



LOBBYING IN AN ALTERNATE REALITY

By Mary Lau, RAN CEO

THE THIRTY-FIRST AND THIRTY-SECOND SPECIAL SESSIONS WERE

surreal to say the least and most everyone was grateful when they Sine-Died. The then upcoming Eighty-First Legislative Session loomed during that time and our elected officials, the business community and other politically active groups grappled with how to proceed and what would be possible to achieve during a continued pandemic crisis.

Suggestions were varied: Open session as constitutionally required and Sine-Die or open as required but only take up budget. There was also discussion to open the building (the people's house) but socially distant, determine capacity as Governor directives indicated, appointments, and on and on.

In the end, just like the Special Sessions the building is locked down and various platforms from Zoom to conference calls are in use.

Most all the sixty-three legislators are in the building to vote on the upcoming



Mary Lau

issues and conduct meetings. As of this writing there are 1017 bill draft requests. Not all are available as bills yet as the Legislative Counsel staff had various COVID-19 concerns to deal with too. Your RAN team is currently following 129 of these requests that have the bill language available and will continue to add our thoughts to the legislative session.

But here is the conundrum: Legislators interested in working with you to discuss their language are not as readily available. When you couple that with the committee chairs allowing only 20 minutes each for opposition, support

or neutral and add a two-minute restriction for each person there is no real discussion on bills.

The chairs have a difficult time determining the direction of the caller and if they are in the wrong queue the time is not adjusted. This throws the whole bill into turmoil and all the mess lands in the lap of each house to clean up. With all of this over the internet and the new You

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2020 HOLIDAY SEASON: ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 1, 2021 — RECORD

holiday season retail sales during the last two months of 2020 reflected the recovering economy but also got a boost from consumer emotions after a stressful year, National Retail Federation Chief Economist Jack Kleinhenz said.

“This was not a typical holiday season and it took place amid an unprecedented shopping landscape,” Kleinhenz said.

“When we assembled our 2020 holiday forecast, we knew one scenario was that results could come in high and that sales might exceed the forecast.”

Kleinhenz said there was a “push and pull” between excitement

over the holidays and worries over a resurgence in COVID-19 cases. But consumers’ ability to spend was boosted by government stimulus checks received earlier in the year and money saved by not traveling, dining out or attending entertainment events.

Rising home values and stock prices also provided support for

holiday spending while the availability of COVID-19 vaccines helped ease worries over the virus and state restrictions on activity. Nonetheless, millions of Americans remained out of work and others were working fewer hours.

Kleinhenz cited English economist John Maynard Keynes’ observation that

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LOBBYING IN AN ALTERNATE REALITY *Continued from page 1*

Tube channels the public, RAN’s members are paying closer attention than ever to what is going on in the building. RAN’s staff have never had so many contacts over legislative issues and many of these are voices of concern.

Prior to COVID-19 there had been growing concerns about the unintended consequences that resulted with the passage of “Term Limits”, and as we face this legislative session from an alternate reality, we’re seeing the true extent of what it means to face challenging times without a steady hand on the wheel.

As predicted, we have watched as legislators with historical perspective

depart only because of term limits; and the pool of experienced candidates has also gotten thinner. It takes several sessions for a legislator to learn the ropes. The same can be said for advocates, lobbyists and special interest groups.

All people involved in the process and, when given the opportunity, can bring history, logic, thoughtful comments and express concerns to the process.

Unfortunately, some of those abilities and conversations were getting stifled and under COVID-19 can become non-existent. In this vacuum of cohesive meetings and testimony, the staff of the Legislative Counsel Bureau continue

to hold more sway in the writing and outcomes of legislation and the rules and procedures that govern this legislative session.

In this alternative reality, the limited expertise plus unwillingness to work with all sides is creating a groundswell that will prove to be interesting as time progresses.

The business community has commented on this phenomenon. In the meetings, which continued during the interim, have made their various communication adjustments in their memberships too.

The narrowing of access coupled with

apparent censorship on the national stage has created a real element of concern for the public.

