When looking at a piece of legislation, I initially read a summary to determine whether it is an issue that will negatively affect our members. At first glance, Senate Bill 211 didn’t seem like something that the industry would worry about. The legislation would make it “unlawful to misrepresent a non-animal product and non-slaughtered animal flesh as meat.”

I think we all agree that transparency and accuracy in labeling is very important to our customers. When farmers wanted to ensure that companies making plant-based products were not using phrases that referred to their products as meat, how harmful can that be?

I sent out our legislative update, asking for comments like I do every week during session. No response. The bill moved through the Senate Agriculture Committee, then passed the full Senate. With only eight days left in our legislative session, I got a call from one of our supplier members, asking me to look at the significant implications the bill would have for her company.

Although similar bills were being introduced across the country, it turns out, the Georgia bill was the strictest in the country. (Remember Vermont and their GMO labeling legislation?) And the Georgia bill was quickly making itself to becoming a law.

By the time the bill passed the full Senate, the bill was amended to make it unlawful “to label, advertise, or otherwise represent any food produced or sold in this state as meat, beef, pork, or any other such term generally utilized to describe animal based food, unless at least 90 percent of such food is composed of the animal”. (The bill also included eggs, fish and poultry)

All of a sudden, the bill became a VERY big deal. We came up with several examples of what might be illegal to sell on Georgia shelves. Chocolate eggs? Goldfish crackers? Chicken of the Sea Tuna? (The bill’s intent to protect consumers from being misled never meant to include these items as unlawful, but again, the devil is in the details.) Mandating that a product must be composed of at least 90 percent of the animal for labeling purposes meant even products with actual meat would be in violation. What about a chicken kabob in your fresh meat case? A sausage biscuit? Beef and bean chili? Chicken noodle soup? A beef burrito?

Finally, because there was no date in the legislation, all these changes would have to happen by July 1st. (The day all bills become law) The planning, implementation of food packaging takes much longer than a few months, so many products would have to be pulled from Georgia shelves. Cont. on page 14
2019 Legislative Highlights

Remember School House Rock’s “I’m Just a Bill?”

It’s a great refresher on the long journey from the time a bill is introduced to the time it actually becomes a law. Over 1000 bills were introduced during the first year of the 2019-2020 session, and the GFIA lobbying team was at the capitol every day, looking out for our members.

The Georgia General Assembly concluded the 2019 legislative session at midnight on April 2nd. The highest profile issues that passed included the state’s $27.5 billion-dollar budget that included a popular $3,000 raise for teachers. There were more restrictions on abortions, less restrictions on hospital competition, a new touchscreen voting system, Medicaid waivers, rural broadband and expansion of medical marijuana.

High profile bills that did not pass this year included legislation on casinos, hate crimes, tax breaks for airlines, private school vouchers, rural transit and oversight of Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

Differences in legislative priorities between the House and Senate stalled several bills on the last days of the session. Disagreements on whether Uber and Lyft should collect tax from their riders meant an online facilitator bill will have to be addressed next session. Legislators also could not agree on an alcohol tasting bill for liquor stores that morphed into a positive bill for grocers.

As a reminder, bills that are listed as “did not pass” are still active during the 2020 legislative session.

Alcohol

When it comes to alcohol, this session was known for what did NOT pass - tastings in package stores; parity in hours for Sunday sales and easing of distance requirements. Last minute bills included statewide license application and wholesaler/retailer relationship changes for small breweries.

We did move the ball forward on alcohol issues by meeting with legislators, Revenue Commissioner Lynne Riley, and the Governor’s office on fixing on-line grocery penalties and a future delivery bill.

An alcohol tasting bill for liquor stores (SB146), morphed into an omnibus bill that included everything from allowing grocery stores to sell beer and wine at 11:00am on Sundays, removing the referendum requirement for changing the hours of Sunday Sales, limiting the tastings in package stores to 24 per year, and easing restrictions for a retailer in Savannah regarding distance requirements for alcohol sales near schools. Did not pass.

Another alcohol bill, HB76, originally introduced to ease the distance requirement around Savannah College of Art and Design also morphed into a larger bill by allowing alcohol tastings in liquor stores as well as adding a referendum requirement. Did not pass.

A Senate Study Committee on Pari-mutuel wagering, horse racing and casino gambling with the introduction of SR367. Passed

Several bills were introduced, but only a Senate study committee on gambling passed this year.

A Senate Study Committee on Pari-mutuel wagering, horse racing and casino gambling with the introduction of SR367. Passed

A limited number of licensed destination resort facilities casino resorts would be allowed under SR184. Did not pass.

HR 327 would ask voters during the 2020 election whether casinos should be legalized in Georgia. Did not pass.

General Business

Prohibitions on cough syrup will be back next year; Money order fee bill fails to gain momentum; Business court is established.

The sale of over the counter medicine containing dextromethorphan would be
prohibited to anyone under the age of 18 under SB272. Retailers would receive a warning letter for the first violation and a $100 penalty for additional violations and adding penalties for minors purchasing the products. A similar bill was introduced in the House, but HB112, a House was introduced earlier in the session without penalties for the minors. Did not pass.

A new Business Court is established under HB239. Passed, and signed by the Governor.

Do you sell money orders? A bill that would have required merchants to charge fees for customers purchasing money orders, never passed. HB532 would require a $10 fee for money orders under $500 and 2% of the transaction for larger transactions. Authorized agents would be compensated 5% of the fees. Customers would save their receipts and for a tax credit on the fees paid. Did not pass.

Local government who imposes regulatory fees and requirements related to construction or alteration of buildings would have to make available a schedule of the costs under HB493. The bill limits the cost of the fee and allows the permitting fee to be reduced if a private engineer is needed to complete the job in a timely manner. Passed, and signed by the Governor.

Labeling

Bill would require many current items to be taken off Georgia’s shelves

Sometimes a brief description of a bill doesn’t give you the details to know if it is harmful to our members. SB 211 would make it “unlawful to misrepresent a nonanimal product and non-slaughtered animal flesh as meat.” By the time the bill passed the full Senate, SB 211 would make it unlawful to label, advertise, or otherwise represent any food produced or sold in this state as meat, beef, pork, or any other such term generally utilized to describe animal based food, unless at least 90 percent of such food is composed of the animal. (They also included eggs, fish and poultry)

It would also be unlawful to label the products as meat if any portion of such food contains cultured animal tissue produced from in vitro animal cell cultures outside of the organism from which it is derived.” Passed Senate; has not yet been heard in House Committee.

The GFIA worked with House Agriculture Chairman Tom McCall, Senate Agriculture Chairman John Wilkinson and Senator Tyler Harper to address the industry’s concerns. We will work with stakeholders before next session.

Labor

No appetite from Republicans to allow labor bills to move forward

Employers would be prohibited from relying upon salary history information when making certain decisions about an applicant during the hiring process under both HB5 and SB49. Did not pass.

The minimum wage for Georgians would increase to $15.00 per hour as of January 1, 2020 under SB 46 and would increase each year based on the cost of living. Did not pass.

Hemp/Marijuana

Hemp farming bill and a compromise medical marijuana bill passes

Legislators compromised on a medical marijuana bill on the last hours of the session. HB324, would permit limited medical marijuana and growing, manufacturing, testing and distribution. The bill was stalled until Governor Kemp helped broker a deal to provide a balance between providing access for patients and the concern that this will lead to illegal drug use.

The compromise bill would allow six private companies can grow medical marijuana, but no dispensaries will be allowed until a state board licenses them. Passed, and signed by the Governor.

A hemp farming bill, HB213, would allow farmers to grow the hemp needed to make CBD, which is legal in the United States if it contains less than 0.3 percent THC. Georgia would join 41 states that already have a hemp program. Passed, and signed by the Governor.

Taxes

Nexus bill passes, but facilitator stalls; no action on exemption for feminine hygiene products

In another effort to tax online retailers as brick and mortar retailers, HB 182 would require retailers to collect the sales tax if they have at least $100,000 (instead of the current $250,000) in annual Georgia sales. Passed, and signed by the Governor.

Should companies that “facilitate” transactions be required to collect and remit sales tax for their companies? The majority of legislators overwhelmed agree that online companies should collect and remit sales and use tax just like brick and mortar retailers, but there was not consensus as to whether Uber and Lyft be exempt from collecting the tax. HB276 was amended in the Senate with an exemption for rideshare services, taxis and limousines, but the House did not agree with the changes. Did not pass.

The state sales tax on feminine hygiene products would be exempt under HB8. Did not pass.

Tobacco

No appetite for tobacco tax bills this session

An increased excise tax on a pack of cigarettes would have gone from 37 cents to $1.87 under HB731. The bill called for cigars to increase from 23 to 42 percent of the wholesale cost price, and loose or smokeless tobacco would increase from 10 to 42 percent of the wholesale cost price. Did not pass.

Tort Reform

Study committee to Reduce the Cost of Doing Business Passes; Seat Belt Usage as Admissible Evidence in Civil Cases Failed; Phantom damages bill and limits on jury awards stall in committee;

HB353 creates a crime related to staging a motor vehicle collision, in an effort to thwart insurance fraud. Passed, and signed by the Governor.

Senators are trying to reduce the cost of doing business in the state through a study committee with SR433. The study committee appears to be a mechanism to discuss a
multitude of issues, especially tort reform in healthcare and otherwise. **Passed. Does not require signature of the Governor.**

Known as the “phantom damages bill”, **SB155** would allow that in the recovery of damages from death or injury, only actual amounts paid for health care services or treatment shall be recoverable. **Did not pass – still alive for next year.**

“Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to allow for limitations on the amount of jury awards in civil cases?” This would be the question that would be on the ballot according to **HR256**. **Did not pass.**

**HB171** was amended in Senate committee with language from SB 148 allowing that the failure to adhere to Georgia’s seatbelt law may be considered in any civil action as evidence admissible on the issues of failure to mitigate damages, assumption of risk, apportionment of fault, negligence, comparative negligence, contributory negligence, or causation. A series of amendments were proposed, and multiple votes were taken. **The bill failed with a vote of 27-28.**

**Pharmacy**

**Single vaccine protocol agreement and more restrictions for PBMs**

A major victory for pharmacists will be the reduction in bureaucracy by allowing a single, state-wide protocol agreement between the pharmacist and a physician in the final version of **SB115**. The original bill failed to get out of the House Rules Committee before Crossover Day and after weeks of trying, we were given the approval to add the language bill to **SB115** as a House Rules Committee substitute. After the bill passed the House, the Senate agreed with the changes. **Passed, and signed by the Governor.**

Thank you to House and Senate leadership for working to make this happen. Our pharmacists appreciate the ability to better to serve their patients and the GFIA loves the opportunity to cut through red tape and save time and money for our members.

Pharmacies were also happy with additional requirements put on pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) with the passage of two bills this Session. **HB233** and **HB323** strengthen Georgia’s anti-mandatory-mail-order provision and prohibit PBM steering. **Both bills passed.**

**Transportation**

**Freight, Innovation, and Logistics to be Studied**

A Senate and House resolution were introduced to study and recommend public policy changes concerning Georgia freight, innovation and logistics investment projects under **SR 318** and **HR 37**. **Both resolutions passed.**

**Organized Retail Crime**

**Stolen gift cards linked to Organized Retail Crime**

In an effort to curb the organized retail theft of gift cards, **HB488** was introduced to require any sale or purchase of gift cards by merchants or persons other than the issuer or authorized agent to keep records of the transaction for at least three years. **Did not pass.**

**Hear the inside story on the 2019 session directly from state legislators during the Friday & Saturday legislative breakfats at our annual convention!**

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**GFIA Members at the Capitol!**

Although our legislative reception was cancelled due to expected snow, several of our members made time to head down to the capitol this year. If you have an interest in visiting the state capitol, we would love to serve as your host!
Thank you for Feeding our Hungry Legislators!

Many thanks to the GFIA members who supported our legislative efforts by donating product during the legislative session. We hosted the senate anteroom, adjacent to the senate chamber, where legislators come to enjoy breakfast, coffee and snacks throughout the day. We work in conjunction with the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores, who hosts the House anteroom.

This year, we were well stocked with snacks, fruit, nuts, granola bars, cookies, crackers, popcorn, 5 Hour Energy shots and M&Ms. The legislators and their staffs enjoyed the food that was provided by our members.

**Product donations were provided by:**

- Campbell Snacks
- Kellogg’s
- 5 Hour Energy
- M&M Mars Candies
- Mondelez International
- Publix Super Markets, Inc.
- The Kroger Company

LT. Governor Geoff Duncan needs all the energy he can get as he leads the Senate in his first session as Lt. Governor.

Representative Gloria Frazier is all smiles with her Kellogg’s Nutri Grain bars.

A bi-partisan group of House members can agree on one thing—They LOVE Lance popcorn!

Senate Majority Leader Mike Dugan knows his senators can get a boost from some 5 Hour Energy shots!

Senator Horecena Tate appreciates GFIA’s daily fruit “bascart”

Senator Nikema Williams loves Lance peanut butter crackers!

Senators Blake Tillery and Renee Unterman enjoy a Belvita bar during a break.

House members model their favorite snack—M & Ms!

### Food Industry for Good Government

*We thank the following members for their commitment to our political efforts!*

| Platinum Level $10,000+ | The Kroger Company  
The Kroger Company  
Publix Super Markets, Inc. |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Gold Level $2,500+       | Quality Foods, Inc.  
Wayfield Foods, Inc. |
| Silver Level $1,000+     | Food Depot  
Food Lion, LLC  
J.T.M. Corporation (Piggly Wiggly)  
McDaniels Piggly Wiggly  
Merchants Distributors, Inc.  
RBG Foods  
Walmart Stores, Inc. |
| Bronze Level $250+       | Adams Food Center  
Clarkston Thriftown, Inc.  
Crooks Marketplace  
Dill’s Food City, Inc.  
Ellaville Piggly Wiggly  
Foodfresh  
Foothills IGA Market  
Ira Higdon Grocery Company  
J & J Foods, Inc.  
Jones Red & White  
Little Giant Farmer’s Market  
Market Grocery Company  
Northeast Sales, Inc.  
Piggly Wiggly Alabama Dist. Co.  
PMA Supermarkets  
Reynolds Foodliner, Inc.  
Sherwood Foods  
Tybee Market IGA  
UNFI  
West Foods |
| Club Level $25+          | C&J’s Supermarket  
Cooper Foods  
SpartanNash Company |
GFIA Members Head to Washington to Fix the “Retail Glitch” and Truck Driver Shortage

Over 170 retailers and wholesalers from across the country flew into Washington on April 30-May 1 for this year’s annual Washington Fly In. Over a fast and furious two days, our group of members visited several legislator offices.

Our group brought important messages to legislators, asking them to fix the retail glitch in the new tax code by supporting the Restoring Investment in Improvements Act. The legislation would increase cash flow and encourage retailers to invest in their businesses.

We also asked our elected officials to support efforts to address the truck driver shortage in this country.

A special thanks to our national partners, FMI and NGA, who make our industry’s voice heard every day on a national level.

What is the Retail Glitch?

A drafting error in Sec. 168 of the new tax code prevents retailers from being eligible for Congress’ intended benefit of 100% bonus depreciation for qualified improvement property (interior remodels to buildings such as refrigeration systems, shelving units, ceiling and flooring tiles, and electrical wiring). It is causing major cash flow issues for retailers and preventing them from making important improvements to their stores.

The retail glitch has caused family-owned and privately-held grocers to be ineligible for a major benefit provided by the new tax code, in addition to being ineligible for bonus depreciation. The drafting error also means that interior remodels to stores depreciate over 39 years instead of one year, causing significant cash flow and planning concerns.

