

Contact: Julie L. Ecke

National Grocers Association

Communications Manager

(703) 516-0700

N.G.A. Announces New Chairman for its Board of Directors

ARLINGTON, Virginia (September 12, 2002) — The National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) recently appointed its new Chairman of the Board, Michael S. Needler, President and CEO of Fresh Encounter, Inc, Findlay, Ohio.

Fresh Encounter operates 29 stores under the following banners: Great Scot, Sack N' Save, Community Markets, Fulmer, Bob & Carl's, and Ev's supermarkets. Needler joined Fresh Encounter, Inc. in 1966 and purchased the company in 1996. He has over 36 years experience in the independent grocery retail business and is active in several industry organizations. Needler is a former director of the Ohio Grocers Association, and serves on the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants Legislative Action Committee. He continues to be actively involved in numerous community organizations and resides in Findlay, Ohio with his wife Kathy.

"We are privileged to have Mike as the new chairman for the National Grocers Association. His extensive experience in the independent grocery business will make him a strong and effective leader and advocate for our organization and for community-focused companies across the country," said N.G.A. President and CEO, Tom Zaucha.

"I am pleased to have the opportunity to serve the many independent grocers and wholesalers of our country as Chairman of N.G.A.," said Needler. "I look forward to continuing to work with Tom Zaucha and the N.G.A. staff as we fight for a level playing field for independent supermarket operators, permanent repeal of the death tax, and many other important issues facing our industry."

The appointment of Needler followed the announcement that Chuck Pilliter, former N.G.A. chairman and executive vice president and COO of Unified Western Grocers, resigned and joined Monrovia, California-based Trader Joe's Co., as senior vice president, operations.

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 and others are employee owned. 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.