

## Texas Retailers Newsletter: January 2019



Happy New Year Texas Retailers,

2019 is here and it's already been a very busy first few weeks. We hope you all enjoyed a great holiday season with family and friends, as well as strong sales during the holiday shopping season. Holiday sales were by all accounts, another record setting effort. I hope all your companies and stores benefited from the great Texas economy, low unemployment, and nice holiday weather. The new year is off to a quick start; the 86th session of the Texas Legislature gavelled in on January 8th and will soon be in full swing. Additionally, TRA is planning two can't-miss events for our members this year (more information on Lobby Day and the Forum can be found below and, in the newsletter). As we closed out 2018, we celebrated what was another banner year for TRA with the always well produced year in review highlight video to celebrate our successes. [Take a look](#) and relive some of the best TRA moments from 2018.

As 2018 came to a close there were major developments at the federal level. The federal Farm Bill was successfully reauthorized by Congress before they adjourned for the holidays. TRA and many of our members lobbied very aggressively on the Farm Bill over the course of 2018 and we are pleased that Congress passed it and the President signed it into law. The 2018 Farm Bill contains many important priorities of TRA and our grocery and food industry members. Thanks again to all of the TRA members who worked so hard on this; we couldn't have done it without you! From the late year excitement of the Farm Bill passing, came the partial shutdown of the federal government at midnight on December 21st. As of this writing, the federal government, including USDA, remains shut down. The TRA team has been working closely with our contacts at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC, as well as with our colleagues at NGA and FMI, to monitor and stay as up to date as possible on the impact the shut down is having on the SNAP and WIC programs, which many of our grocery members participate in as retailers. TRA will continue to keep you updated on developments related to the shutdown, as long as it lasts.

At the state level, with the Texas Legislature in session there are many new faces at the Capitol. The TRA team is already meeting these newly elected officials and educating them about the importance of retail in Texas. There is also a new Speaker of the Texas House, Representative Dennis Bonnen from Angleton. The Texas Senate remains largely unchanged; with the loss of only two Republicans during the elections it will have little effect on the way the Senate operates. On the first day of session TRA sent a letter to all members of the legislature, detailing the retail industry's legislative priorities for the 86th Legislative session. The letter can be [viewed here](#).

One top legislative priority is our fight against burdensome wage and labor laws and ordinances, which are nothing more than one-size fits all solutions to perceived problems. This is why TRA is leading the effort, along with many of Texas' top business industry groups, on the Alliance for Securing and Strengthening the Economy in Texas (ASSET) coalition. ASSET collectively represents millions of employers and employees in the Lone Star State who believe that employment and business

operational decisions are best left to private employers – not government. More information can be found about ASSET in this newsletter and at [www.ASSETtexas.com](http://www.ASSETtexas.com).

One of the highlights for TRA every session is our lobby day. Make plans to join us here in Austin for our always successful Texas Retailers Lobby Day at the State Capitol, which will be on March 20th. For more information about Lobby Day and to register to attend [click here](#).

Lastly, registration for the annual Texas Retailers Forum is now open. Join us this summer in Austin at the Omni Barton Creek resort, July 29th for our annual industry showcase event, which will provide retailers with timely, topical and quality sessions and speakers. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with retail industry leaders from across the state and country at networking functions such as our Awards Dinner, networking breaks, and our popular closing night casino party. Registration and sponsorship details and information about both great events is inside this newsletter. Make plans now to secure your company's spot at this can't miss event. As always, thank you for supporting TRA. Once again, Happy New Year and best wishes on a great 2019.

Sincerely,



President/CEO  
Texas Retailers Association

## Legislative Update



The 86th Texas Legislature began on January 8th and will conclude after 140 days on May 27th 2019. So far, things are moving along swiftly with what seems to be a more unified approach on key priority issues. The week following the kick off of the Legislative Session, Governor Greg Abbott and Lt. Governor Dan Patrick were sworn into office the during inauguration ceremonies on the steps of the state capitol building. Joining them was the newly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dennis Bonnen (R- Angleton) who was elected by the members of the House after a crowded race for the chambers top position. During those ceremonies and throughout the past few weeks it has become clear that for now, the state's leadership has agreed that the top priorities for this legislative session will be making significant progress toward bettering our public education system and providing property tax relief for taxpayers across the state. Both the House and Senate moved forward quickly on setting the stage for deliberation on those plans by providing their committee assignments and proposed budgets within the first few weeks of session. ([House Committees](#), [Senate Committees](#)). While the priority issues have been agreed upon, exactly how they should be implemented is still up in the air and the House and Senate have both taken different approaches to funding the school finance system and making state dollars available for property tax reform. In the mix of these conversations is a \$5000 teacher pay raise and how to pay for a supplemental budget bill from last biennium. The good news is that Comptroller Glenn Hegar indicated the Legislature would have approximately \$120 billion to

spend this go around which is an 8% increase from last biennium. Stay tuned for more information on these and many more issues in the coming weeks.