Your company is a valued member of RAN and we thank you for your comments. We represent you and your company with pride and care. We appreciate your willingness to step up.

You elected your representatives to consider your views carefully and constructively and as their constituent those views should be respected and heard.

There are reasons people join their chambers, their trade association and other organizations of like-minded philosophies. The legislature needs to remember this. ■



LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS — USUALLY SLOW TO START

By Andy Peterson

FOUR STATES HOLD BIENNIAL LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS,

meaning they meet every other year. They are Montana, North Dakota, Texas, and Nevada.

Each state, meeting biennially, has a limited number of days it can meet by law. Texas can meet for 140 days. North Dakota can meet for 120 days. Montana can meet for 90 days, and Nevada can meet for 120 days.

Why the states meet for varied lengths of time depends upon different reasons, but each state spells out the number of days its legislature can meet in its constitution thereby making the length of time its legislature meets difficult to change.

If you queried legislative watchers in each state you would likely come to understand each legislature have some similar traits. Politics aside, these traits seemingly reflect how legislators use their time.

Most legislators spend their days attending hearings, attending their respective senate or

house/assembly general sessions, and then they socialize at numerous gatherings in the evenings. Many legislators make the best of things as they come from far reaches of their states and up spend large amounts of time away from their families. For most it's a privilege and a sacrifice to serve in the legislature.

One particular phenomenon likely common to all legislature's — not just those who meet biennially — is a slow start. However, one wonders why, given the limited time allotted to legislators in Montana, North Dakota, Texas, and Nevada to conduct and complete their work in every other year session, the process to get going takes so long.

Reasons are varied. For example, bills in Nevada are initiated through a system of bill draft resolutions, or BDRs. Each legislator is able to offer a limited number of BDRs by a certain date. Once BDRs are dropped, legislative counsel goes to work transforming the BDRs into full bill text which reflects



Andy Peterson

the legislator's intent. This can take an enormous amount of time.

On the other hand, North Dakota bills are "dropped" having been entirely completed as full text prior to the deadline. Again, each legislator there gets to introduce a certain number of bills. Those in leadership get to hold a few to be introduced at any time throughout the session. Yet, each legislature — despite how they get their bills into final form — complete their full legislative work in 120 days.

There are many reasons legislatures always seem to take all the time allotted them prior to Sine Die, the day they complete their work and formally vote to

end the session and go home.

Some can be attributed to politics, some can be attributed to the challenges of process, and some can be attributed to human nature. Politics and process will always be part of any legislature. However, the real reason is that legislators are similar to any other group, legislators seemingly tend to get things done when a deadline is eminent.

Psychological studies have shown that students usually study much harder when a deadline, or exam, looms. It's not a far leap to understand legislators might act in a similar manner. After all, they have 120 days to get things done. Why not take the time and do it right?

With some insight in why legislatures use all their time no matter how much time is allotted, what remains a puzzle, however, is why basketball players take the first 58 minutes to play a measured game, then they try to play an entire game in the last two minutes? ■



NONPROFITS, BUSINESSES RECEIVING PPP COULD FACE SURPRISE AUDITS

NONPROFIT AND FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT RECEIVED

Paycheck Protection Program loans could unexpectedly find themselves confronting the “single audit” requirement for the first time, even though PPP loans are supposedly exempt.

A single audit is an organization-wide audit of

the financial statements and federal awards of a non-federal entity that spends \$750,000 or more in federal funds in a single year.

It aims to provide assurance to the federal government that a non-federal entity has the right internal controls in place, and is generally



in compliance with the requirements of a federal program like the PPP. Whether or not the organization has prior

experience with undergoing single audits, the process can be complicated if

it's not done correctly.

The PPP is generally thought of as a program

for helping small businesses get through the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic by providing them with forgivable loans through the Small Business Administration and lenders. But the program has also been available to nonprofits and other types of organizations that may never have gone through such audits in the past. ■

Accounting Today

2020 HOLIDAY SEASON *Continued from page 2*

consumer behavior can sometimes be governed by “animal spirits” rather than rational motivation, resulting in fluctuations in the economy.