Truck Driver Shortage Legislation Would Help Industry

The Drive-Safe Act is a two-year pronged apprenticeship program. Under the legislation, once a driver qualifies for a commercial driver’s license (after the age of 18), they could begin a two-step additional training/apprenticeship program with rigorous performance benchmarks. Drivers would have to complete at least 400 hours of on-duty time and 240 hours of driving time in a cab with an experienced driver before they can drive interstate loads without a trained, licensed interstate driver. Every driver in this program would be required to train on trucks equipped with new safety technology, including active braking collision mitigation systems, video event capture and a speed governor of 65 miles per hour or below.

Current state law allows drivers to be eligible to seek a commercial driver’s license at age 18 in most states; however federal law currently prohibits commercially licensed adults from driving across state lines before age 21. This legislation would revise federal law to help alleviate the shortage in a way that provides better training and safety equipment for the next generation of drivers.

“The Day in Washington is the one time when the industry comes together to educate our federal legislators. They appreciate when their constituents educate them with real examples affecting our bottom line.”

Tom Coogle - Reynold’s Foodliner

“I believe our representatives in Washington want to make things better in America. I think they really value feedback and input from their constituents to help guide them. This was my first Day in Washington and I enjoyed visiting the people we have elected to help shape our future.”

Keith Milligan - J.T.M. Corporation

Senator David Perdue meets with GA delegation
Thanks to our Dedicated Team!

Thanks to the following GFIA members who brought our message to Georgia’s legislators on Capitol Hill:

Mike Coggins, Sherwood Foods; Tom Coogle, Reynolds Foodliner; Greg Crook, Crook’s Marketplace; Ron Edenfield, Wayfield Foods; Michael Gay, Foodfresh; Randy and Brenda Gentry, RBG Foods; Keith Milligan, JTM Corporation and Andre White and Moses White, Wayfield Foods.

Ron Edenfield, President of Wayfield Foods, is a veteran to the Washington Fly-In. He believes that it’s important to go every year to establish relationship and trust with federal lawmakers. “When we have something that adversely affects our business, the legislators will listen because they already know us and our industry.”
Can a Customer Purchase Beer and Wine Through Curbside Pick-up Programs?

Yes, but Proceed With Caution!

The supermarket industry is experiencing major changes and our members are using technology to make shopping more convenient for their customers. Several of our members have introduced a curbside pickup program, which is becoming increasingly popular. With the convenient program, the customer chooses their order online and designates a pickup time. The grocer does all the shopping and loads the customer’s order in their car at the time of pick up.

Over two years ago, retailers reached out to the Georgia Food Industry Association for assistance. Georgia customers were able to order beer and wine on-line, but state regulations required the customers to come into the store to pay for their beer and wine purchases. Not exactly the convenient option that retailers were striving to offer!

After a series of meeting with Georgia Department of Revenue and interested stakeholders, the Department granted our request to allow curbside pick-up; however, there are some complicated rules and very harsh penalties for violations. Retailers that sell distilled spirits will NOT be allowed to participate in a curbside program (although a drive-in window is permissible).

Go to the GFIA’s website for the full regulation, but here are the highlights:

- Except when prohibited by local ordinance, retailers may offer online “curbside pickup” of Malt Beverages and Wine. Purchased goods must be delivered to the purchaser’s vehicle which must be located within a clearly designated pickup area located adjacent to the Place of Business.

- Malt Beverages and Wine sold as part of “curbside pickup” must be pulled from the inventory located at the licensed location of the Retailer providing the “curbside pickup” and may not be pulled from the inventory of another Retailer or licensed location.

- Purchasers of Malt Beverage and Wine pursuant to this regulation must be registered with the Retailer prior to ordering alcoholic beverages online for “curbside pickup.”

- Curbside Delivery of Malt Beverages and Wine may only be made if the name of the purchaser registered on the account matches the name on the driver’s license or other proper identification of the individual accepting delivery.

- Any employee delivering Malt Beverages or Wine to a purchaser’s car must electronically record the age of the person accepting delivery.

In addition to any current penalties for violations:

- First violation of the grocery pick-up regulation will result in a license suspension for a period of one month.

- A second violation of the grocery pick-up regulation within one year from the date of citation for a previous violation will result in a license suspension for a period of one year.

The GFIA is continuing to work with officials to make this program less onerous for our retailers. Contact Kathy Kuzava for any questions.
MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE EXCITING GFIA EVENTS
Details are at www.GFIA.org/events

Annual GFIA Convention
July 17-21, 2019
Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort
Destin, FL

Holiday Extravaganza
December 3, 2019
Cobb Galleria Centre

Fall Golf Tournament
October 16, 2019
Chateau Elan Golf Club
Braselton, GA

Legislative Reception
January 28, 2020
Sloppy Floyd Building
Atlanta, GA

WELCOME

NEW GFIA MEMBERS

Associate Members
Austin Eastciders
Body Armor
Coach Joe’s Enterprises
Copper Cane Wine & Provisions
Creature Comforts Brewing Co.
Dyla LLC (FoRTO)
ECRS
Fundamental Beverages
Kahiki Foods
King’s Hawaiian
Lewis Bakeries
Line Creek Brewing Co.

McKee Foods / Little Debbie
Monster Energy
Nectar
Overdrive Logistics
Planet H20
Sun City Produce
Super Charged All Natural Hydrating Sports Drink

Retail Members
La Morena, Jonesboro, GA
Wholesale Food Outlet IGA, Calhoun, GA
Wholesale Food Outlet IGA, Forest Park, GA
$132,000 Awarded to Deserving Students

Since 1996, the Georgia Food Industry Education Foundation has provided scholarship funding to deserving students in our industry. We are proud to announce that GFIA member companies have stepped up to offer 104 scholarships worth more than $132,000 in scholarship awards for the 2018-2019 program. This year, competition was fierce as more than 650 applicants submitted their credentials for review. Winners will be announced in late May.

