding how these should work.”

It’s a fluid process that can change based on what members want. We will take direction from our members regarding how these should work.

## AWMA INFOMETRICS

# The Point-of-Difference for Profit

InfoMetrics is an exclusive tool that is helping a growing number of distributors and manufacturers determine precisely what products would generate the most sales and profit for their companies and for their customers. Bottom line: InfoMetrics provides users with a strong advantage over their competitors and helps to engender loyalty from their best customers.

Category management decisions based on InfoMetrics data are based on facts—on the latest distributor sales information that is updated every week. It helps managers quickly determine what products are selling well in the industry and their own marketplace—and which ones are not.

Then, they can make adjustments to maximize sales and profit, and help the c-store customer do the same. The result is increased bottom line profits for distributors, retailers and suppliers alike.

To date, 56 distributors with more than 90 warehouses send their weekly sales data to InRhythm, Pittsburgh, PA, developer of InfoMetrics in partnership with AWMA. InfoMetrics offers access to: weekly SKU level sales data for more than 90,000

stores covering 160,000 SKUs in some 30 NACS categories. That data is sent to InRhythm by Saturday, and by Sunday, just a week later, more than 1 million SKUs are processed covering 160,000 unique items. It is then provided to users on a secure Internet portal.

To help strengthen InfoMetrics and increase both the base of companies that contribute data and actively use it in their operations, AWMA and InRhythm, Inc. have added a new staff member devoted to this initiative. AWMA is committed to building InfoMetrics into the go-to resource for convenience distribution product sales data.

We all have Snickers Bars; we all have M&Ms and we all have Peanut Butter Cups. Our theme to differentiate ourselves is our people coupled with technology, and one of the key pieces of our technology is InfoMetrics.



**The AWMA C-Metrics™ Convenience Industry Outlook Forum was held June 23-24, 2014, in Chicago, featuring a general session presented by analyst Bonnie Herzog.**

“We provide information in our sales reports that helps InfoMetrics participants understand what they are missing,” says Viv Penninti, InRhythm president & CEO. “It is actionable information.”

“It’s changed our whole financial picture,” explained Zeno Corrigan, vice president, Pine State Trading Co., Gardiner, ME. “It’s become an expectation that InfoMetrics is part of every day life whether you are using SalesMetrics on an iPad as a salesman walking into an independent retailer and doing a quick business review, or whether you’re walking into a 150-store chain and doing a full-on PowerPoint, or you’re a sales manager reviewing your numbers and getting them together so you can go out in the field, you need to have all those pieces.”

Corrigan said InfoMetrics is a major factor in the company’s success. “Pine State wouldn’t be showing double digit growth year after year compounded





**In the E-cigarettes and Vaping Products breakout session Nik Modi, managing director, RBC Capital Markets LLC, was bearish on the category.**

without the use of InfoMetrics,” he said. “It is the point of difference that we deliver every day. We all have Snickers Bars; we all have M&Ms and we all have Peanut Butter Cups. Our theme to differentiate ourselves is our people coupled with technology, and one of the key pieces of our technology is InfoMetrics.”

## Manufacturer Users

Increasingly, manufacturers are finding solid value in using InfoMetrics data, which is available to them. Manufacturer users as of December 2014 included:

- Kellogg’s
- General Mills
- Lil’ Drug Store Products
- Ruiz Foods

Manufacturers incorporate the data into their category management programs to make the right assortment and pricing decisions and improve overall shelf management decisions to drive profit for themselves, their distributors and retailer customers.

Manufacturer category teams provide category management services for c-stores, and InfoMetrics provides data that helps make that initiative successful. Making certain top items are always in stock is crucial, and InfoMetrics helps manufacturers identify distribution voids so they can be filled.



**During the Cigarettes and OTP session, David Bishop, managing partner, Balvor LLC, noted that tobacco use in general continues to decline.**



**Kit Dietz, principal, Dietz Consulting, moderated the Candy breakout session and stressed the importance of good category management and rationalizing assortment.**



**In the Salty and Alternative Snacks breakout session, Steve Montgomery, president, b2b Solutions LLC, encouraged distributors to educate their retailer customers by using data to show them the top snacks they are missing.**



**An Outlook Forum welcome reception offered attendees a valuable networking opportunity and a bit of relaxation.**

“We see the value that InfoMetrics provides to the channel as we lead our category management work in partnership with distributors and retailers,” said John Dalton, director of convenience at General Mills, explaining that such data offers “great insight to drive both sales and profit for the industry—distributors, retailers and manufacturers like General Mills.”

The fact that InfoMetrics updates its information weekly is a major benefit for manufacturers as well.

“Most of other sources update (data) monthly,” noted one company’s category development manager. “With weekly updates, we can see fresh data every Monday morning and have the potential to be more proactive.”

### Actionable Reports

InfoMetrics generates many specific reports for users free of charge, as well as many optional detailed reports that cover the key areas of Category Management, Inventory Management, Customer Sales Management, and Rebate Management, which are available for an annual fee.

A mobile application for InfoMetrics also is available from InRhythm, providing a highly effective tool for distributor sales reps as they help their retailers maximize in-store inventory.



**Mark Davenport, president of Core-Mark Carolina, a division of Core-Mark International and the 2014 AWMA chairman, welcomed attendees to the Outlook Forum and emphasized the importance of the InfoMetrics program.**

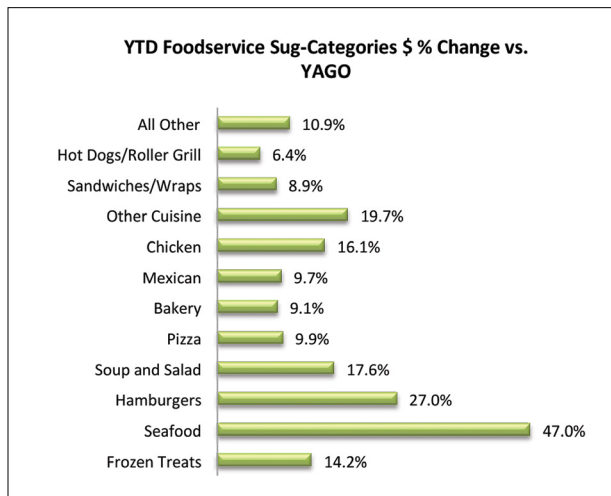
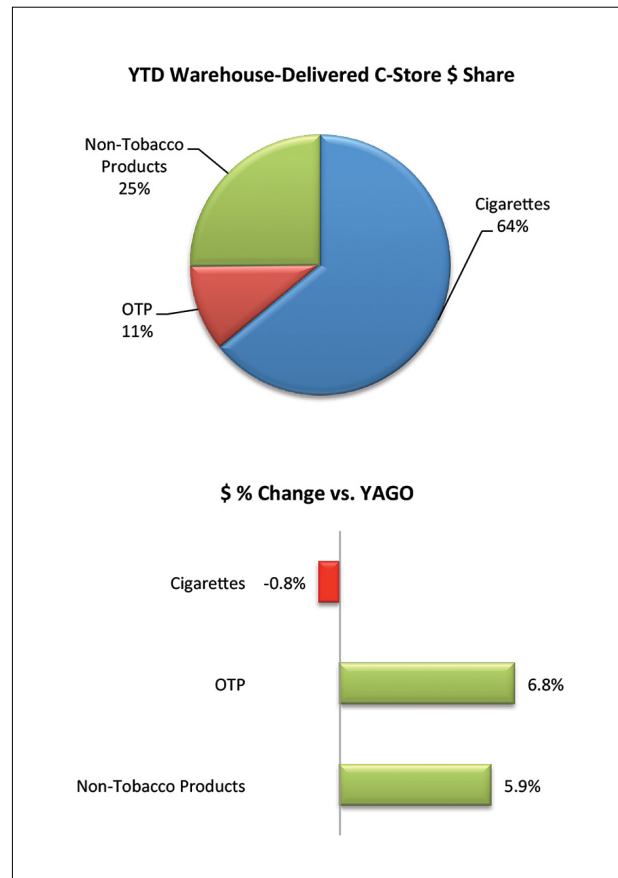
The mobile app uses an InfoMetrics’ Sales Metrics application, which allows sales people to place an order immediately in-store, to address item void opportunities, out of stocks, rebate program compliance and other targets. It’s done using iPad and Android-based mobile platforms.