TRA is working diligently on our priority issues and want your input. If you hear of any legislation that my impact your business or want more information about any particular bill please feel free to contact [Justin Williamson](#) at any time.

Texas Legislature Online: <https://capitol.texas.gov>

We look forward to working with you all and always feel free to reach out to our team for updates on any issue you feel is important.

## Texas Retailers 86th Legislative Session Priorities

The Texas Retailers Association (TRA) has prepared legislative priorities for the 86th Texas Legislature. Collectively, TRA represents more than 320,000 retail establishments and over 3.5 million jobs across the state. The association supports all levels of Texas retail including grocery stores, chains and single location small businesses.

TRA's goal is to keep Texas "retail-friendly" and ensure that legislative action is taken to protect business owners so that they can continue to employ hardworking Texans and serve communities across the great state of Texas.

- **TRA supports a business-friendly regulatory environment.** TRA member companies are regulated, licensed, inspected, and taxed by agencies in Texas and appreciate the Legislature's efforts to continue to make Texas retail friendly. TRA supports regulation that is reasonable and that allows our members to continue to provide excellent customer service, top quality products and continued business success in the retail industry. TRA appreciates the various approaches our membership takes to providing these services and supports their efforts to make those choices independently without unnecessary regulatory burdens imposed by either the state or local governments. Additionally, in light of, the South Dakota v. Wayfair decision by the United States Supreme Court, TRA and its member-companies look forward to continuing work with our state's elected officials to implement any legislation, rules, and regulations in a way that reflects the spirit of the level playing field for all retailers envisioned by the Court's ruling.
- **TRA supports Texas customers and communities.** All TRA members provide the best service to all of their customers and communities and do so in a variety of ways. Whether providing food, clothing and essential supplies during the recent hurricanes, flooding and other natural disasters or providing school supplies and medication to those in need across the state, TRA's members go above and beyond to support the customers that support their businesses. Our members coordinate closely with local, state and federal authorities in efforts to make sure our communities thrive throughout the year.
- **TRA supports property tax relief.** Retailers across Texas are subject to increasingly higher and higher property taxes, not only on their retail space but also on the inventories on their shelves. Texas business property taxes continue to serve as a significant disadvantage to the retail industry in our state. Inventory taxes stacked on top of ever rising taxes being assessed on our buildings drive costs up for our businesses and ultimately the customers we serve. Retail property across the state is unique in its position in the market and we support a regulatory framework that allows for accurate and fair valuation of that property.

### **86TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION PRIORITIES:**

- **LOCAL EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE PRE-EMPTION** - TRA will support passing statewide legislation that would preempt local governments from unilaterally enacting negative local employment and labor laws mandating employer benefits, employer hiring practices, scheduling, and other daily operational business practices.
- **INVENTORY TAX RELIEF** - TRA supports inventory property tax relief and repeal. Texas is one of only a handful of states that allows local property taxes to be assessed on retail inventories. Those other states are not states with whom Texas normally competes for new business and economic development opportunities. Additionally, inventory property tax relief is not selective, it benefits large and small businesses equally and attracts greater investment in the Texas economy.

• **SNAP DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE** – Many TRA members participate in the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) and want to do so as effectively and efficiently as possible to maximize customer experiences. Insuring product availability to our customers while also allowing retailers to manage employees and inventories is essential in this process. To do so, TRA will advocate to broaden the SNAP distribution schedule from its current 15 days to 28 days. This will provide both customers and businesses with a more even and predictable shopping experiences across the state.

## ASSET



### New Statewide Group Forms To Fight Burdensome Ordinances On Small Businesses

With “Small Business Saturday” in the rearview and a bustling holiday season on our doorstep, now is the time of year when many pause to reflect on what local businesses bring to patrons and their community, and how we as Texans can better support them in the remaining eleven months of the year.

This year is no exception, especially as Texas small businesses are under fire now more than ever. Unfortunately, certain Texas municipalities have taken strides to pass burdensome regulations on businesses in recent years, making it increasingly difficult for small businesses to remain profitable and conduct commerce across city lines. We’re talking specifically about local ordinances mandating certain employer benefits, scheduling and hiring practices like mandatory paid sick leave, for instance.

This breed of local regulations is adversely affecting the employer-employee relationship, and in doing so has highlighted a real need for statewide legislation that would preempt municipalities from instituting these local ordinances in the first place. After all, they make it difficult for the State of Texas to attract new businesses, and they often force employers to slash budgets, lay off employees or worse – close their businesses for good. As the need grew and more businesses and trade organizations came to the table in search of a solution, the Alliance for Securing and Strengthening the Economy in Texas, or ASSET, was born.