“Household emotions likely played into holiday economic decisions as consumers wanting to offset the anxiety and stress experienced during 2020 spent on gifts to enjoy a better-than-normal holiday,” Kleinhenz said. “This was clearly a year when animal spirits outweighed conventional wisdom.”

Kleinhenz’s remarks came in the February issue of NRF’s Monthly

Economic Review, which said 2020’s \$789.4 billion in holiday spending during November and December was the highest on record despite the coronavirus pandemic.

The season’s 8.3 percent growth over the same period a year earlier was the highest holiday growth rate in records going back to 2002 – beating since 6.8 percent in 2004 – and more than double the 3.5 percent average of the previous five years, including 2019’s 4 percent gain.

The results easily exceeded NRF’s holiday forecast, which cited

economic indicators such as growing employment and wages to predict that holiday sales would increase between 3.6 percent and 5.2 percent over 2019 to between \$755.3 billion and \$766.7 billion.

The numbers exclude automobile dealers, gasoline stations and restaurants to focus on core retail.

The holiday spending total includes online and other non-store sales, which were up 23.9 percent at \$209 billion as consumers shopped more online whether they made their purchases from

pureplay online sellers or traditional retailers’ websites. That compared with 14.7 percent growth in 2019 and represented 26.5 percent of total sales during the holiday season.

Kleinhenz called online holiday sales “a standout” that showed how retailers had innovated during the pandemic. Even as it became too late for reliable delivery of online orders in late December, many consumers still ordered online but took advantage of in-store and curbside pickup services retailers had perfected over the previous several months ■

NRF



BUSINESSES BE WARNED, THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE IS IN SESSION

By Bryan Wachter

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY DAYS. THAT'S HOW MANY

days the legislature has in each odd numbered year to solve every problem that occurs to them during the 610 days between sessions.

The unfortunate situation that presents as we begin the arduous process of reading through the tens of thousands of pages of legislation is to find and stop the bills that will harm.

In just a few short weeks of the 81st Legislative Session, we've seen an unprecedented number of proposals, and a general movement behind them, that will create laws and regulations that will substantially raise the cost of doing business in Nevada.

In just the first few weeks of the session,

we've already seen bills that would rework unemployment insurance, the only part of DETR that actually worked during the pandemic to help Nevadans who are out of work, and an effort to double the length of time an employee can file a claim for wrongful termination. These are just the tip of the iceberg among hundreds of bill draft requests that don't even have their bill text public yet.

These bills don't, usually, come out of malice; instead, they come from legislators trying to fix the problems they see without understanding the context.

Term limits ensure that each year we have a large number of freshmen legislators, combined with a growing population of public employees, none



Bryan Wachter

of whom understand what you are going through day-to-day as well as during a pandemic.

It is our task to educate legislators on what they don't know about business, but COVID has presented a unique challenge; our facetime with legislators is severely limited.

Legislators are working in a void without the support, and sometimes opposition, of the lobbyists who have traditionally roamed the hallways,

and this is letting some of these "bad bills" that will raise costs on employers move through

the process.

Now more than ever, this legislature needs to hear directly from you how their bills will increase your costs of doing business.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will be asking you to join us in contacting legislators and telling your stories about surviving the pandemic, keeping your employees safe and on payroll, and the challenges of keeping your doors open when new laws make it harder to make ends meet.

This legislature is a unique situation, but it is part of a growing trend to look to businesses to fill budget holes and solve public policy challenges, at your expense.

The Legislature meets for 120 days every two years, and this is a cycle that will continue. Be ready to stand up for your business and be warned that until the legislature adjourns sine die on May 31, 2021 we must stand together against this trend of making businesses responsible for the costs of their legislative agendas. ■





Nevada Notes

SEGERBLOM WANTS TO BE STATE DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIRMAN

Clark County Commissioner Tick Segerblom will run for the chairmanship of the Nevada State Democratic Party.