Thus, InfoMetrics distributor users are armed with a powerful tool that helps customers know exactly where and how they can improve their store inventory—and the bottom line.

The system generates a detailed Customer Review PowerPoint deck that includes national trends, regional marketplace trends, and shows individual customer performance by category, brand and SKU for each store in a chain.

### AWMA Weekly InfoMetrics Roundup

| Product Category   | % Dollar Change vs YAGO |
|--|-------------------------|
| Candy: Chocolate Bars, Gum, Bagged Candy, Non-Chocolate Bars/Packs, Candy Rolls & Mints, Penny Candy | <b>+6.2%</b>            |
| Alternative Snacks: Meat Snacks, Health & Energy Bars, Granola/Fruit Snacks                          | <b>+13.1%</b>           |
| Salty Snacks: Potato Chips, Nuts/Seeds, Tortilla/Corn Chips, Pretzels, Crackers                      | <b>+8.2%</b>            |
| Foodservice  | <b>+14.5%</b>           |
| Cigarettes   | <b>+0.9%</b>            |
| Other Tobacco Products: Smokeless, Cigars, E-Cigarettes, Pipe/Cigarette Tobacco, Papers              | <b>+11.3%</b>           |



It's quick and easy to create and an impressive benefit for customers that strengthens customer loyalty.

In addition, through InfoMetrics, distributors can provide retailers access to a Customer Portal, which allows them to see their own data and determine where voids and opportunities for improvement may exist.



**AWMA's Scott Ramminger, president and CEO, opened the Outlook Forum general session.**

We see the value that InfoMetrics provides to the channel as we lead our category management work in partnership with distributors and retailers.

## AWMA 2015 Chairman Urges Distributors to Use InfoMetrics

“There is wonderful information on InfoMetrics,” said Rob Sincavich, president, Team Sledd, Wheeling, WV, and AWMA’s 2015 chairman. “I am astounded that when I challenge my colleagues on what is contained within InfoMetrics, at times they are surprised to learn about things on there they did not realize existed. It is valuable information that can be drawn upon quickly and used as a source of discussion with both the retailer and the manufacturer.”

Sincavich pointed out that information provided by InfoMetrics, particularly through its customer review capability, makes it possible for distributors to quantify the value they are providing to their customers.

“As a distributor, we all speak to the value of our own individual service,” he said. “But things don’t have value unless they can be measured, and InfoMetrics provides a wonderful tool to really measure how we are effectively providing service to our retail customers.

“The service we provide, in my view, is success, which is defined as retail profitability. When we can begin to measure that, when we can measure sales growth collaboratively and put that on paper, then we get credit for providing service. So, we need to make InfoMetrics an everyday vibrant tool that is utilized by the distributor with the retail customer and with the manufacturer vendors that do business with us day-in and day-out.”

So, we need to make InfoMetrics an everyday vibrant tool that is utilized by the distributor with the retail customer and with the manufacturer vendors that do business with us day-in and day-out.

## InfoMetrics Training Video Details

The training videos being produced by AWMA and InRhythm, Inc. include:

### 1) About InfoMetrics

A complete overview of the Distributor InfoMetrics system, reports that are free and what can be purchased.

### 2) Reports Module Details

All of the reports available through InfoMetrics will have a separate training video, including the following:

- Void Report
- SKU Report
- Tracking Chart Report
- Performance Report
- Vendor Report
- Distribution & Pricing Report
- Market Benchmark Report
- Focus Item Report
- Gap Report
- Customer Opportunity Report
- Fiscal Year Report
- Inventory Module

### 3) Customer Portal

This video instructs the user how to set up a portal for their Key Account Customers and how to provide them with access. It also allows the distributor to create a Business Review Deck based on InfoMetrics data.

### 4) Programs Module

Setting up Rebate Programs or other Incentive Programs range from fairly easy to quite complex. Videos for this module will help the user build a solid foundation to help set up more complex programs.

InRhythm continues to conduct individual training webinars with users on request. For more information, please contact InRhythm at (412) 697-2665.

## InfoMetrics in a Nutshell

AWMA InfoMetrics is a centralized portal for the collection and processing of distributor-to-retail store sales and shipment data from participating distributors.

This up-to-date data is provided to participating distributors, enabling them to make fact-based decisions regarding optimum warehouse inventory.

Distributors can provide this information to retailer customers, helping them improve sales and profit by making smart product selection and category management decisions. The data is also for sale by AWMA to the manufacturing community. InRhythm is AWMA's exclusive partner for the delivery of this important AWMA initiative.

Manufacturers benefit from this single source of retail store sales information:

- All stores and brands are standardized, mapped and coded; no additional processing
- Single agreement with distributors and retailers; no large program costs
- Store volume and size information and other key metrics for sales force coverage
- Ability to quantify, track and make payments on retail incentive programs
- Distributors in turn get access to their own data and regional metrics for comparative purposes. Access to valid GTIN/UPC and store information ensures clean and accurate data.

AWMA InfoMetrics is a centralized portal for the collection and processing of distributor-to-retail store sales and shipment data from participating distributors.



**Above: Keynote speaker, Bonnie Herzog, managing director, beverage, tobacco & convenience store research at Wells Fargo Securities, gave Outlook Forum attendees an industry overview and some of her own predications.**



**During the Outlook Forum Welcome Reception, Terry Miller, controller and Dan McIntyre, president, Jackson Wholesale Co. and Paula Glidewell, vice president, Glidewell Distributing Co., had a chance to catch up.**



**The Category and Procurement Management track of InfoMetrics User Training was led by InRhythm's Jeff Daugherty.**



**With their laptops in the Customer Management track of InfoMetrics User Training, participants received hands-on training.**

### InfoMetrics Training

AWMA and InRhythm are doing everything possible to provide the training needed for distributors and manufacturers to effectively take advantage of InfoMetrics' many benefits.

Training includes on-site sessions with InRhythm experts, webinars covering all major aspects of InfoMetrics, group seminars such as those held at the C-Metrics Outlook Forum in June 2014 and the sessions slated for the 2015 AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo in Las Vegas, and a series of training videos expected to be ready for online viewing early in 2015.

All of this provides an incredibly effective tool for distributors, their customers and their suppliers, to use the latest data available—targeted specifically to the convenience industry—to build sales and profits and strengthen their bottom line. It is a benefit that comes with AWMA membership. Its value cannot be overstated.

For information, contact [infometrics@info-rhythm.com](mailto:infometrics@info-rhythm.com) or call 412-697-2665, or contact AWMA at 703-208-3358.



**Scan QR code to view video of InfoMetrics users discussing its value.**



**InRhythm's Bill Casey facilitated the Sales Management track of InfoMetrics User Training.**



**Becky Spellmann, vice president of marketing and promotions, Stephenson Wholesale Co., and an InfoMetrics User Committee member, gave pointers during the Sales Management track.**

## 2014 AWMA MARKETPLACE & SOLUTIONS EXPO

# Revitalized Annual Convention Wows Attendees

**T**he 2014 AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo, held Feb. 25–27 at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino was substantially revamped over previous editions of the AWMA Show, with a new formula implemented based on recommendations of attendees, exhibitors and AWMA convention consultants.

The result was met with acclaim from attendees and exhibitors alike, who

appreciated the upbeat, new event that featured a revitalized trade show, a new Expo Café & Solutions Theater offering educational presentations, a Knowledge Bar, where attendees conversed one-on-one with industry experts, and new amenities that added interest, excitement and fun.

“You can see where we’re heading,” said 2014 AWMA Chairman Mark Davenport, division president, Core-Mark Carolina, Sanford, NC, a division of Core-Mark International. “It was a home run.”

### Innovations at the Expo

Some of the new changes implemented at the 2014 Expo included:

- The AWMA Women’s Leadership Initiative, featuring speaker Marianne Cooper, research associate, Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University.
- New programming designed to help small distribution companies succeed against their larger competitors. A roundtable discussion led by Al Bates, chairman of the Profit Planning Group, generated ideas to help distributors in their daily operations.
- The Knowledge Bar, where speakers and industry experts, like Bates, discussed issues of concern with attendees.