Piggyback Award Donors & Sponsored Award Donors

Piggyback awards are available only to the sponsoring member’s employees.

Dill’s Food City, Inc.
Food Lion LLC
Foothills IGA Market
Ira Higdon Grocery Company
J & J Foods, Inc.
The Kroger Company
Market Grocery Company
Milko, Inc.
Pepsi Beverages Company
Publix Super Markets, Inc.
Quality Foods, Inc.
RBG Foods
Reynolds Foodliner, Inc.
Southeastern Grocers
Wayfield Foods, Inc.

Sponsored awards are available to employees of all GFIA member companies who meet the established award criteria.

Anheuser-Busch, Inc.
& The GA Wholesaler Family
Blue Bell Creameries
Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED
Heineken USA
Linea Private Wealth Management
Pepsi Beverages Company

Foundation Awards

In addition to the Piggyback & Sponsored Awards, the Foundation funds 40 additional scholarships, which are available to employees of GFIA member companies who meet the criteria. These awards are made possible by our fundraisers, as well as a generous $15,000 grant from Publix Super Market Charities.

Go to GFIA.org for a complete listing of available scholarships

Huge thanks go to the member companies listed below that recognize the impact and value of providing quality education to our students.

Sponsored award donors are available to employees of all GFIA member companies who meet the established award criteria.

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Sponsorship Award Donors

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RBG Foods
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Sponsors are a great employer benefit – let us help you set up a program for your employees. The Foundation will administer the entire program FREE of cost to you! Contact the GFIA office for details.

SUPPORT OUR CONVENTION FUNDRAISERS -

Help us to provide scholarships to industry students by supporting our Silent and Live Auctions at the GFIA convention in July. Here is a sneak peek at the exciting items that will be included in this year’s live auction.

• Week stay at an unbelievable 7-bedroom house that sleeps 23 people --- DIRECTLY on Panama City Beach, courtesy of Kevin McDaniel
• Suite for an upcoming United Atlanta game (14 tickets), courtesy of Pepsi Beverages
• Exciting UGA football package, courtesy of Verlin Reece
• 7-night stay in a beautiful Panama City condo, courtesy of Ron Edenfield
• Week at a gorgeous condo in Siesta Keys, courtesy of Jeff Downing
• Full-page color ad in The Shelby Report
• Two-Day Quail Hunting Trip, details coming soon

MORE ITEMS WILL BE ANNOUNCED SOON!

Retailer trips offered prior to convention

• Recreation for Education (golf with Jamey Leseueur, skeet shoot with Kerry Hitchcock and golf with Verlin Reece!)  
• Dinner with Tim Brown and Kroger leadership

How Can You Help?

• Donate Items to Sell
• Donate Cash
• Purchase Silent Auction Items
• Purchase Raffle Tickets

“The Voice of the Food Industry in Georgia”
The Voice of the Food Industry in Georgia

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17
Registration open 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Diamond Sponsor Welcome Party
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Diamond sponsors, all retailers, wholesalers and our board of directors and board of trustees are invited from 6:30pm-8:30pm.

THURSDAY, JULY 18
Registration open 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM
• Snack Shack 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
• Mayfield Ice Cream Station
  9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Wine Tasting and Welcome Party
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
The event will feature a host of wine selections and experts to answer all of your questions.
Opening Night Party
8:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Join us for a SHELLEBRATION as we enjoy a night of games, food and entertainment for the whole family! Kids are invited to dress up like mermaids, hula girls, fisherman, or pirates of the sea! Shell out big clams for the Silent Auction for Scholarships held throughout the evening. And don’t miss the Annual Best Bagger Contest- cheer on baggers from across the state!

SNACK SHACK HOURS:
Thursday & Friday
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Lunch served
11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

FRIDAY, JULY 19
Legislative Breakfast
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM
Enjoy a delicious breakfast as you listen to an update on the 2019 legislative session from some of Georgia’s top elected leaders. Get behind the scenes story on legislation and issues that affect Georgia’s grocery industry.
The Lens of Leadership – Nine Strategic Shifts in Perspective
9:30 AM – 11:00 AM
Let’s face it. Our industry is changing at such a fast pace, it is more challenging than ever to be an effective leader. Join author and speaker Kevin Paul Scott as he shares how a shift in perspective can give us better insight with our teams, our organizations and our families.
Executives from Chick-Fil-A, Delta Airlines, The Coca-Cola Company and even Coach Vince Dooley agree that our speaker’s newest subject will make a difference for leaders. Effective leaders are always looking for ways to grow, and this presentation is dedicated to you!

Hemps’s Path to Retail
11:15 AM – 12:15 PM
After the Farm Bill legalized hemp cultivation, hemp-derived products have flooded the market, including CBD-based products. Will CBD oil be on the traditional grocer’s shelves? Some analysts project this will be a multibillion-dollar business within five years. Is CBD the revolutionary discovery that will get rid of anxiety and pain? Or just a fad?
Join our panel of experts who can educate our attendees the legalties on this topical issue. You just may leave with a different perspective!
CONVENTION PREVIEW

Independent Council Luncheon
12:30 PM – 1:45 PM
Independent retailers and wholesalers - this one is for you! Join Kevin Paul Scott as he delivers a message geared to the independent retailer. Don’t miss the opportunity to spend time with your peers and leave with practical and valuable tips!