ASSET is a 501(c)(4), non-profit advocacy coalition of sixteen business groups that was formed in October to fight for public policies that protect Texas small businesses from these burdensome government regulations. Their goal is to bring more businesses to the table to advocate for a statewide legislative solution that would put a stop to these harmful patchwork ordinances for good.

Increasingly, Texas cities have faced unnecessary pressures to expand their regulatory scope and pass these ordinances – and ASSET believes state law says they shouldn’t have to. At the end of the day, employers and their employees are in the best position to decide what’s best for their businesses – not government.

While offering better benefits allows businesses to stay competitive and retain top talent, local regulations shouldn’t force them to make these costly decisions. Just because government mandates something to be done doesn’t mean a small business can afford it, after all.

As we head into the holiday season and the legislative session, let’s keep in mind the many ways we can help support small businesses. Coming together in support of this effort and organization is a good place to start.



To learn more about ASSET and its mission [click here](#) or visit [www.ASSETtexas.com](http://www.ASSETtexas.com).



**THE TEXAS RETAILERS ASSOCIATION IS STAYING UP TO DATE ON ALL FEDERAL NEWS REGARDING THE SHUTDOWN**

CEO/PRESIDENT GEORGE KELEMEN WITH CONGRESSMAN DAN CRENSHAW AND CONGRESSWOMAN LIZZIE FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON DC.

### Texas Retail Lobby Day



[RSVP today for the 2019 Texas Retail Lobby Day!](#) The event will be held on **Wednesday March 20, 2019** at the Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol and attendance is free for all members! If you have already RSVP'd, thank you! Nothing else is needed at this time and more detailed information will be sent out closer to the date.

Complimentary of TRA, there will be transportation to and from Dallas and Houston. If you are coming to Austin on your own, we do have a host hotel, The Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol, [where you can book a hotel room at a discounted rate](#). Please take advantage of our discounted rates and book before February 15th! Hotels in Austin become very limited during session so booking early is the best option if you are wanting to stay in Austin before or after Lobby Day.

### Texas Retailers End of Year Video

Thank you to all our members who made 2018 an incredible year for the Texas Retailers Association! Please take a moment and watch our [end of year video](#) to relive the great moments TRA had in 2018.

## Texas Retailers Forum



**HONORING WILL HURD**  
Federal Legislative Champion

**2019 TEXAS  
RETAILERS FORUM**

July 29th at the Omni Barton  
Creek in Austin, TX

The 2019 Texas Retailers Forum will be held at the Omni Barton Creek on July 29th, 2019 in Austin, TX. The Texas Retailers Forum will be one full day of breakout sessions, educational panels, an awards dinner and closing night party. We will also be honoring Representative Will Hurd as the Federal Legislative Champion. The Texas Retailers are very excited for our annual conference and hope you can join!

Registration for members is \$350 and non-members is \$700. This includes all meals, educational opportunities, breakout sessions, and your tickets to the dinner and closing night party. [Click here to register today!](#)

## New Member Spotlight: Worldpay



Worldpay, Inc. (NYSE: WP; LSE: WPY) is a leading payments technology company with unique capability to power global integrated omni-commerce. With industry-leading scale and an unmatched integrated technology platform, Worldpay offers clients a comprehensive suite of products and services globally, delivered through a single provider.

Worldpay processes over 40 billion transactions annually through more than 300 payment types across 146 countries and 126 currencies. The company's growth strategy includes expanding into high-growth markets, verticals and customer segments, including global eCommerce, Integrated Payments and B2B.

Contact: Jarrod Newman, [jarrod.newman@worldpay.com](mailto:jarrod.newman@worldpay.com), 214-502-0472  
[www.worldpay.com](http://www.worldpay.com)

## Plastic Container Theft Task Force



The Texas Retailers Association launched the Operation S.T.O.P.P. initiative in 2013 in Houston, TX in response to the overwhelming plastic container losses our retail members report each year. Plastic crate theft is considered a felony and our mission is to recover crates and stop this organized crime.

When you opt in to the Plastic Container Theft Task Force, you have a very high chance of getting your plastic crates and containers back. This program is designed specifically for retailers who are victims of plastic container theft and who want to save money by recovering their stolen property. If your company wants to acquire stolen goods back or wants to help prevent future organized retail crime, [please click here for details on opting-in](#) to the Plastic Container Theft Task Force.