**During the AWMA All Industry Breakfast, Chad Gummer (l) joined Pat Carrico (r) to present his father, Rick Gummer, with the AWMA Hall of Fame Award.**

- The AWMA Buyers Circle, which provided ongoing information about show deals and featured the New Products Showcase and a lounge area for attendees to relax and network.
- A special Buyer’s Program/Harmonizing Assortment Conference, which demonstrated how distributors can use InfoMetrics effectively.

Expo general sessions featured a keynote address by former pro football quarterback Tom Flick, now a business consultant, and presentation of AWMA’s Hall of Fame Award to Rick Gummer, past AWMA chairman and former CEO of Gummer Wholesale Inc., Heath, OH.

The importance of our trade association is to provide one voice in discussing issues with manufacturers and one voice with manufacturers on most legislative issues.



**There was an exciting vibe on the floor of the 2014 AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo that featured a new and engaging format.**

Gummer was introduced by Pat Carrico, CEO and president, Richmond-Master Distributors Inc., South Bend, IN, who called him a “straight shooter” who is “honest in dealings and determined to make things better for his customers.”

Gummer emphasized the importance of his involvement with AWMA and the many friends he has made in the industry. “The importance of our trade association is to provide one voice in discussing issues with manufacturers and one voice with manufacturers on most legislative issues,” he said. “We have a responsibility to give back to the industry that has given so much to us.”

### Think Like a Winner

A major highlight on the last day of the Expo was the keynote address by pro football legend Archie Manning, former New Orleans Saints quarterback.

Manning encouraged his audience to “think like a winner, think like a leader.” He shared experiences from on the football field and at home with his family, including his famous football quarterback sons, Eli and Peyton, and son Cooper, a financial consultant.



**The AWMA Buyer’s Circle by Convenience Distribution™ was a new addition to the expo floor in 2014.**



**Doug MacKay, The Glen Douglas Group, led a discussion about the challenges distributors have with sales calls and gave participants an action plan to take back to their companies.**



**AWMA wishes to thank all of the  
2014 AWMA Expo & Solutions Marketplace sponsors:**

**PLATINUM SPONSORS**



**Altria**  
Altria Group  
Distribution Company

*John Middleton*  
an Altria Company

**NuMark**  
An Altria Innovation Company

**PhilipMorrisUSA**  
an Altria Company

*U.S. Smokeless*  
**TOBACCO CO.**  
an Altria Company

**HERSHEY**  
THE HERSHEY COMPANY



**INCLUDES THESE COMPANIES**



**GOLD SPONSORS**



**SILVER SPONSOR**





**The First Time Attendee and Exhibitor Welcome Reception was packed!**

## What They Said about Expo 2014

- **Brent Cotten**, director, customer & industry affairs, The Hershey Co.—“We are pleased with the changes AWMA made in the show. We have had a lot of customers come through and we are getting a great opportunity to connect. Having seminars on the trade show floor helps to keep the people here. It’s been a great show.”
- **Chad Owen**, vice president, business affairs, Chambers & Owen, Janesville, WI—“This show has a lot to offer. I love the seminars in the theater, which helps give you a break. The seminar speakers have been excellent, not to mention the outstanding speaker this morning.” [Tom Flick]
- **John Scardina**, senior vice president, merchandise, Eby-Brown Co., Naperville, IL—“These show floor seminars are a great idea. It doesn’t draw people off the show floor for too long, yet we have an opportunity to learn.”
- **Glenn Gargone**, director of marketing, ProCat Distribution Technologies, West Berlin, NJ—“We appreciate the fact that more activities are centered on the show floor. As an exhibitor, it allows us to participate and take advantage of those resources. AWMA does a lot for our industry.”
- **Bill Hatcher**, senior vice president of sales, Diversified Logistics, Fernandina Beach, FL—“We have talked with a lot of people who show interest in the potential cost savings in the receiving side of the business. We have at least 10 solid prospects in the first few hours.”
- **Renea Wells**, marketing director, Java Classics/Penguin Ice/Victory Energy, Missoula, MT—“We are getting people, board members, key buyers who can make decisions. I like it because we can talk one-on-one with decision-makers and buyers. There is a lot of life here. And the networking is great. Socializing doesn’t always have to talk about business.”
- **Jessica Fratercangelo**, marketing director, Cheyenne International LLC, Grover, NC—“The show’s been great for us. We’ve had a good opportunity to meet with all of our customers and we have some great show specials, so we’ve had a lot of orders for the show. We have found increased traffic. They’ve done a lot of good things to increase booth traffic. The Knowledge Bar, the seminars that they’re having during the show have been really great.”

In assuming the AWMA chairmanship following the term of 2013 Chairman Hugh Raetzsch, president, Lyons Specialty Co., Port Allen, LA, Mark Davenport outlined the process that led him to sell his family company in 2013 to Core-Mark International Inc. and become that company's Carolina Division.

He likened the changes that occurred at his company to changes in the industry and the need for the association to respond. He credited AWMA with responding to governmental challenges, providing guidance and expertise through educational programming and conferences, and for developing programs such as InfoMetrics to help distributors become better operators.

Seminars in the Expo Solutions Café & Theater featured presentations on e-cigarettes, taking advantage of InfoMetrics, and ways to help retail customers profit from seasonal sales.

Meanwhile, the AWMA Silent Auction raised more than \$8,000 to help fund AWMA's government affairs program, which includes the annual Day on the Hill lobbying event, scheduled for May 13–14, 2015.

## The 2015 Expo: What's Coming?

The 2015 AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo Feb. 24–26 at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino will complete the major transformation of the Expo floor, continuing and enhancing the Knowledge Bar, AWMA Café & Solutions Theater, AWMA Buyers' Circle, and the AWMA Silent Auction.



**Expert Anne Barker-Smith fielded questions on food safety practices and planning in the AWMA Knowledge Bar.**

There is also a revolutionary new rate structure for distributor attendees, designed to make it easy for all to attend. Distributors will experience the new and unique experiential expo floor, a super array of educational and networking opportunities for a registration cost of just \$100 per company.

In addition, each distributor attendee gets a \$100 credit off his or her stay at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino. There also will be two great receptions, breakfast and lunch each day for every attendee.

Distributors will be able to shop the booths, step away for a chat with an expert, bid on great silent auction items, view the Expo Only Show Deals, or attend a fast-paced category session in the AWMA Café & Solutions Theater.



**AI Bates spoke in the Solutions Theatre on how small firms can be more profitable.**



**Kit Dietz was joined by the panel of Ryan Broderick, Mars Chocolate North America, Tom Cinnamon, Eby-Brown Co. and Brent Cotten, The Hershey Co., in a Solutions Theatre session on seasonal sales opportunities.**



**The Industry Reception at the Marketplace, sponsored by Lorillard Tobacco Co., kept business going on the expo floor.**



**Pro football legend Archie Manning discussed his experiences on the football field and as a family man with attendees.**



**In his first address to the AWMA membership 2014 chairman Mark Davenport talked about change in his family's business and the industry.**



**Brent Cotten, with closing session sponsor, The Hershey Co., introduced keynote speaker Archie Manning.**

There will be lively and fun activities on the show floor to entertain and to offer attendees a chance to take a break, enjoying a soft drink, cocktail or brew. Plus, the annual grand prize drawing this year, on the final day of the Expo, will be a \$14,000 trip to Hawaii and \$5,000 in cash!

Expo keynote speaker will be Erik Weißenmayer, the first blind person in history to summit Mount

Everest, who will speak at the AWMA General Session, 8:30–9:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 26.

Re-defining what it means to be blind, Erik has opened the minds of people around the world. Weißenmayer continues to inspire others with motivational talks, charity work and wild adventures. AWMA is delighted that he will open the final day of our exciting new 2015 Expo.

## 2015 Expo Education Program Highlights

Expo attendees at no extra registration charge, can participate in one of four special education seminars beginning on Tuesday morning, Feb. 24:

- **Next Generation Conference** (Tuesday 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.)—AWMA and The Southern Association of Wholesale Distributors have joined forces to launch a Next Generation Group to help young professionals in the industry develop their leadership potential and get to know fellow distributors from across the country. Open to all registered attendees.
- **Executive Leaders Forum** (Tuesday 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.)—The first-ever AWMA Executive Leaders Forum will convene owners, CEOs, presidents and vice presidents from convenience distribution businesses to learn and collectively explore strategies to enhance leadership skills and improve company culture. Open to registered distributors only.
- **InfoMetrics Distributor User Training** (Tuesday 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)—These training seminars will provide specific examples of using InfoMetrics by the personnel within a distributor organization, including live demonstrations of how to address key business needs and goals, and “do-it-yourself” training, using specific case studies with one-on-one training assistance. Open to current InfoMetrics user distributors only.