“Margaritavilla Shellabration”
6:30 PM – 11:00 PM
Wear your best Hawaiian beach gear and join us for all of the fun-cocktails, dinner, dancing and a live auction with something for everyone! Get ready to bid on beach vacations, an Atlanta United hospitality suite, golf trips and more!

SATURDAY, JULY 20
Legislative Breakfast
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM
Enjoy another delicious breakfast as you listen to more elected officials bring you news from inside the gold dome.

Grocers Give
9:15 AM – 10:30 AM
Celebrate the generosity of our fine industry as we join together to prepare 3,000 bags of food for hungry children. All family members are invited to attend this event as we work with Sandestin Foundation for Kids to make a difference for families effected by Hurricane Michael. Don’t miss this opportunity for the whole family to participate in a worthy cause!

Decision Maker Exhibit Show
(Retailers and Wholesalers only)
10:45 AM – 12:45 PM
Before the trade show opens to all attendees, our exhibitors host a VIP preshow for retailers & wholesalers to sample products and see new offerings.

GFIA Trade Show
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
The GFIA trade show is always a Shellebration! It will be a must “sea” as booths are decked out in all of the sights and sounds of a seaside Shellebration! There will be lots of sunken treasure so bring the whole family along! More than 80 vendors will have their products and services on display. Visit each booth to win prizes, learn about new products and enjoy some family fun as this popular event!

Chairman’s Cocktail Party, Awards Dinner & Dessert Party
6:45 PM – 10:00 PM
The convention wraps up on Saturday evening as we “Shellebrate” our industry achievements. We will recognize our convention sponsors, industry leaders and present this year’s prestigious Legacy Award.
The Voice of the Food Industry in Georgia

Convention Speakers Bring an “Ocean of Opportunity” to our Attendees

If you are like most of us, your perspective certainly changes over time. Sometimes a shift in perspective can open you up to an ocean of opportunities, both in your business and personal life. This year’s GFIA convention is dedicated to finding those opportunities.

Let’s start with “The Lens of Leadership,” where we bring back speaker Kevin Paul Scott who will challenge all of us to look at things through a different perspective. After spending time with this popular leader and author, you will receive better insight on many aspects of your life. Scott says that how we “view” things changes how we “do” things, and that shapes the culture of your team. Leaders often make changes to organizational structure, strategies, and personnel without addressing the one thing that can radically transform and their leadership: perspective.

In the presentation “The Lens Of Leadership,” author and leader Kevin Paul Scott will challenge how you see your role and your relationships. Looking through a new lens in nine aspects of leadership can make a significant difference in all aspects of your life. Each time we make a strategic shift in these nine areas, we elevate ourselves, our teams, and our organizations.

Scott has traveled to six continents and spoken to leaders in more than 100 countries. He is co-founder of ADDO Worldwide, a leadership consultancy company. In partnership with Chick-fil-A and Coca-Cola, ADDO created the Chick-fil-A Leader Academy.

Speaking of opportunities, the convention will bring you a panel of experts who will educate you on the rapidly growing market of CBD products. Consumers are very quickly changing their perceptions on hemp and CBD oil products.

In fact, Winsight Grocery Business says CBD is “arguably the hottest and most ambiguous retail topic of 2019. Products from CBD oil, to lotions, waters and even pet food are popping up. So, what is legal in Georgia?

The passage of the 2018 Farm Bill removed hemp from the Controlled Substances Act and legalized hemp cultivation. During the last hours of Georgia’s legislative session, the “Georgia’s Hope Act” passed to allow for the cultivation, manufacturing, and dispensing of low THC oil with a lawful valid license to allow registered patients to obtain low THC oil in Georgia.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it will hold a public hearing on May 31 to gather more information on the science, manufacturing and sale of cannabis compounds like CBD. Regulators announced that they are exploring ways the marijuana extract can be used legally in foods, dietary supplements and cosmetics.

Our convention panel will educate you on Georgia’s laws and learn more about the legalities of industrial hemp, cannabis and medical marijuana.

Cont. from page 1.

I went to House Agriculture Chairman, Tom McCall, with the industry’s concerns over the unintended consequences of the language. Requiring a different label on products sold in Georgia stores would create a massive headache and cost for suppliers, retailers and our customers.

I worked through the rest of the session on language that would work with all parties, but time ran out. We committed to Chairman McCall that we would pull the stakeholders together for some meetings during the summer to address all concerns.

I have researched so much over the last few weeks and have looked at the labeling on plant-based, vegetarian and meatless products and I understand that this is a growing category. I have also learned about the future of “cell- based meat” that is produced from in a lab. (The bill would also make it unlawful to label these products as meat)

This experience has left me with a few parting thoughts:

- The Federal Government should decide on labeling guidelines for the entire country.
- The devil is truly in the details.
- I am extremely grateful for Chairman McCall, Senator Tyler Harper and Senate Agriculture Chairman John Wilkinson for listening to our concerns.

And finally—

- I am hungry for a juicy burger or a tender filet mignon made from REAL beef!!

Don’t miss the GFIA’s legislative panel at this year’s convention, where you should bring examples of how this legislation would affect YOUR company!
Diamond Sponsors Feel the Love

To show appreciation to our Diamond Level sponsors, the GFIA offers additional events and recognition throughout the year for these top level sponsors. On May 2, Tim Brown and his team at the Kroger Company treated our Diamond Sponsors to a delicious breakfast prepared by their team of chefs. Brown talked about his commitment to the GFIA and gave the group some insight on the newest developments in Kroger’s Atlanta Division. Bettina Hall, who serves on the association’s board of trustees, thanked the group for their support of the Foundation’s March golf tournament.