Segerblom filed his official paperwork as nominations to replace outgoing chair and fellow Commissioner William McCurdy II began.

He is currently the only candidate to have done so, according to the state party.

Its central committee will elect a new chair on March 6. If elected, this would be Segerblom's second turn at the helm of the state party. He previously served as its chair from 1990-94.

Segerblom is in his first term on the commission, having served 12 years as an assemblyman and state

senator in the Nevada Legislature prior to that. *LVJR*

LEGISLATURE PASSES \$50M COVID RELIEF PLAN FOR NEVADA BUSINESSES

Governor Sisolak signed a bill to provide an additional \$50 million dollars to help small businesses hurt by the pandemic. Assembly Bill 106 provided the vehicle to distribute the Pandemic Emergency Technical Support (PETS) grant program.

Typical grants were in the neighborhood of \$10,000 dollars. Approximately 4,600 businesses have been helped.

The program began in October with \$20 million; lawmakers added \$31 million to it in December.

In its initial four-day application period

in October, the state received more than 13,000 applications. The latest increase boosts the total to over \$100 million.

Funding comes from federal COVID-19 relief dollars. *LVJR*

COVID-19 TRENDING IN RIGHT DIRECTION

According to the Mitigation and Management Task Force, on February 18th COVID-19 are trending in the right direction as the case positivity rate continues to fall.

Currently, it is 11.8%, which is down from over 20%. The CDC goal is 5% or less.

New daily cases are also down. Nevada averages 462 new daily cases versus nearly 1000 last week. As a result, hospitalizations and deaths are falling too.

Currently there are 740 people in our state hospitalized due to COVID-19, and daily deaths, due to COVID-19, stand at a daily average of 14 verses 18 daily deaths last week.

Nevada is moving in the right direction.

Vaccinations in Nevada continue. There have been 464,037 doses administered. People who have received a second dose stand at 118,192.

State legislators have also been offered vaccines and will soon be offered their second dose.

Overall; 3.75% of Nevada's population has been vaccinated. It is hoped that the involvement of private sector pharmacies will soon increase the availability of vaccines.

RAN

NEW DATA ON PFIZER'S VACCINE IS PROMISING

DATA SHOWS PFIZER-BIONTECH VACCINE

Highly Effective After First Dose. This according to a peer-reviewed study conducted by Israeli

6 ◆

government-owned Sheba Medical Center published in the Lancet medical journal.

The study is a promising development in getting shots into the arms of Americans. Because the

study shows the vaccine to be 85% effective 15 to 28 days after injection, some propose the second vaccine can be postponed.

The U.K has already taken this approach and delays the second dose by

up to 12 weeks in order to assure more people get the first shot. Currently, at least one-third of U.K.'s adult population has gotten at least one shot. ■

WSJ



National Notes

WALGREENS NAMES ROSALIND BREWER CEO

Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc. named Starbucks Corp. operating chief Rosalind Brewer as its next chief executive, setting her up to be the only black woman leading a Fortune 500 company.

Brewer previously was the CEO and group leader at Starbucks. She also served as CEO of Walmart's Sam's Club for five years.

Brewer is 58 years old, holds a bachelor's degree from Spelman College, attended Wharton's Advance Management Program, and Stanford University's Director's College.

Brewer also has served, or serves, on the following board of directors: Amazon.com, Starbucks, Lockheed Martin, and Molson Coors.

WSJ

AMAZON PUBLICLY BACKS BILL TO SET \$15 MINIMUM WAGE

In a corporate blog, Amazon affirmed its support for a \$15 per hour minimum wage. Amazon asserts the wage increase is good for both employee and employer.

In addition to providing workers with a

living wage, Jay Carney, senior VP, Amazon global corporate affairs, said that a minimum wage of \$15 is also good for business.

In addition, Carney said, "Once we increased our starting wage to \$15 an hour, the positive impact on employee morale and retention—and the surge in job applicants—was immediate," said Carney.

"In fact, the month after we raised our starting wage, applications for hourly positions more than doubled. Employees who saw their paychecks increase told us that they had an easier time providing for their families and were able to spend on things like car repairs and home improvement projects.