It was a busy two days of business on the 2014 Expo floor.



The new Knowledge Bar brought together industry leaders and experts.



Lunch, served on the 2014 Expo floor, was sponsored by Mars Chocolate North America on Wednesday, and BIC Consumer Products USA.

- **Digital Stamping Panel Discussion** (Tuesday 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.)—This program will provide an update on the latest issues surrounding the complicated nationwide encrypted stamping initiative. Speakers will include industry stakeholders from the affected states and those involved in digital stamping systems. Open to all registered attendees.
- **AWMA Women’s Leadership Initiative Breakfast** (Thursday 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.)—This will feature a special presentation by Charlotte Beers, named “the most powerful woman in advertising” and called “the queen of Madison Avenue.” Featured on the covers of *Fortune* and *Businessweek* as one of the most powerful women in America, her mantra of the difference between products and brands revolutionized major ad campaigns, bringing unprecedented success to her clients and the advertising agencies she managed.



The 2014 Expo reception gave attendees and exhibitors a chance to wind down.

This show has a lot to offer. I love the seminars in the theater, which helps give you a break. The seminar speakers have been excellent, not to mention the outstanding speaker this morning.



Altria Group Distribution Co. sponsored the jam-packed 2014 Expo All-Industry Welcome reception.



The well-attended AWMA Leadership Dinner was sponsored by Swisher International, Inc.

- Small Distributors: Operations Super Session & Breakfast**  
 (Thursday 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.)—Back by popular demand, this interactive session is open to executives from small distributors from across the country. This roundtable provides an opportunity to learn and share ideas that could help address operations issues or challenges you may be facing. Topics such as driver shortages, key metrics that drive out costs, delivery system economics, and compliance issues will be discussed.



Profitability guru Al Bates led a session at the 2014 AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo that focused on steps small distributors can take to improve profit margins.

We are getting people, board members, key buyers who can make decisions. I like it because we can talk one-on-one with decision-makers and buyers. There is a lot of life here. And the networking is great. Socializing doesn't always have to talk about business.

## 2014 SUMMIT & ABX

# Connecting & Getting Business Done

The 2014 Summit and Business Exchange (ABX), held in Orlando Sept. 8–11, was hailed by both AWMA distributor members and suppliers as one of the best and most successful in the history of the event.

“This a key partnership for our company with AWMA,” said Blake Benefiel, director of trade relations at Altria Group Distribution Co. “This gives us an opportunity to talk with and gain input from our customers, all of whom are critical to Altria’s success.”

### AWMA SUMMIT & BUSINESS EXCHANGE

ABX provides a forum for AWMA trading partner members to discuss their business relationships and make plans for the future. Many distributors and suppliers consider the ABX to be one of the most important meetings of the year as they seek to strengthen their relationships and prepare for the future. Participants reemphasized that point repeatedly throughout the event.

“This is a great opportunity to talk with our peers in the

industry on both the vendor and distributor side, one-on-one, and discuss business, whether it’s in business meetings, receptions, or at the pool bar having a beer,” commented Mark Davenport, Core-Mark Carolina, Sanford, NC, AWMA 2014 board chairman.

Rob Sincavich, Team Sledd, Wheeling, WV, agreed. “We spend a lot of time running our businesses, but very seldom do we get to connect with people we’ve known for years,” he said. “This is the one opportunity for us to connect, to come together for the common good. As leaders, we have a responsibility to drive this home.” Sincavich is AWMA chairman for 2015.

This is a great opportunity to talk with our peers in the industry on both the vendor and distributor side, one-on-one, and discuss business.



**Tom Joyce, The Hershey Co., was honored for his long-time support of AWMA and the industry with the AWMA Hall of Fame award, presented to him by Chad Gummer, Gummer Wholesale.**

### The Summit

Before the ABX meetings began, the 2014 AWMA Summit program featured presentation of AWMA’s Hall of Fame Award to long-time industry and AWMA supporter Tom Joyce, vice president of global customer and industry affairs at The Hershey Company, and a keynote address by Juliet Funt, owner and founder of Whitespace at Work. The Hershey Co. sponsored her address.

Chad Gummer, president of Gummer Wholesale, Inc., Heath, OH, presented the Hall of Fame Award to Joyce, lauding the 40-year industry veteran as “the best supplier partner a wholesale distributor could want.”

“Building personal relationships based on honesty, trust and transparency is his stock in trade,” said Gummer.

Joyce accepted the award by recognizing many distributors and other industry stalwarts who helped him throughout his career, and acknowledged his company for supporting his industry efforts. “It’s hard to climb a mountain by yourself,” he said.

Funt, the daughter of the late Alan Funt, creator of the popular Candid Camera TV show from the 1960s, consults with businesses to help boost productivity.



“When talented people don’t have time to think, business suffers,” she said. “Most companies place no value on thinking.”

So Funt advocates creating “whitespace” in your lives, pausing to allow time for thinking and reflection. “If you open up 12 minutes a day, that’s 500 hours a year in found productivity,” she said, “just from the release of mindless busyness.”

“I thought her message was right on spot as to how we all approach our day,” said past AWMA chairman Hugh Raetzsch, Lyons Specialty Co., Port Allen, LA. “You think you are alone, juggling family life and work life, but you’re not. We all have this problem. Everything needs to slow down enough so you don’t

miss those little things. We need to slow down just a little bit and take a step back. If we did that, we would be amazed at what we would see.”

### Annual Business Exchange (ABX) Meetings: ‘A Home Run’

“The ABX is really all about communication,” said Davenport. “We can have open dialogue to review the past year’s performance, identify opportunities, solve any outstanding issues, and learn about new programs and product lines. This meeting allows us to exchange ideas that will encourage cooperation and collaboration, so that it becomes profitable for all segments of the industry.”



**Above: The ABX gives distributors and suppliers the chance to cover a lot of ground with one another in just two and a half days. Team Sledd’s Scott Lojas and Bob Fortunato met with General Mills during the ABX program.**

**Another successful ABX meeting ended with a handshake. Manufacturers and distributors agree there is nothing like the ABX for getting business done.**





**The AWMA Summit & ABX reception gave attendees the opportunity to relax and network.**

This meeting allows us to exchange ideas that will encourage cooperation and collaboration, so that it becomes profitable for all segments of the industry.

Following the Summit program, executives from 60 convenience distribution companies began face-to-face ABX meetings with 52 suppliers in 63 private meeting rooms throughout the Ritz-Carlton. Once again, distributors and suppliers alike raved about their meetings and their ability to connect as trading partners.



**Keynote speaker Juliet Funt encouraged attendees to create more “whitespace” to give themselves time to think and reflect.**

“We put a lot of work up front and a lot of work since we’ve been here,” commented Frank Davoli, Richmond-Master Distributors, Inc., South Bend, IN. “No pain, no gain. But this is the best industry meeting of the year, bar none.”

Said Dennis Ballard, GSC Enterprises, Inc., Sulphur Springs, TX, “It’s nice to be able to talk to top (supplier) executives so we can work together to improve sales and profits. It’s a lot of working together, and that benefits everybody.”

Added Jim Hachtel, Eby-Brown Co., Naperville, IL, “It is great to see all of the new items and trends for 2015 and the business from the wholesaler’s point of view and see if what I’m doing every day with category management fits with manufacturers’ plans for the coming year.”

“We’ve been talking about voids,” said Zeno Corrigan, Pine State Trading Co., Gardiner, ME. “We’ve used AWMA’s InfoMetrics data to demonstrate to our vendors where distribution levels are below what they should be for specific SKUs and we’ve discussed strategies for resolving those voids. InfoMetrics has been an invaluable tool for our participation in the ABX.”

“This is my favorite format that we do as an organization,” said Susie Douglas Munson, Douglas Cos., Inc., Conway, AR. “We enjoy coming here to meet one-on-one with our vendors and seeing what’s coming ahead in the future. It’s just a very productive meeting.”