The following week, Jamey Leseueur, Executive Vice President of Food Depot and other independent retailer board members hosted our Diamond Sponsors for a breakfast at GFIA’s new office in Smyrna. Leseueur shared some of the challenges that Georgia’s independent retailers face and expressed his appreciation for the support and commitment of these top level sponsors. Leseueur will become GFIA chairman at the July convention.
Independent Council Meeting

A record group of independents from across the state came together for an informative day at GFIA’s new office in Smyrna. To start off the meeting, Independent Council Chairman Tom Coogle of Reynolds Foodliner introduced Jack Carlile, UNFI and Dave Logue, MDI, who discussed Georgia’s changing grocery climate.

Speaker Kevin Paul Scott and his team from ADDO, a leadership consulting group, led a discussion about the results of our independent retailer survey and the needs of today’s independent retailer. We shared ideas in three key areas – bottom line impact, branding and employee training. Results will be presented at the Independent Council Luncheon during the convention.

Federated Insurance shared a powerful video, showing the financial impact of verdicts against companies for distracted driving accidents. DJ Hanlin educated the group about the importance of having a company policy on the use of handheld and hands-free devices. Although Georgia law allows us to use a handheld device while driving, the National Safety Council recommends a complete ban on the use of these devices. As a GFIA member service, Federated Insurance can help your company put a policy in place – contact the GFIA office for more info.

We were also joined by representatives of Georgia WIC. Tim Northrup, Georgia’s new eWIC Project Manager, updated the group on the progress of changing from paper vouchers to an all digital eWIC system. Northrup shared that states are mandated by USDA to be up and running with eWIC by October 1, 2020 and Georgia WIC has an aggressive plan in place to meet the deadline. A few retailers in attendance who are currently participate in Alabama’s pilot eWIC project shared their advice on the transition, and reported that eWIC is a much better program than the current paper system.

WIC Director Sean Mack addressed retailers’ concerns with rejected vouchers and the ongoing problem of constant peer group changes. Mack assured the group that eWIC would help WIC officials to understand the data in retail time and agreed to look into the peer group problem. The GFIA will continue to work with WIC to bring resolutions to Georgia’s retailers.
Souto Foods Expansion

**Congratulations to Sebastian Souto, President of Souto Foods, on the new warehouse!**

In 2010, Sebastian Souto, originally from Argentina, took a great risk and began his own company in the US. A business that started with one man and one truck, has become a large company that distributes to many stores in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama and Tennessee. The company is known for its extensive selection of products from Latin America, the Caribbean and many other countries. Souto Foods has been a member of GFIA since July of 2015.

On February 19th, 2019, the new warehouse location had its ribbon cutting ceremony accompanied by GFIA board member Bob McTeir, president of MDI and Brian George, President and CEO of Alex Lee Inc. Also in attendance were GFIA Board members, Verlin Reece, Quality Foods, Darryll Wiley, J & J Foods. GFIA’s Kathy Kuzava and Estela Martinez were there to support Sebastian on his expansion.

The new warehouse, located in Norcross, Gwinnett County, has nearly 60,000 sq. ft. of space and 10,000 sq. ft. of that is refrigerated. With over 40 employees, Souto Foods expects to add more than 1,000 new SKUs to its distribution by the end of March 2019. Souto Foods is expecting a 300% growth for the company in the next three years.

Souto Foods is very excited to have reached this new milestone and we couldn’t be happier for them!

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From left: Brian George, President and CEO, Alex Lee Inc.; Sebastian Souto, President, Souto Foods LLC; Bob McTeir, President, MDI

GFIA Board of Directors attended Souto Food’s Grand Opening from left: Verlin Reece, Quality Foods; Kathy Kuzava, GFIA; Darrell Wiley, J & J Foods and Bob McTier, MDI

Estela Montoya, GFIA; Sebastian Souto, President, Souto Foods and German Fuentes, General Manager, Souto Foods

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Flavor of Georgia Contest Showcases New Products

The annual Flavor of Georgia contest, sponsored by the UGA Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, is a chance for food businesses to showcase their new products. Hundreds of products are entered each year, but only the top three in the eleven categories are chosen to compete in the finals.

GFIA Chairman Mike Coggins, Sherwood Foods; Tom Coogle, Reynolds Piggly Wiggly and Darrell Wiley, J & J Foods were among this year’s judges who had the “tough” job of tasting the delicious entrants. They rated the 33 finalists on their products’ qualities - including innovation, use of Georgia theme, market potential and flavor.

The grand prize winner of this year’s contest was a very excited Suzi Sheffield, who entered her Gunpowder Finishing Salt. Sheffield’s company, Beautiful Briny Sea, is a popular Atlanta-based salt and sugar business. As part of her prize package, Sheffield will receive a trade show booth at the GFIA's annual convention in July.

First Lady Marty Kemp didn’t want to miss this year’s Flavor of Georgia! She is pictured here with Kathy Kuzava, Mike Coggins, and Tom Coogle.

