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## **N.G.A. LAUNCHES NEW CONVENTION CONCEPT FOCUSING ON ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT**

*Retailers, wholesalers and suppliers to participate in premier of S3, Supermarket Synergy Showcase, featuring pavilions and workshops for solutions in critical areas of the supermarket.*

**RESTON, Virginia (June 11, 2001)** — The National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) has designed a totally new concept for its 2002 convention that will feature interactive solution pavilions covering seven critical areas of the 21st century supermarket. To be held February 11-14, 2002 at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas, N.G.A.'s S3 Show will address marketing and operations issues that cover Center Store, Whole Health Solutions, Fresh & Prepared Foods, Specialty & Ethnic Foods, Fuel Center Solutions, Applied Technology & Fixtures, and Operational Services areas of the store with demonstrations, workshops, and support activities.

The concept of the convention will build on the success of this year's Healthy Living area in Dallas, where a section of J.B. Pratt's store was recreated in the pavilion area. J.B. Pratt, President and CEO of Pratt Foods Supermarkets in Shawnee, Oklahoma, participated in morning workshops and was on hand in the afternoon to meet directly with other retailers and wholesalers. In the months ahead, N.G.A. will identify retailers from across the country that have been creative and successful in one of the seven concept areas. It is N.G.A.'s goal to provide attendees of the 2002 Convention a "store within a store" interactive experience in all seven solution pavilions. Rather than ask manufacturers to build individual exhibits, which can become quite costly, N.G.A. will invite them to invest in the demonstration area, along with the workshops, business dialogues, and other educational programs dedicated to improving retail execution and performance.

"N.G.A. is all about cultivating business relationships, and the new convention format reflects our commitment to deliver value to our members every day of the year. As a result, sponsors of the convention will be able to communicate with our audience at the convention before, after, and throughout the year, through a series of interactive tools we are developing," said Tom Zaucha, President and CEO of N.G.A.

"We believe that while traditional expositions may continue to have a role in a marketing mix, the format of S3 provides sellers an efficient, cost effective forum to interact face-to-face with buyers and profit when the demonstrations are conducted in concert with educational activities before, during, and after the event."

In addition, N.G.A. looks to schedule opportunities, either at the convention and/or at other forums throughout the year, for manufacturers and their retail customers to meet directly in Strategic Business Dialogues. The goal is for all trading partners to work together to drive greater sales through the independent retail sector.

In seeking input from various manufacturers, N.G.A. received the following response from a leading national brand company, "Our company is enthusiastic for a retail/manufacturing dialogue forum at the convention next year. It's really big news in our industry when virtually all manufacturers look to be more focused on retail."

N.G.A. is poised to launch its new "web-based" registration process, bringing it into the 21st century, by offering on-line registration and hotel reservations. "We are committed to engaging the attendee from the point of registration, during the show, and finally with interactive follow-up throughout the year," Zaucha concluded.

N.G.A. is working with industry veteran Michael Muldoon of Convention Management Group to produce an event that will inform, educate and entertain all attendees.

N.G.A. is the national trade association representing the retail and wholesale grocers that comprise the independent sector of the food distribution industry. An independent retailer is a privately owned or controlled food retail company operating in a variety of formats. Some are publicly traded but with controlling shares held by the family. Wholesale distributors service most independent operators, while others may be partially or fully self-distributing. Independents are the true "entrepreneurs" of the grocery industry and dedicated to their customers, associates, and communities. N.G.A. members include retail and wholesale grocers and their state associations, as well as manufacturers and service suppliers.