**AWMA wishes to thank all of the  
2014 Summit & Annual Business Exchange sponsors:**

**PLATINUM SPONSORS**



**Altria**  
Altria Group  
Distribution Company

*John Middleton*  
an Altria Company

**NuMark**  
An Altria Innovation Company

**PhilipMorrisUSA**  
an Altria Company

*US Smokeless*  
TOBACCO CO.  
an Altria Company

**HERSHEY**  
THE HERSHEY COMPANY



INCLUDES THESE COMPANIES



**GOLD SPONSORS**



**SILVER SPONSORS**



This is the best event for one-on-one discussions with our customers. You could not ask for a better opportunity to see the right people and to discuss ways that we can do a better job for our customers.

### Vendors Pleased with Discussions

Suppliers were also pleased with the results of their ABX meetings with distributors.

Said Doug Hynek, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., “This is the best event for one-on-one discussions with our customers. You could not ask for a better opportunity to see the right people and to discuss ways that we can do a better job for our customers.”

Kellogg’s Bill Henry said flatly, “The ABX is the best function that I attend all year long, and it has been since the beginning. It is the only event that I know of where you can get face-to-face with the owners and the CEOs of the distribution companies, and the system established enables us to make our meetings effective and impactful.”

Jack Link’s Beef Jerky’s Nate Springer was delighted that his team was able to discuss opportunities to be category captain for distributors. “There is a lot of excitement building for follow-up meetings, and that is great,” he said.

Tim Quinn, Mars Chocolate North America, said the ABX is “one of the best events” in which his company participates.

“The reason is that we have our senior executives here to meet with 58 different customers. What would it take us to get on a plane and fly all over the country to accomplish that? We are solving problems, and we absolutely show them how they can take advantage of opportunities.”

“We had meaningful strategic discussions and information sharing meetings with our valued



**During the Summit & ABX reception, Tom Joyce accepted congratulations from friends for his AWMA Hall of Fame award.**

wholesale partners,” said Dave Riser, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. “The ABX is very productive for us. That’s why we bring our top teams to this event.”

### Silent Auction Big Success

The Summit & ABX Silent Auction, which benefits the AWMA government affairs program, is a “huge help” to the association’s lobbying efforts and the annual Day on the Hill program, said Anne Holloway, AWMA vice president of government affairs.

“Thanks to our chairman, Mark Davenport, and our chairwoman of the Government Affairs Committee, Susie Douglas Munson, we have had a very successful silent auction,” said Holloway.

The reason is that we have our senior executives here to meet with 58 different customers. What would it take us to get on a plane and fly all over the country to accomplish that? We are solving problems, and we absolutely show them how they can take advantage of opportunities.

DISTRIBUTION SOLUTIONS  
CONFERENCE**AWMA Distributors Find  
Ops Solutions**

**A**WMA distributor members who attended the 2014 Distribution Solutions Conference (DSC) in Indianapolis Oct. 20–23, 2014, returned to work armed with new insight and ideas for improving operations, both in the warehouse and on the road.

Those nuggets emerged from the educational programming provided, networking with others, including foodservice exhibitors, and from the supplier exhibits on the trade show floor.

During the DSC, AWMA-sponsored four educational sessions specifically for distributor members. They covered developments in employment law, general operational issues and challenges, government regulatory developments affecting transportation and fleets, and the use of metrics to lower distribution costs.

“If you come home with one idea, it pays for your whole trip,” said Chad Henning, general manager, Cash-Wa Distributing Co., Inc., Kearney, NE. “Lots of times you find more than that, and its gravy.”

The nearly 50 representatives of the 19 AWMA member companies attending the conference met with vendors of products that could benefit their company’s operations and to network.

I like the educational programming. That’s what I look for because there is always something to learn, something we haven’t thought of.



**Theresa Gallion educated attendees on employment and labor law in her session, giving examples of possible problems to consider.**



**Chris Timmons, Eby-Brown Co., moderated a panel discussion on the use of on-board computers with Mark Boticelli, PeopleNet; Tom Files, Cadec Global; and Jon Van Winkle, Omnitrac LLC.**



**The show floor at the IFDA Distribution Solutions Conference in Indianapolis, co-sponsored by AWMA, offered attendees, including many AWMA member distributors, the latest for improving operations.**

Blake Gustafson, transportation manager at Harbor Wholesale, Lacey, WA, was part of a three-person team from his company and attended the DSC for the fourth time. “I like the educational programming. That’s what I look for because there is always something to learn, something we haven’t thought of. And it’s good to see new products that are available, as well.”

### Workshop Highlights

The employment and labor law discussion was presented by Theresa Gallion, partner, Fisher & Phillips LLP,

who outlined several scenarios and circumstances that can, and do, result in lawsuits filed against employers under numerous statutes, including the Fair Labor Standards Act and many others.

Both the roundtable and the metrics sessions were led by Dr. Tony Vercillo, a 25-year veteran of the supply chain industry and president and COO of IFMC Consultants, a company that works with distributors to help improve operational efficiencies.

The roundtable session was a free-flowing conversation between Vercillo and attendees as they discussed key distribution challenges and shared solutions. Topics included ways to manage efficiencies in



**Supply chain industry expert Tony Vercillo presented two sessions specifically for AWMA members. He facilitated a roundtable discussion on distribution challenges and solutions, and presented a session on metrics.**



**The DSC opened with a reception at the J.W. Marriott in Indianapolis, the conference headquarters. AWMA's Bob Pignato and Bob Gatty mingled with AWMA member attendees during the reception. Photo at left: Bob Pignato, Tammy Weant and Rik Schrader of NCR, Bob Gatty. Photo at right: Joel Jorgenson of Cadec Global, Chris Timmons and Sean Jones of Eby Brown Co., Bob Pignato.**

the face of intense competition, coping with driver shortages, and the use of on-board technology.

During the session on metrics, Vercillo discussed the use of key performance indicators (KPI) to improve efficiency and make better decisions.

“Determine what you are trying to change,” he advised. “Once you understand that, you choose the measures accordingly.”

The session on government relations was presented by Earl Eisenhart, principal, Government Relations Services, a Washington, DC-based transportation policy consultant.

“One of the things that people need to recognize is that government regulations have a big impact on the bottom line,” he said. “The regulations keep coming, fast and furious.”

The DSC offered nearly 50 workshops and seminars on a wide variety of topics, ranging from managing labor and coping with regulators to meeting key fleet and warehouse operations challenges.

Chris Timmons, Eby-Brown Co., moderated a show-floor theater panel discussion on the use of on-board computers. Participants were Mark Botticelli, chief technology officer, PeopleNet; Tom Files, chief operating officer, Cadec Global, Inc. and Jon Van Winkle, director, product management, Omnitrac, LLC.

Noting that the U.S. Department of Transportation is working on electronic logging regulations, panelists predicted those new rules will not be finalized until sometime late in 2015, at the earliest.

Keynote speakers during the DSC were Alison Levine, captain of the First American Women’s Everest Expedition in 2002, and who summited Mount Everest in 2010 on her second try; former National Football League player and coach Mike Ditka, and Mike Schlappi, a paralympic basketball gold medalist and author of “Shot Happens.”

Determine what you are trying to change. Once you understand that, you choose the measures accordingly.



**Consultant Earl Eisenhart updated distributors on new and proposed transportation regulations.**

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

# The Convenience Distributors' Voice Before Government

**"S**ometimes we feel like everything is going against us. If you don't speak up, no one will hear you. If you don't stand up, the giants will mow you down. Speaking up is what AWMA is all about."

Those were the words of Susie Douglas Munson, chief operating officer at the Douglas Cos., Conway, AR, and chairwoman of the AWMA Government Affairs Committee during AWMA's annual Day on the Hill lobbying event May 15, 2014, and they capture the essence of AWMA's governmental affairs initiatives, which is being further strengthened for 2015.

Because so many critical decisions that affect the convenience distribution industry are now being made in state capitals across the nation, AWMA will provide increased state legislative coverage to

help track and, when possible, influence legislative decisions in the states.

"AWMA is utilizing a state tracking online product, called Engage, that will be fully integrated with our AWMA database and web portal," explained Anne Holloway, AWMA's vice president of government affairs. "This new tracking software will allow AWMA access to the most up-to-date action on legislative issues affecting our members. It also will allow our members greater ability to impact these legislative initiatives through an easy-to-use, streamlined grassroots system."