Congratulations to GFIA friend Representative Robert Dickey, who was presented with the 2019 Farmer of the Year Award by Governor Brian Kemp and Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black. This Crawford County fourth-generation farmer, Dickey manages approximately 1,000 acres of peaches and 3,000 acres of timberland with the help of his 90-year-old father, Bob Dickey, his wife, Cynde Dickey, and their son and daughter-in-law, Lee and Stacy Dickey.
Congratulations to Our Fearless Broker, **LINDSAY KOCH**, President of Koch & Associates for Being Recognized as a GenNext Award Winner for Emerging CPG Leaders Under 40 by Progressive Grocer Magazine!

We are thrilled with your achievements, leadership, dedication, work ethic, and drive for impactful change. We are proud to have you leading our company and our brands to even greater growth in 2019 and guiding the merger locally between business and technology.

In December 2018 Progressive Grocer announced their brand new GenNext Awards, which “recognizes the top 25 individuals under 40 years of age who have demonstrated innovation, leadership and a commitment to learn in the grocery industry while supporting local associations and supporting charities in the community.”

Our very own Lindsay Koch, President of Koch & Associates Food Brokerage and longtime GFIA member and volunteer, was one of the 25 honorees selected for the 2018 Inaugural Class of GenNext Award Winners!

Lindsay was recognized for merging business and technology with small to mid-sized vendors and retailers as well as for her embracement of “Buycotting”, where she is matching vendors such as Orchids Paper Products with not for profits such as the ALS Association of Georgia and then to retailers such as The Kroger Company. All three organizations worked together on a very successful launch of Trends and Fresh Scent towels while donating $25,000 to ALS. Her theory is that, while consumers will not purchase from brands they dislike, consumers will purchase and remain loyal to brands that support causes they care about. This Orchids/Kroger/ALS Georgia partnership that she brokered in 2018, resulting in two SKUs on Kroger shelves, increased awareness about ALS, and the $25,000 donation to ALS Georgia will become an annual donation from Orchids Paper Products.

Lindsay recently completed her Executive Masters of Business in Global Business (MBA) at Georgia Tech. She traveled to Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Panama City to see local retailers in action. She was also able to ask questions and develop global strategy with some of the world’s largest CPG brands. She has brought back this knowledge to Koch & Associates and her team where they are working every day to improve the industry through retailer programs and vendor supply chain to process improvements that benefit manufacturer, stores & customers to lower cost of goods. Lindsay is additionally working on a startup (LADgistics) with Georgia Tech to help solve the trucking crisis utilizing new technology to increase the amount of drive time an individual trucker is on the road, as opposed to waiting to deliver a load, resulting in a lower cost of goods for retailers and wholesalers.
2019 Swinging for Scholarships Spring Golf Classic

Spring Golf Tournament Raises Over $83,000 for GFIA’s Education Foundation

The Education Foundation’s annual spring golf tournament, “Swinging for Scholarships,” is always a GFIA member favorite! In March, over 275 golfers, volunteers, and guests joined us for a beautiful day of networking at White Oak Golf Club in Newnan, GA. Each year, our foundation trustees do a great job of hosting the tournament, with all proceeds benefitting the GFIA Education Foundation. Thanks to the sponsors, retailers, golfers and volunteers who made the day a huge success!

Grand Sponsor Ole Mexican Foods with Bettina Hall, The Kroger Co.

Josh Bohannon, Chuck Burton & Jeanne Fuda, Bimbo Bakeries USA

John West, West Foods; Verlin Reece, Quality Foods; Skip Vaughan, Pepsi Beverages Co.
Special Thanks to Our Event Sponsors for Making the Spring Tournament a Success!

**Grand Sponsor**

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"The Voice of the Food Industry in Georgia"
SPRING GOLF

Chad Ledbetter, Heineken USA; Dan Kelly, GA Crown; Michael Gay, Foodfresh; Daniel Jackson, GA Crown

Mike Givens, Matador Dist.; Aaron Bell & Steve Ferguson, Red Bull and Matt Whitlatch, Matador Dist.

Matt Crawley, Publix Super Markets & Loren Lemons, Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED

Kevin Kaseta, Dutty Gurl Cocktail Mixers; Allen Hagan, Sherwood Foods

Blake Legrand, Constellation Brands; Chad Rutherford, General Wholesale Beer Co.

Carmen Snow, Dave Alvarez & Chris Bradfield, Milo’s Tea Company

The 5 Hour Energy & Kroger team is all smiles

Don Francisco’s Coffee team serves delicious coffee to our members


GFIA new member Planet H2O showcasing their product
SPRING GOLF

Corrine Christian, MillerCoors; John Gehring, Publix Super Markets, David Jones, United Dist. Co.; Scott Allen, Bev South

Kyle Butler, Frito-Lay; Joe Hartman, Pepsi Beverages Co.; Jamey Leseueur, Food Depot

Kristen Witkowski & Lizzie Ward, Sunshine Beverages

Kevin Dougherty & Neil Norden, Talking Rain Beverage Co.

JP Watterson, Publix Super Markets; Kristine Day, Sierra Nevada; Kevin Murray, United Dist. Co.

Jerry McCann & Jeff Brown, Piggly Wiggly Alabama; Randy Gentry, RBG Foods

Kerry Hitchcock, Wayfield Foods; Rudd Cummings and Kevin Bryant; Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED

Mario Reyna, Blue Bell Creameries; Mickey Register, Leon Farmer & Co.

The Fox Bros. Bar-B-Q team praying they win the tournament

Dean McDermont & Shawn Williams, Flowers Foods; Tim Edwards, The Kroger Co.