

Contact: Julie L. Ecker
Communications Manager
(703) 516-0700

VERMONT GROCERS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT RECEIVES N.G.A. SPIRIT OF AMERICA AWARD

ARLINGTON, Virginia (September 15, 2001) – Jim Harrison, president, Vermont Grocers Association, was presented today with the National Grocers Association's (N.G.A.) Spirit of America Award at the Vermont Grocers Association Annual Convention in Burlington, Vermont.

The award was presented by N.G.A. Senior Vice President and Senior Counsel, Tom Wenning, to Harrison in honor of his involvement in community and civic affairs, in praise of his support of the Vermont Grocers Association, in recognition of his active and effective participation in government affairs to preserve and foster the principals of free enterprise, and as a strong and effective advocate for the independent food distribution industry.

Harrison has been president of the Vermont Grocers Association, a statewide trade association representing over 750 retail stores and 160 suppliers to the industry, since 1987. As president, he oversees the various member programs and services and coordinates the organization's legislative representation. His prior food industry background has been beneficial in explaining Vermont retailers' concerns before various legislative and regulatory committees.

Prior to joining the Vermont Grocers Association, Harrison was the sales development manager for Associated Grocers of New England, a retailer-owned grocery wholesaler. Other industry experience includes retail operations with Foodmaster Supermarkets and Hannaford Brothers.

Currently, Harrison is a member of the N.G.A. board of directors, the American Society of Association Executives, and treasurer of the Vermont Grocers Credit Union. He is a past chairman of the Food Industry Association Executives, a past trustee and treasurer of the Vermont Foodbank, and a past president of the Vermont Society of Association Executives.

The N.G.A. Spirit of America Award, established in 1982, honors key industry and community figures who have provided leadership in the areas of community services and government relations on behalf of a free and independent food distribution system. Recipients of the award have included former Presidents Gerald Ford and George Bush; former Vice President Dan Quayle; former Speaker of the House, Tom Foley; Clinton Administration Chief of Staff, Leon Panetta; as well as other distinguished individuals serving the public interest.

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. Most independent operators are serviced by wholesale distributors, 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.