In addition, AWMA has added a new director of state government relations to help manage this important initiative.

Because so many critical decisions that affect the convenience distribution industry are now being made in state capitals across the nation, AWMA will provide increased state legislative coverage to help track and, when possible, influence legislative decisions in the states.



**At the Altria-sponsored dinner, Eby-Brown's John Scardina, attending his first Day on the Hill, joined members of the Altria team.**

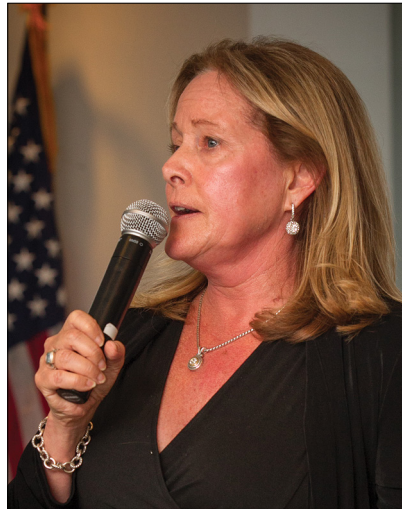


**Guest speaker, Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) was greeted by Anne Holloway, AWMA vice president of government affairs.**





**Susie Douglas Munson, Douglas Cos. and chairwoman of the AWMA Government Affairs Committee, told participants “If you don’t speak up, no one will hear you.”**



**AWMA vice president of government affairs Anne Holloway gave Day on the Hill attendees some final points at the end of the evening.**



**At the breakfast sponsored by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., AWMA chairman Mark Davenport summed up the issues saying “Don’t raise taxes. Don’t raise the minimum wage.”**

AWMA is also hosting state association executives at the 2015 Expo in Las Vegas, where participants can engage with the association on a wide variety of topics of mutual concern. AWMA works closely with state association executive directors to promote improved communication and to facilitate lobbying efforts at all the legislative levels.

### Key 2014 Governmental Initiatives

- Federation of Tax Administrators Task Force on Uniform Reporting—AWMA has attended all the meetings with this task force over the past few years and continues to provide guidance on issues related to uniform reporting that impact distributor members to ensure that these reports are not unduly burdensome.
- AWMA remains on the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Retail Food Store Food Safety Partnership group that is dedicated to working with the agency as a part of its overall prevention-based, farm-to-table food safety strategy to reduce foodborne illness. AWMA participates in regular meetings and conference calls with agency officials to ensure the most reasonable, effective regulation of food safety.

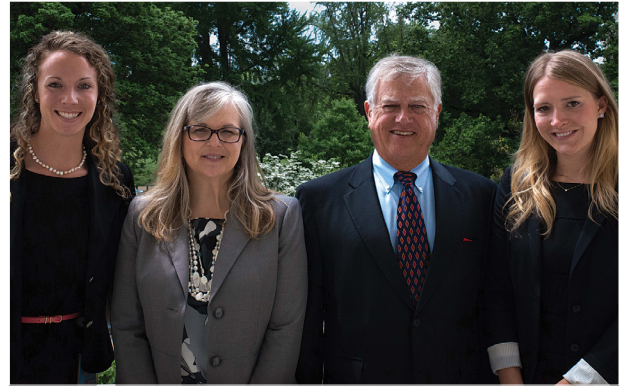


**Attendees checked out auction items and the latest bids in the AWMA Silent Auction and Networking Lounge on the expo floor. Silent Auction proceeds support AWMA’s governmental affairs program.**

- AWMA continues to comment on the implementation of the Food Safety and Modernization Act as appropriate. Most recently, AWMA retained a noted food safety expert to review and comment on the proposed rule on sanitary transportation of human and animal food, which has the potential to adversely impact distributors.



Attending the FTA Tobacco Tax Uniformity Committee meeting were (l-r) Helen Hayes, director, tax operations, Core-Mark International; Jennifer Moulton, director of administration, AWMA and Tim Harris, tax coordinator, Eby-Brown Co.



Charlie Casper of Hardec's, Elizabethtown, KY, and AWMA communications specialist Mary Arntson-Terrell stepped outside with the staff of Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY).



AWMA members Dick Dunham and Corey Cooper, Stephenson Wholesale Co., and Rick Bahlinger, Standard Distributing Co., met with their senator from Oklahoma, James M. Inhofe (R-OK), during the 2014 Day on the Hill.

When we have these huge increases in taxes it is a major burden on our companies," said Munson. She and other AWMA members told lawmakers that as the cost of cigarettes increases due to taxes, so does the extent of illegal activity involving cigarettes.

- AWMA continues to track FDA regulation of tobacco, including the 2014 issuance of deeming regulations covering electronic cigarettes. The proposed newly "deemed" products would include electronic cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, certain dissolvables that are not "smokeless tobacco," gels, and water pipe tobacco. AWMA submitted comments on these proposed regulations.
- AWMA supports the FDA's proposal to adopt age restrictions for these products. However, AWMA is concerned about the impact of some of the provisions on the distribution industry.
- AWMA has been working to address distributor concerns on encrypted stamping by hosting meetings and panel discussions with the various stakeholders on this issue.

### Day on the Hill

In mid-May, distributors from across the nation participated in 60 meetings with members of Congress and key staff members in Washington, DC, opposing any increase in the federal excise tax on tobacco and the federal minimum wage.

They delivered their message directly to congressmen and senators in meetings in their offices and in the corridors of power. Most meetings were scheduled, but there were times, too, when AWMA members—because they were there—bumped into congressional staffers and lawmakers in the hallway and took advantage of the opportunity to state their case.

“Don’t raise taxes. Don’t raise the minimum wage. That’s our message,” said AWMA 2014 Board Chairman Mark Davenport, division president, Core-Mark Carolina. “It threatens the economic vitality of our industry.”

Davenport made the comments during the kickoff breakfast May 15 sponsored by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. Dave Riser, vice president, external relations-trade marketing, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., emphasized the importance of distributors pressing their opposition to any increase in the federal excise tax on cigarettes.

Day on the Hill activities actually got underway the evening of May 14 when Altria’s director of trade relations, Bob Sears welcomed AWMA members to a dinner hosted by Altria Group Distribution Co. at the company’s offices overlooking the Capitol.

Sears expressed Altria’s appreciation to AWMA members who participated and said his company “takes seriously” the participation of AWMA members in the political process. Altria, he noted, is aligned on “most issues” with distributors.

Charlie Casper, president of Hardec’s, Elizabethtown, KY, welcomed guest speaker, Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), a potential Republican presidential candidate. Casper described the senator as “an outspoken libertarian who says the things we all think.”

Sen. Paul recounted numerous examples of wasteful spending by the federal government and said for things to change in Washington, “the people in charge have to change.”

## Meeting with Lawmakers

During their congressional meetings, AWMA distributors pressed lawmakers on both the cigarette excise tax and minimum wage issues, emphasizing the negative impact on businesses that operate on a miniscule profit margin.

Both Munson and Paula Glidewell, vice president, Glidewell Distribution Co., Fort Smith, AR, made those points with Steve Lehrman, senior legislative assistant to Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AR).

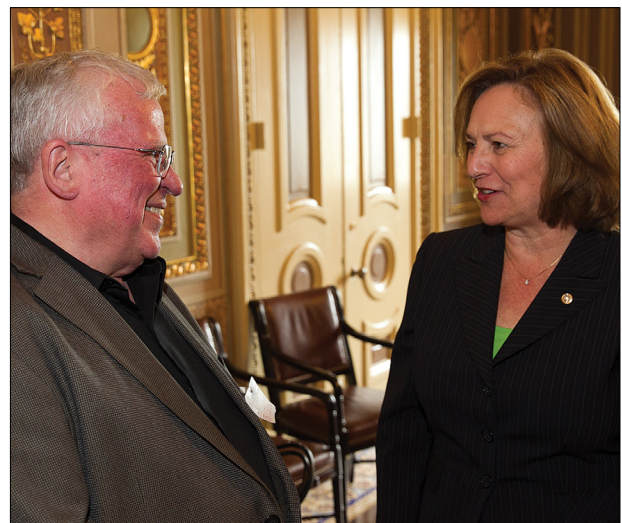
“When we have these huge increases in taxes it is a major burden on our companies,” said Munson. She and other AWMA members told lawmakers that as the cost of cigarettes increases due to taxes, so does the extent of illegal activity involving cigarettes.

Lehrman said Sen. Pryor opposed a federal minimum wage increase, preferring that the state handle that issue. He also predicted that a cigarette tax hike was not in the cards.

Not all meetings went so smoothly.



**The AWMA Silent Auction, which helps fund the government affairs program, ended during the ABX Reception with a brisk round of bidding.**



**Cash-Wa Distributing’s Ed Bloomfield met with Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) in the reception room just off the Senate floor.**

It is mighty important to be here any time we can to talk with these people. They respond eyeball to eyeball a lot better than through written correspondence.



**Dave Riser, vice president, external relations-trade marketing with breakfast sponsor R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., thanked the participating distributors, and reiterated the importance of Day on the Hill.**



**Sen. Paul was greeted by his constituent, Charlie Casper of Hardec's in Elizabethtown, KY.**

**Altria's director of trade relations, Bob Sears, welcomed AWMA distributor members to the dinner that kicked off the Day on the Hill.**



Jackson Droney, legislative research assistant to Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) candidly told Pete Lippe, vice president of purchasing, Core-Mark International, that his boss favored increasing the minimum wage and had no intention of changing her position.

She also supports the excise tax increase, he said, but would be interested in hearing what federal law enforcement agencies have to say about the claim that higher taxes on cigarettes lead to smuggling and counterfeiting.

Finding greater support was Ed Bloomfield, chief financial officer, Cash-Wa Distributing Co. Inc., Kearney, NE, who met with Sen. Deb Fisher (R-NE) in the reception room off the Senate floor in the U.S. Capitol. He brought those same issues to her attention along with his support for maintaining or increasing the renewable fuel standards (RFS) for ethanol and other renewable fuels.

“It is mighty important to be here any time we can to talk with these people,” said Bloomfield. “They respond eyeball to eyeball a lot better than through written correspondence.”



**Altria Group Distribution Co. hosted AWMA Day on the Hill participants, including (center) Kevin Barney, Atlantic Dominion Distributors with Altria's Blake Benefiel and Pete Dialtelevi.**

Other distributors were effusive in their praise for the Day on the Hill opportunity. Dick Dunham, vice president of operations, Stephenson Wholesale Co., based in Oklahoma, said he and company president, Corey Cooper, had an excellent opportunity to educate some congressional staffers about e-cigarettes and vaping—an important undertaking as the FDA considers regulating those products.

“The Day on the Hill program is one of the most important industry events our company



**Mark Davenport (left), 2014 AWMA chairman of the board, caught up with Debbie Robins, Lori Rodman and David Sadugor of Century Distributors Co., and Elvin Smythers of Merchants Grocery Co., during the Altria dinner.**

attends every year,” said past AWMA chairman Hugh W. Raetzsch Jr., president and CEO, Lyons Specialty Co., Port Allen, LA. “It is critical that we maintain an open dialogue with our Senators and Representatives. I have been to Day on the Hill consistently for a number of years now, and have developed important relationships that will be critical when the time comes that our industry is under political attack.”

It is critical that we maintain an open dialogue with our Senators and Representatives. I have been to Day on the Hill consistently for a number of years now, and have developed important relationships that will be critical when the time comes that our industry is under political attack.

# COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

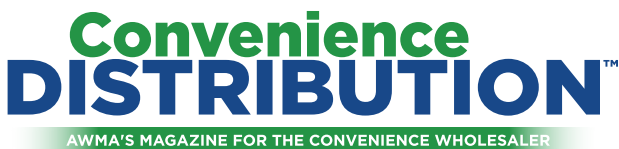
## An Evolution in Delivering Information

**W**ith the world changing in the way all of us receive our news and information these days, AWMA members are no different and so your association’s methods for providing the information that you need is evolving as well.

AWMA is considering new products, new formats, and new delivery mechanisms, including potential co-publishing opportunities with other association partners. An overall objective will be to promote the importance and value of the distributor within the convenience channel, using every means at our disposal.

**THAT MEANS LEVERAGING:**

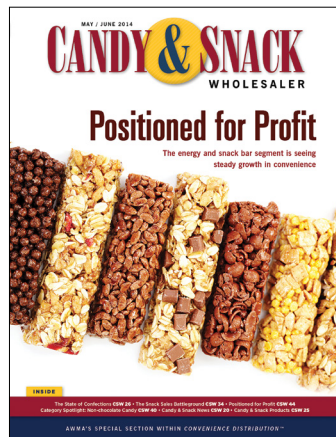
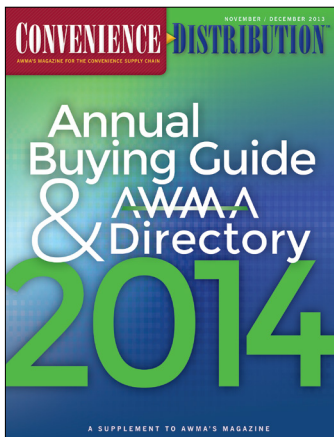
- *Convenience Distribution* magazine, digital and print editions
- The AWMA website, [www.awmanet.org](http://www.awmanet.org)
- Video communications
- Two weekly e-newsletters
- Special event e-newsletter updates
- Online Membership Directory



AWMA’s website, [www.awmanet.org](http://www.awmanet.org), underwent a major redesign in 2014, and a new Member-Only section will provide exclusive access to AWMA members for important information, including analyses of industry developments, government affairs information, and more. AWMA’s membership directory is being moved online and will provide members the ability to instantly update their own company information.

Another component of AWMA’s new approach to communications is video. The association now has an on-staff videographer, who has already developed a series of videos based on the association’s InfoMetrics data program, AWMA’s major events, and a video version of this report. Video messages from AWMA executives are now a regular offering, as well.

Much of this is delivered via AWMA’s e-newsletter, *Convenience Distribution News*, *AWMA Executive Update*, distributed to more than 3,000 recipients each Thursday. A similar edition focused on tobacco is distributed each Wednesday. Also, the *AWMA Marketplace News*, the association’s weekly e-news primer for the Expo is distributed via email from December through the Expo in February, when daily e-news updates reporting on convention events and activities, are created and distributed—as



they are at major AWMA events such as the Summit and ABX, Day on the Hill, and the Distribution Solutions Conference.

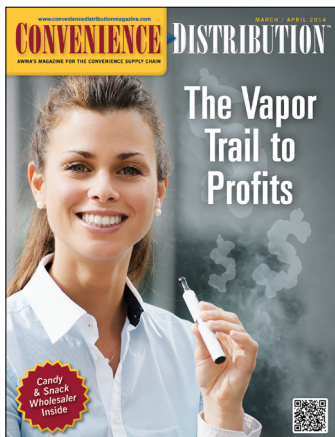
Currently, *Convenience Distribution's* bi-monthly print edition reaches 10,000 readers, with additional distribution at members' trade shows and industry events. The print edition has been redesigned for 2015, with the magazine logo revised to reflect its direct association with AWMA and a new tagline, "AWMA's Magazine for the Convenience Wholesaler."

Advertising sales are an important contributor to AWMA's overall budget and the magazine's ad program for 2015 includes a closer tie-in with two key events, the AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo and the AWMA Summit & ABX. A new 'PLUS' sponsor program allows manufacturers to both sponsor and gain valuable media exposure surrounding these events with one package.

The magazine's digital edition is pushed to about 2,000 industry professionals. *Conveniencedistributionmagazine.com* includes all of the latest news from the channel, industry calendars, products releases and more. A new redesigned version debuts in early 2015.

Throughout 2014, *Convenience Distribution* brought readers news and actionable insight, including:

- Jan/Feb—2014 Industry Outlook
- Mar/Apr—Tobacco Category Overview with focus on e-cigarettes and vaping
- May/June—State of Confections and State of Snack Category Overviews



## Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 24-26

### AWMA Marketplace & Solutions Expo

Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino,  
Las Vegas, NV

MAY 13-14

### AWMA Member's Day on the Hill

Grand Hyatt, Washington, DC

SEPTEMBER 8-11

### AWMA Summit & Business Exchange (ABX)

Westin Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL

OCTOBER 26-29

### Distribution Solutions Conference

Phoenix Convention Center,  
Phoenix, AZ

- Jul/Aug—Foodservice Overview focusing on opportunities for growth in the category
- Sept/Oct—Cover feature, the first in a continuing series, about how distributors are helping retailer customers be more profitable, especially those using AWMA's InfoMetrics/C-Metrics data program
- Nov/Dec—Beverage Category Overview: hot and cold dispensed, and packaged

Companies profiled in 2014 were Core-Mark Carolina (formerly J.T. Davenport & Sons) and Team Sledd.

