

# Michigan Retailer

## Milkins Jewelers marks 120 years of family tradition

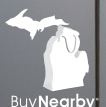
Five generations have strived to  
preserve family legacy and craftsmanship.

### Plus

What is Legislative Advocacy  
and Why Does it Matter?

Retailers Utilizing Social  
Districts as an Advantage

Youth Hiring Law Changes:  
What You Need to Know



APR/MAY 2025

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FROM THE CEO



## A Season of Change

**William J. Hallan**  
President & CEO  
Michigan Retailers Association

Sometimes there is nothing better than that first glimpse of spring. It's a season that inspires growth and change – an opportunity for a fresh start, a new initiative, or an evolution of a brand. