

## Texas Retailers Newsletter: March 2019



Hello Texas Retailers:

Its March and spring is right around the corner, if not here already. The 86th session of the Texas Legislature is operating at full speed with hearings on several of TRA's legislative priorities having already occurred or scheduled to soon. Additionally, TRA's signature event during the legislative session, our biannual Texas Retailers Lobby Day at the Texas Capitol is coming up on March 20th. It's not too late to register to attend Lobby Day, so be sure to check out the details about how to register below in the newsletter.

The TRA team has kept up its efforts in meeting with key members of the Texas Legislature regarding our legislative priorities for this session. Specifically, our ongoing work to reduce or eliminate the outdated inventory tax on property, as well as the fight against burdensome wage and labor laws and ordinances. On the inventory tax, there is definitely an appetite to address it in some form this session, as evidenced by the number of bills filed on the issue, in addition to the very positive discussions we have had on the issue with key legislators. This is significant progress in a multi-session effort, and we are hopeful that this session results in some form of inventory tax relief passing into law. TRA is also leading the effort with many of Texas' top business industry groups, in pushing back on anti-business wage and labor initiatives, through our work on the Alliance for Securing and Strengthening the Economy in Texas (ASSET) coalition. We already have two great bills moving through the legislative process, which would create one state standard on employment issues, and we are aggressively pushing these two bills, [along with a little help from Governor Abbott](#). With all of this important and positive activity on TRA's legislative priority, it's important to have legislators hear from our members, and there aren't many better ways to do so than at TRA's Lobby Day at the Texas Capitol. Our lobby day this session will be on Wednesday, March 20th. Make plans to join us here in Austin for our always successful Texas Retailers Lobby Day at the Capitol. 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, here in Austin at the Omni Barton Creek resort on 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 and learn from retail industry leaders from across the state and country. Make plans to be there to help us honor our Federal Legislative Champion for 2019, Congressman Will Hurd, as well as other industry champions 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. Secure your spot at this can't miss retail industry event.

As always, thank you for supporting TRA.

Sincerely,



President/CEO  
Texas Retailers Association

## Legislative Update



The Legislature is almost half way done with it's 140 day Session and things are now moving a light speed with literally thousands of moving parts. With more than 7000 bills being filed in the House and Senate, the Legislature is now scheduling hearings on those bills and moving potential new laws through the process. More than 500 bills could have a direct impact on the Retail industry and many more are being vetted for potential impact. TRA and it's staff are in the Texas Capitol every day talking to lawmakers and their staffs about our industry and making sure your support and concerns are at the forefront of their minds when considering these pieces of legislation. During this process your input is invaluable and always welcome. If you find an issue of interest or hear about a proposed law in the news, please reach out to TRA to get more information and let us know how that issue may impact your operations. Currently, tax and employment issues are at the top of many legislators minds and we want them to stay informed and know what the retail businesses in their districts think of proposed changes in statute. Your input remains critical to the association and the legislative process.

Our 28 Day SNAP distribution schedule bill (HB1218) was heard in committee last week and with the excellent testimony and work of our grocery members this bill should move out of committee for a debate on the floor of the House soon. A special thanks to Representative Stephanie Klick for authoring that bill and working so diligently on our behalf.

For more information on the legislative process, TRA's priority bills and news from the Capitol, please join us weekly for the TRA Tax and Legislative Conference Call on Thursdays at 2:00 PM CT.

## 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**



### **Asset Update:**

HB1525, which is the marketplace piece of the Wayfair v. South Dakota implementation, was heard this week in the House Ways and Means Committee, and with the support of TRA and many of our members we hope to move this on to the next step in the process soon. Ways & Means Committee Chairman Dustin Burrows as been a great partner in this process who has

regularly sought TRA's input on this critical issue for the retail industry. Senate Bill 15 has passed the Senate State Affairs Committee is currently waiting to be taken up by the full Senate. House Bill 1654 has been referred to the House State Affairs Committee and is waiting on a hearing date. We will continue to keep members updated on ASSET and the consistent employment regulations bills that have been filed.

**Information on ASSET:**

ASSET is a non-profit coalition of job creation organizations that fights for policies that fuel the engines of our economy and protect Texas businesses from invasive and burdensome government regulations. ASSET collectively represents millions of employers and employees in the Lone Star State who believe employment and business operational decisions are best left to private employers, not government. To learn more about ASSET and its mission [click here](#) or visit [www.ASSETexas.com](http://www.ASSETexas.com).

**Texas Retail Lobby Day**



**WE HAVE EXTENDED THE RSVP DEADLINE TO MARCH 15TH!** Sending in your [RSVP](#) takes less than 5 minutes and then you'll be on your way to representing our industry and your business's needs! Attendees will be guaranteed three meetings with three different representatives and their staff and have the potential to set up a fourth meeting if time allows. Worried you won't know what to say? The Texas Retailers Association provides an easy guide to help you and your group explain what our priorities are and how they are effective in making Texas retail friendly. Attached is the tentative Lobby Day Schedule, please feel free to share it to any colleagues who may be interested in attending.

**Bus Pickup Information:**

Courtesy of TRA, there will be transportation to and from Houston and Dallas. Please specify in your RSVP if you will be taking advantage of our transportation option. If you are taking this free transportation, please meet at your designated pickup location before 5:15 AM. Buses will be departing these locations at 5:30 AM.

**Dallas Pickup Location:**

Kroger  
[1001 North Beckley Ave.](#)  
[Desoto, TX 75115](#)

**Houston Pickup Location:**

Kroger  
[17455 Spring Cypress Road](#)  
[Cypress, TX 77429](#)

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!**

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please reach out to [jwilliamson@txretailers.org](mailto:jwilliamson@txretailers.org)



## 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!](#)

### Member Spotlight: 3Grams Food Group



An emerging "Millennial Centric" food broker, 3grams Food Group, located in Flower Mound, Texas is a leader in building start up brands that focus on, natural, organic, artisanal and small batch produced products. We introduce Texas "functional food" brands to national leading retailers with offices in Seattle, Bentonville, Cincinnati and Chicago we have established partnerships with Costco, Walmart, Kroger and Walgreens. We also help regional brands get placement in Texas with all of our Texas retail and wholesale partners to bring Texans some of the highest quality and innovation

#### OUR VISION:

"To create a better way of life through building delicious, nutritious, convenient and innovative food"

#### OUR MISSION:

"To grow quality brands who have uncompromised ingredients, maintain value and create a world that tastes better."

#### OUR VALUES:

Every day, we lead with a conscious commitment to always do the right thing

1. Determination: We are empowered to do what it takes to deliver what we promised
2. Ingenious Collaboration: We nurture an environment that celebrates insatiable curiosity and diverse ideas
3. Purposeful Innovation: We delight our customers with solutions and enjoy shared value.

We partner with category DISRUPTORS who have innovative products that drive consumer purchases

For more information please contact us at [info@3gramsfoodgroup.com](mailto:info@3gramsfoodgroup.com) or (214) 998-9178

## 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!](#)

## Grocers Corner- In the Cart



The next Food Council Call will be on March 13th at 2:00PM. If you would like to participate in the call, please dial 972-497-2499. The conference code is 177204.

## WIC/SNAP Program Statistics Update

### WIC

Participants: 700,000  
Dollars: \$16,000,000

### SNAP

Participants: 3,522,541  
Dollars \$397,883,833

## Master of Science Food Industry Leadership Program

The Marshall School at USC has openings for its Master of Science, Food Industry Leadership program. Many current food industry executives have completed this outstanding course. It is ideal for food industry leaders looking to rise to the next level in their careers.

- Primarily online with two weeks on campus in Southern California
- Complete the course in 16 months

For information: [www.marshall.usc.edu](http://www.marshall.usc.edu)

## Meet Gen Z: New Products Draw New Customers

Consumers gravitate toward companies that innovatively create change. When it comes to finding ways to revise, present and sell a product, there are several things to consider. How is the consumer accessed? What message are consumers receiving? Does the appearance of the product accurately represent the company? What are the ethical costs of production? [Click here to continue reading](#)



TEXAS RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

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

**Click Here to Learn More!**

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