In addition to the product category coverage in every issue, executive management and operations features covered such topics as Hiring the Right Foodservice Personnel and Transportation Updates.

## 2015 Officers

### Chairman



**Robert Sincavich\***  
Sledd Co.  
Wheeling, WV

### President & CEO



**Scott Ramminger\***  
American Wholesale  
Marketers  
Association  
Fairfax, VA

### First Vice Chairman



**Chad Owen\***  
Chambers & Owen, Inc.  
Janesville, WI

### Chairman Emeritus



**Mark Davenport\***  
Core-Mark Carolina  
Sanford, NC

### Second Vice Chairman



**Susie Douglas Munson\***  
Douglas Companies, Inc.  
Conway, AR

## 2015 Directors

**Jeff Allen**  
Allen Bros. Wholesale  
Dist., Inc.  
Philadelphia, PA

**Josh Altman**  
Mountain/Service  
Distributors  
S. Fallsburg, NY

**Tremayne Arnold**  
Capitol Distributing, Inc.  
Meridian, ID

**Eric Atkinson**  
Atkinson Candy Co.  
Lufkin, TX

**Wayne Baquet**  
Imperial Trading Co.  
Elmwood, LA

**Kevin Barnes**  
Stewart Candy Co.  
Waycross, GA

**Kevin Barney\***  
Atlantic Dominion  
Distributors  
Virginia Beach, VA

**Blake Benefiel**  
Altria Group Distribution  
Co.  
Richmond, VA

**Michael Berro**  
Harold Levinson  
Associates, Inc.  
Farmingdale, NY

**Ethan Burnes**  
Capital Candy Co. Inc.  
Barre, VT

**Scott Carrico**  
Richmond-Master  
Distributors, Inc.  
South Bend, IN

**Charlie Casper, Jr.**  
Mydad, Inc. dba  
Hardec's  
Elizabethtown, KY

**Corey Cooper**  
Stephenson Wholesale  
Co., Inc.  
Durant, OK

**Patrick Cordle**  
BIC Corporation  
Shelton, CT

**Brent Cotten**  
The Hershey Company  
Huntersville, NC

**Grant Demers**  
McLane Company, Inc.  
Temple, TX

**Michael D'Ortenzio**  
Garber Bros., Inc.  
Randolph, MA

**Bill Dunn**  
Swisher International,  
Inc.  
Jacksonville, FL

**Cole Ehlert**  
Brenham Wholesale  
Grocery Co.  
Brenham, TX

**Justin Erickson**  
Harbor Wholesale  
Grocery, Inc.  
Lacey, WA

**George Eversman**  
Dot Foods  
Mount Sterling, IL

**Stan Feist**  
Sheehan Majestic  
Missoula, MT

**Paula Glidewell**  
Glidewell Distributing  
Co.  
Fort Smith, AR

\* Member of Executive Committee



**Gary Gloeckl**

A.J. Silberman & Co.  
Indianola, PA

**Chad Henning**

Cash-Wa Distributing  
Co., Inc.  
Kearney, NE

**Doug Hynek**

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco  
Co.  
Winston-Salem, NC

**Bill Jackson**

W.L. Petrey Wholesale  
Co., Inc.  
Montgomery, AL

**Randy Long**

Long Wholesale  
Dist., Inc.  
Corinth, MS

**Larry Lupo**

Mars Chocolate N.A.  
Hackettstown, NJ

**Barry Margolis**

Cooper-Booth  
Wholesale Co.  
Mountville, PA

**Gary McGuirk, Jr.**

Liberty USA, Inc.  
West Mifflin, PA

**Scott McPherson**

Core-Mark International,  
Inc.  
Fort Worth, TX

**Jay Mitiguy**

Dowlings, Inc.  
Milton VT

**Jimmy Naifeh**

Standard Distributing  
Co.  
Sapulpa, OK

**Joseph Noorda**

Gem State Distributors  
Pocatello, ID

**Fred Paternostro**

Lorillard Tobacco Co.  
Naperville, IL

**Eric Polep**

J. Polep Distribution  
Services  
Chicopee, MA

**Kaye Powell**

S. Abraham & Sons, Inc.  
Grand Rapids, MI

**John Prickette**

GSC Enterprises, Inc.  
Sulphur Springs, TX

**Hugh Raetzsch\***

Lyons Specialty Co., LLC  
Port Allen, LA  
(*Ex-Officio*)

**Jonathan Resnick**

Resnick Distributors  
New Brunswick, NJ

**John Scardina**

Eby-Brown Co.  
Naperville, IL

**Steven Shipe**

Liggett Vector  
Brands LLC  
Morrisville, NC

**Chris Smythers**

Merchants Grocery  
Co., Inc.  
Culpeper, VA

**Jerome Sternweis**

Holiday Wholesale Inc.  
Wisconsin Dells, WI

**Ted Stessman**

Farner-Bocken Co.  
Omaha, NE

**Rick Vance**

AMCON Distributing Co.  
Omaha, NE

**Nick Zaden**

City Wholesale Co.  
Birmingham, AL

**AWMA Staff****Scott Ramminger**

President & CEO—  
AWMA  
Executive Director—  
Distributors Education  
Foundation

**Mary Arnston-Terrell**

Communications  
Specialist

**Kimberly Bolin**

Executive Vice President

**Joel Brown**

Vice President  
of Business  
Development,  
Membership &  
Published Products

**Joan Fay**

Assistant Publisher &  
Database Specialist

**Bob Gatty**

Senior Editor

**Anne Holloway**

Vice President of  
Government Affairs

**Meredith Kimbrell**

Director of Education &  
Communities

**Jennifer Moulton**

Director of  
Administration  
Corporate Secretary—  
AWMA

**Robert Pignato**

Vice President, Meetings  
& Industry Affairs

**Kym Selph**

Manager of Meetings &  
Special Assistant to  
the President

**Dirk Smith**

Director of State  
Government Affairs

**Alex Swaim**

Manager of Video &  
Communications  
Specialist

**Zac Talmadge**

Manager of InfoMetrics  
& C-Metrics  
Optimization

**Toni Tileva**

Director of Digital  
Strategy &  
Communications

**Gene Lange**

General Counsel



AMERICAN WHOLESALE MARKETERS ASSOCIATION

## About AWMA

The American Wholesale Marketers Association (AWMA) is the only international trade organization working on behalf of convenience distributors in the United States. Its distributor members represent more than \$85 billion in U.S. convenience product sales. Associate members include manufacturers, brokers, retailers and others allied to the convenience product industry.



Typical products purchased and sold by convenience distributors include candy, tobacco, snacks, beverages, health and beauty care items, general merchandise, foodservice and groceries. In addition to convenience stores, their largest customer segment, convenience distributors also service grocery stores, drug stores, tobacco shops, mass merchants, newsstands, concession stands, gift shops, fundraising groups, restaurants, institutions and much more.

AWMA is the place to come when convenience distributors need information on legislative and regulatory issues; operations and logistics; management techniques, such as category management; and expanding product categories, like foodservice. AWMA offers various forums that bring together convenience distributors and their trading partners, allowing them to discuss issues of importance.



**AWMA Past Chairman's Advisory Council with 2014 AWMA Chairman Mark Davenport and 2015 AWMA Chairman Rob Sincavich. Bottom row - L to R: Rob Sincavich, Keith Canning, Mark Davenport, Chad Gummer. Top Row - L to R: Dick Dunham, Sherwin Herring, Hugh Raetzsch, Jode Bunce, Pat Carrico, Rick Gummer, Steve Shing, Jon Burklund, Jerry Abraham.**





**American Wholesale Marketers Association**

**2750 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 530 / Fairfax, VA 22031  
Phone: 703-208-3358 / Fax: 703-573-5738**

**WWW.AWMANET.ORG**