### TRA-Endorsed Energy Solutions Provider: Amerex Energy Services



A TRA-endorsed service provider since 2002, Amerex is the largest OTC(wholesale) natural gas, electricity and emissions trader in North America. Their real-time involvement in the wholesale energy market and their customized service has consistently yielded significant cost savings to TRA members. [Click Here to Learn More](#)

Contact: Brandi Peck, [bpeck@amerexenergy.com](mailto:bpeck@amerexenergy.com), 281.340.5308  
[www.amerexenergyservices.com](http://www.amerexenergyservices.com)

**Click Here to Learn More!**

## TRA-Endorsed Insurance Provider: ANCO Insurance



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that is your perfect fit.**

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Agents Cassie Doolittle  
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Contact: Gina O'Hara, [ohara@anco.com](mailto:ohara@anco.com) or  
Cassie Doolittle, [doolittle@anco.com](mailto:doolittle@anco.com), 512.330.9836 x 6340

[www.insuranceforretailers.com](http://www.insuranceforretailers.com)

## Grocers Corner- In the Cart



Congratulations to Daniel Morales, Walmart, who will be the Food Council Chair. We greatly appreciated the service to TRA and the Food Council of Kathy Sweidel-Caton. We wish her well for the future. Don Benefield, Food Town, will continue to serve as the Vice-Chair.



## WIC/SNAP Program Statistics Update

On January 13, 2019, the state of Texas announced that February food benefits will be provided early to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) recipients. This gives recipients more time to manage their resources during the government shutdown due to the uncertainty about future federal program funding. SNAP Recipients should see funds on their Lone Star cards. While SNAP recipients are encouraged to not make mass purchases and try to space their food purchases throughout the whole month of February, retailers should prepare for both cases. Roughly three and a half million people will be receiving their benefits early and retailers need to be prepared to accommodate mass crowds. WIC benefits for February will be released as normal.

### A Few WIC Statistics for December 2018:

Participation: 713,446

This is .05% less than last month and 11% behind last year

### A Few SNAP Statistics for December 2018:

# recipients: 3,580,375

Total: \$408,550,000

This is about even with last month and running about 5% behind last year. The new WIC posters are available. To order please [click here](#) or call 800-252-9629.

Please contact Gary Huddleston [ghuddleston@txretailers.org](mailto:ghuddleston@txretailers.org) or 972-670-6814 if you have any questions regarding the statistics update.

## 2019 National Grocers Association Show

Each year, The NGA Show brings together independent retailers and wholesalers, food retail industry executives, food/CPG manufacturers and service providers for unparalleled opportunities to learn, engage, share, network, and innovate. NGA is the only industry association devoted exclusively to the needs of independent grocers. Given today's ever-changing marketplace and evolving advancements in innovation occurring in the food retail industry, The NGA Show is a must-attend event.

Over the course of three days, attendees have the opportunity to:

- Take part in over 40 education workshops, to bring home ideas that are guaranteed to drive profitable growth to your company
- Visit an EXPO floor designed to optimize business relationships between retailers and manufacturers and service suppliers, which features innovative and game-changing products and solutions
- Network with peers and industry leaders

Members of the Texas Retailers Association receive a 15% discount on registration for the 2019 NGA Show [using this link](#). [Learn more about the 2019 NGA Show!](#)

## USDA Proposes New Rule To 'Restore Original Intent of SNAP

At the direction of President Trump, the USDA has proposed a new rule intended to “move more able-bodied recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to self-sufficiency through the dignity of work.”

According to the USDA, the rule is meant to restore the system to what it was meant to be: assistance through difficult times, not lifelong dependency. [Click here to continue reading!](#)

## FNS Retailer Training Guide- SNAP

[Please click here](#) for the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Retailer Training Guide. There is a lot of valuable information included that can help out our members.

## TREF Scholarship Opens February 1st!

[Click here to learn more](#) and see if your students and high school seniors qualify! Applications open February 1st and will close April 1st. Apply online!



TEXAS RETAILERS  
ASSOCIATION



<b>2019 TEXAS RETAILERS FORUM</b>	<b>2019 TEXAS RETAIL INDUSTRY LOBBY DAY</b>	<b>2019 TREF GOLF TOURNAMENT</b>
OMNIBARTON CREEK RESORT & SPA AUSTIN, TX JULY 29, 2019	SHERATON AUSTIN HOTEL AT THE CAPITOL AUSTIN, TX MARCH 20, 2019	WILDCAT GOLF CLUB HOUSTON, TX MAY 3, 2019

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### Your FedEx and UPS Shipments Will Be More Expensive in 2019

FedEx and UPS rates are going up in 2019, and it's more important than ever that TRA members know how to mitigate the impact to their business. PartnerShip®, the benefit provider that manages the [TRA Shipping Program](#), has analyzed the new rate charts so TRA members can accurately prepare for the year ahead. [Download the free white paper](#) to see a break down of where you'll find the highest increases and get a simplified explanation of the complicated changes you need to be aware of.

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