In short, the investments we made in our hourly employees were quickly transferred to local businesses and economies."

Carney also cited the decision by several other major companies, including Target, Best Buy, and Costco, to increase wages to at least \$15 an hour for their employees. In 2019, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos publicly challenged the company's "top retail competitors" to

meet or beat its starting pay and benefits package. *Chain Store Age*

PRIVATE SECTOR READIES TO VACCINATE FOR COVID-19

According to the Wall Street Journal, the private sector is preparing to vaccinate people for COVID-19.

At present, the CDC views the roll-out by hospitals, long term care centers, and health departments as inadequate.

Further complicating the issue has been supply bottlenecks, vaccine hesitancy, and complicated methods of signing up to get a shot.

Rules will remain in place once retail pharmacies begin to administer vaccines regarding who is eligible to get vaccinated at any given time, but it is anticipated additional access points will significantly speed up the process.

The WSJ suggests retail pharmacies are part and parcel of the vaccine solution but stress retail pharmacies will be stress tested as they assume a more direct role in making sure Americans get vaccinated. *WSJ*

CVS PHARMACY, WALGREENS OFFER COVID-19 VACCINES AT STORES IN CERTAIN STATES

The nation's two leading drug chains will bring COVID-19 vaccinations to the retail setting in multiple states.

CVS Pharmacy said that on Feb. 11 it would begin offering COVID-19 vaccines at stores in 11 states, with its initial supply of roughly 250,000 doses coming from the federal government.

Walgreens said vaccinations would begin Feb. 12 at locations in 12 states, as well as Puerto Rico, New York City and Chicago.

Both companies noted that the vaccines would be available only to eligible patient populations based on state and jurisdiction guidelines.

CNN

AMAZON TOPS RECORD YEAR WITH RECORD QUARTER

Amazon's 2020 sales jumped 44% to 125.5 billion, its final quarter passed \$100 billion. Amazon's net income more than doubled to \$7.2 billion, or 14.09 per share, soaring past analysts'

Continued on page 11



NACDS BACKS “PARTIAL FILL” CONCEPT TO CURB OPIOID ABUSE

THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION’S (DEA)

rulemaking that implements a 2016 law allowing for the partial filling of Schedule II controlled substances is a necessary step to help address the opioid-abuse epidemic, yet changes are recommended to ensure success, NACDS said in comments to the DEA this week.

NACDS submitted its comments on a DEA notice of proposed rulemaking, which seeks to implement aspects of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016.

“Given the ongoing opioid epidemic in communities throughout the country—which has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health crisis—the chain pharmacy community is steadfastly committed to policies and practices that serve to curb prescription drug abuse, misuse and diversion. Accordingly, NACDS strongly supports policies that facilitate partial filling of Schedule II prescriptions and those that set quantity

or days supply limits for prescribers on opioid prescriptions.

Both of these practices can promote careful use of prescription opioids and reduce the quantity of unused controlled substances that might otherwise be diverted or abused,” wrote NACDS President & CEO Steven C. Anderson in the comments to the DEA.

“We commend DEA for moving forward with this rulemaking to align its regulations with recent statutory changes that further encourage partial filling practices for Schedule II prescriptions and that clarify additional issues related to the partial filling of these medications. However, we have identified a number of issues that warrant further consideration and clarification by DEA before the rule is finalized.”

NACDS recommendations—intended to prevent delays in the delivery of patient care, support the intent of the 2016 law, and improve clarity for pharmacies and



pharmacists—include:

- Ensuring that the DEA’s rule and state laws are aligned on the concept of what is a valid prescription and on how pharmacists are to address prescriptions written for chronic conditions

- Improving clarity about how pharmacists can comply with an array of recordkeeping requirements

- Recognizing and accommodating that a prescriber may also authorize a partial fill for a prescription at some point after the original prescription is issued

- Recognizing and accommodating situations in which a partial fill can

be requested by a patient’s representative, such as a family member or other caregiver

- Clarifying that a patient may request a partial fill in any manner allowed by states

- Setting the effective date of a rule as six months after its finalization, to allow pharmacies adequate time to update systems, policies and procedures

More information about NACDS’ and pharmacies’ role as part of the solution to opioid abuse is available on a dedicated NACDS webpage. ■

National Association of Chain Drug Stores



NACDS PRESIDENT AND CEO STEVEN C. ANDERSON ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT FOLLOWING PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN’S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE “NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS”

PRESIDENT BIDEN’S PLAN DEMONSTRATES ACTION IN CRITICAL areas that are essential for getting safe and effective vaccines to Americans’ arms, efficiently and equitably.

Among its proactive steps, NACDS appreciates that the Administration will activate the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program in the next two weeks.

NACDS also appreciates the focus on ensuring a data-

driven response to COVID-19 and to future public health threats—a vision on which NACDS members can add considerable value.

“President Biden’s plan also includes important progress in the areas of COVID-19 testing expansion, COVID-19 reimbursement and coverage, and enhancing the scope of practice of pharmacists and other healthcare professionals—all of which are vital to helping America overcome this

pandemic and prepare for future threats.

“The establishment of a health equity task force focused on enhancing vaccine confidence also is a crucial step. Pharmacies, pharmacists and pharmacy teams are local and highly trusted—and can help to engage in the conversations that are essential to vaccine confidence, across races and ethnicities, and in rural and urban settings.

“NACDS represents national and regional chain pharmacies, which operate

between four and 10,000 stores in the traditional drug, grocery and mass retail settings. By virtue of their extensive experience collaborating with public health, pharmacies also are key to standing up mass clinics and mobile clinics.

We all know that vaccine supplies remain the rate-limiting step at this time, yet pharmacies can meet the demand for 100 million vaccinations in one month assuming such supplies are available.

There is a pharmacy within five miles of 90 percent of Americans, and pharmacies are committed to going the extra miles, too, to help vaccinate all Americans.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Biden Administration in this important work of protecting Americans and their livelihoods, overcoming the pandemic, and returning us all to what we need and love.” ■

National Association of Chain Drug Stores





Important Information for SIG Members

NRS requires all existing members of a self-insured group to be notified of all new members.

NRNSIG new members are listed below.

Joe France dba Cason City Joe's

BAMYAN LLC dba Beach Café

Why Do We Wear Green on St. Patrick's Day?

Wearing green has become a staple of St. Patrick's Day, but the holiday was originally associated with the color blue. It's thought that the shift to green happened because of Ireland's nickname "The Emerald Isle," the green in the Irish flag and the shamrock, or clover. Green ribbons and shamrocks were worn as early as the 17th century. During the Irish Rebellion of 1798, an uprising against British rule in Ireland, Irish soldiers wore full green uniforms on March 17 to make a political statement. Legend has it that wearing green makes a person invisible to leprechauns that will pinch someone if they see them.

NRNSIG members who wish to register a negative vote on a new group member, please write NRNSIG at 575 S. Saliman Road, Carson City, NV 89701, indicating which member and the reason(s) for the negative vote.




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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Find out more about RAN's self insured group. Call Pro Group, **800-859-3177**,

10 ♦ or the RAN office at **775-882-1700** (toll free in Nevada 800-690-5959). Don't forget to check out our website, www.RANNV.org.



NATIONAL NOTES *Continued from page 7*

average estimates of \$7.34.

The company spent \$4 billion on COVID-19 measures in the quarter.

Outside of its core retail business, Amazon Web Services, the company's lucrative cloud-computing business, saw its revenue rise 28% to \$12.7 billion, missing expectations of \$12.83 billion. It represented 10% of Amazon's total sales, but continues to drive much of the company's profit.

Amazon said it hired 175,000 new full- and part-time employees in the fourth quarter, more than triple the 50,000 employees it hired in the year-ago period.

The company ended its fiscal year with nearly 1.3 million employees across the globe, up 63% over last year.

