

Contact: Ron Margulis

RAM Communications

908.232.3230

Julie L. Ecker

National Grocers
Association

Communications Manager

703.516.0700

N.G.A. ANNUAL CONVENTION AND SUPERMARKET SYNERGY SHOWCASE (S3) PRODUCES LARGE INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE

Both independent retailer and wholesaler numbers and supplier numbers increased by more than 50 percent at this year's event in Las Vegas.

LAS VEGAS, Nevada (February 13, 2002) – The National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) announced that attendance at this year's Annual Convention and Supermarket Synergy Showcase (S3) increased by more than 50 percent from last year's event in Dallas.

"The transition from a traditional booth show to the S3 interactive concept show has been made and we are extremely pleased with the response," said Thomas K. Zaucha, president and CEO of N.G.A. "The attendance on the concept show floor and at our educational workshops surpassed our expectations and shows the strength of the community-based and community-focused supermarket retailer and the commitment to the sector by suppliers. I am very encouraged by the turnout and support for the organization."

Zaucha added that beginning with a keynote address by George Herbert Walker Bush, the 41st president of the United States, and finishing with the annual National Best Bagger Competition, "N.G.A. was able to offer attendees a wide range of innovative events."

Attendees also experienced several new initiatives and activities designed to help build sales and profits of many key categories in the supermarket. Among these are the Supermarket Synergy Showcase, which featured proven solutions to specific challenges facing independent supermarkets, and Trading Partner Business Sessions, which gave vendors the opportunity to conduct face-to-face meetings with their retail partners.

The Supermarket Synergy Showcase consisted of Center Store Sales, Whole Health Solutions, Fresh and Prepared Foods, Fuel Center Solutions, Applied Technology and Fixtures, and Specialty and Ethnic Foods concept areas. Each area included vendors delivering presentations and demonstrations that educated the trade on the benefits of the respective category.

"I think what impresses me the most about this show was the amount of information available to the trade," said Carole Bitter, president and CEO of Friedman's Supermarkets, a seven-store chain based in Butler, PA. "There is so much information available here on such issues as creative advertising and rewarding your associates, that I will take home and utilize at my own business. Plus, the new show format allowed me to spend more time with the vendors and really get to know about their products and categories."

"It is amazing what the level of energy is at the show," said Larry McCurry, executive director of industry and business development for Unilever Home & Personal Care-North America. "At a workshop we ran, we had an overflow of attendees. That tells me that people are interested in growing their businesses, as opposed to just cutting costs. Through this energy level, the creativity of the workshops and the general excitement on the exhibit floor, this convention is helping to provide a new focus on what is needed to successfully operate a grocery business."

Zaucha announced that the 2003 Annual Convention and Supermarket Synergy Showcase will also be held in Las Vegas next February.

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.