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## **N.G.A. SUPPORTS PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

*N.G.A.'s Immediate Past Chairman Steve Smith met with President George W. Bush and other leading corporate CEOs*

**ARLINGTON, Virginia (June 17, 2002)** – On Thursday, June 13, 2002, National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) president and CEO, Tom Zaucha and past N.G.A. chairman, Steve Smith, President and CEO, K-VA-T Food Stores, Abingdon, VA attended a meeting at the White House to support United States volunteer efforts through the *Businesses Strengthening America* campaign.

Zaucha and Smith first met with 17 other corporate leaders from organizations across the nation, as well as Freedom Corps Director, John Bridgeland, and other key White House staff members to discuss themes and objectives for the *Business Strengthening America* campaign for service and citizenship. The planning session was co-chaired by Steve Case, Chairman, AOL Time Warner and Robert Nardelli, President and CEO, Home Depot. Then in a closed Roosevelt Room meeting, Smith, along with other members of the CEO Working Group, met with President Bush and discussed the self-directed initiative of the campaign.

“On behalf of K-VA-T Food Stores and the National Grocers Association, I am pleased to be a part of *Businesses Strengthening America*. Our company and associates have a long history of community involvement and volunteerism, as do grocers across this country,” said Smith. “I look forward to enlisting their support in response to the President’s call for expanded volunteer commitment.”

In his report to the President, Smith identified four goals on behalf of N.G.A., which include: **an industry wide commitment to educate supermarket shoppers and associates about local volunteer opportunities; throughout America, commitment on the part of local, community-focused grocers to put comprehensive volunteer clearinghouse web site and toll-free number on grocery bags, have bag stuffers, point of sale signage, etc. – enabling shoppers to find volunteer opportunities; enlist supplier trading partners to support the initiative; and in cooperation with suppliers and U.S.A. Freedom Corps, make available “Be Prepared” items, products, and information to consumers.**

The four main objectives of the *Businesses Strengthening America* meeting were to determine how corporations can lead a campaign to strengthen America by encouraging increased service and citizenship; create institutional changes in how corporate support for service and participation is encouraged, rewarded, and measured; create a set of principles that can guide how companies of any size, in any industry, can develop their own policies and programs to foster service and citizenship; and recruit hundreds of corporate leaders for a fall Business Leadership Conference on Service, and develop results-oriented programs and policies that adhere to the principles.

“Grocers care about their communities, and the industry. The N.G.A. Grocers Care program has a long and proud history of supporting and promoting volunteerism in America,” said Zaucha. “N.G.A. enthusiastically embraces President Bush’s call for community service.”

In 1983, when President Ronald Reagan declared December 19th National Care and Share Day, he recognized the work of the members of N.G.A. for their support of food banks. The proclamation read, “It was a day to pay tribute to acts of charitable voluntarism and to promote community involvement in caring for the needs of our neighbors.” In 1984, N.G.A. created “Grocers Care” which honors companies and individuals for their support of civic and charitable acts. In 1988, President George H.W. Bush wrote a letter to Zaucha and N.G.A., which stated, “I cannot agree more with the National Grocers Association about small business’s critical role in shaping our nation’s economic future. Active leadership with public

service projects such as local food banks, cancer and heart associations and other charitable organizations reflects the true commitment independent retail grocers and their wholesalers have to the communities they serve.” In 1997, N.G.A. responded to Colin Powell’s call to service and joined his *America’s Promise Campaign*.

*Businesses Strengthening America* was formed in response to President Bush’s call to service he made during his State of the Union Address. It is a self-directed, multi-year effort to engage hundreds of America’s business leaders in helping corporations, employees, and consumers strengthen civic participation. *Businesses Strengthening America* is based on the premise that a strong commitment to volunteering and civic responsibility serves corporate interests as well as community, national, and global needs by increasing employee, consumer, and shareholder loyalty.

Other executives participating in the meeting included F. Duane Ackerman, Chairman and Ceo, BellSouth Corporation; Michael Armstrong, Chairman, CEO, AT&T; David Bronczek, President and CEO, Federal Express Corporation; Stephen Burke, President, Comcast Cable Communications, Inc.; Stephen Case, Chairman, AOL Time Warner, Inc.; Raymond Chambers, Chairman, New Jersey Devils and Owner, YankeesNets LLC; Phil Chiapparone, Vice Chair, EDS; Michael Eisner, Chairman and CEO, The Walt Disney Company; Michael Eskew, Chairman and CEO, United Parcel Service, Inc.; Geraldine Laybourne, Chairman and CEO, Oxygen Media; J.W. Marriott, Jr., Chairman and CEO, Marriott International, Inc.; Robert Nardelli, Chairman and CEO, Home Depot; Franklin Raines, Chairman and CEO, Fannie Mae; Jeffrey Swartz, CEO, The Timberland Company; Sidney Taurel, Chairman, President and CEO, Eli Lilly and Company; G. Kennedy Thompson, CEO, Wachovia Corporation; and Robert Willumstad, President, Citigroup.

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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.