Chain Store Age

KROGER LAUNCHES NEW ROUND OF WORKER BONUSES

Kroger launched a new round of bonuses to thank employees for their work in the pandemic. In addition, the retailer will reward employees for getting fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

The company plans to spend at least \$50 million more to thank and reward its associates, including offering a \$100

store credit and 1,000 fuel points to its hourly front-line grocery, supply chain, manufacturing, pharmacy and call center associates.

Kroger will also provide a one-time payment of \$100 to all associates who receive the full manufacturer-recommended doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Progressive Grocer

GROCERY WORKERS HOPE FOR HIGHER PAY AND VACCINATIONS

In a sweeping NYT article, grocery workers say the pandemic hasn't necessarily meant higher wages or an enhanced placement on vaccine priority lists.

The New York Times found only 13 states that had started specifically vaccinating grocery store workers. They are Alabama, Arizona, California, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Nebraska, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wyoming.

NYTs

WALMART UPS SUPPLY-CHAIN EFFICIENCY WITH RPCS

Reusable Plastic Containers (RPCs) have helped Walmart track assets and facilitate future innovations in product traceability.

Walmart has selected IFCO Systems as its exclusive provider of RPCs. According to IFCO, its RPCs use less energy and water and produce less carbon dioxide and solid waste than single-use packaging. They also keep produce fresh longer, are easier to handle and protect produce better than one-way packaging.

"IFCO and Walmart share the goal of an efficient, sustainable fresh food supply chain that helps nourish millions of Americans and billions of consumers worldwide," said Dan Martin, outgoing president of Tampa, Florida-based IFCO North America. "This agreement is a win for IFCO, a win for Walmart, a win for the environment and a win for millions of grocery shoppers across America."

"Walmart is committed to providing its shoppers with high-quality, safe, nutritious and affordable fresh food produced sustainably," said Martin Mundo, Walmart SVP, produce and GPS, "Our new agreement with IFCO helps us deliver on that promise by creating a fresh food supply chain that is more efficient and more sustainable from beginning to end."

Progressive Groce

WALGREENS AND UBER WORK TOGETHER TO GET PEOPLE VACCINATED

Walgreens and Uber have signed an agreement that helps drive equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

This includes Walgreens experience in community care and Uber's transportation and logistics expertise.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) points to many interrelated factors that hinder vaccine access for communities of color, including vaccine hesitancy and lack of access to transportation.

Walgreens and Uber are addressing these barriers through the development of educational programs with community leaders and organizations, technology solutions that make it easier to connect people with vaccine appointments, and free transportation to Walgreens vaccine clinics among socially vulnerable communities.

Walgreens and Uber will roll out several initiatives over the coming months as vaccines become available for mass distribution.

Chain Drug Review



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ONCE AUTHORIZED, THE RAPID COVID-19 TEST CAN BE FULLY PERFORMED USING ONLY A SMARTPHONE AND A LATERAL FLOW ASSAY (SIMILAR TO AN AT-HOME PREGNANCY TEST)

KROGER HEALTH HAS SIMPLIFIED

COVID-19 testing process to make it accessible by anyone with a smartphone. Its smartphone-enabled at-home Gauss COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test Kit is currently awaiting Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).

The testing technology was developed by Gauss Surgical, a computer vision-focused health care company. Once authorized, it will be the first rapid COVID-19 test that can be fully performed using only a smartphone and a lateral flow assay (similar to an at-home pregnancy test), without involving a laboratory, a

telemedicine visit or any specialized electronics.

Once approved, Kroger Health expects the at-home rapid antigen test will be available to purchase on the grocer's website and over the counter at its 2,200 pharmacies nationwide. ■

DSN

After successfully launching the virtual Chapter 1 of Retail's Big Show in January, we are preparing to return online in June to provide more expansive content, networking, entertainment and expert insights. In the weeks ahead, we will unveil a new and exciting offering that only NRF can provide for the industry, serving as a prelude for when we return to the newly expanded Javits Center in January 2022 with the largest retail trade show in the world.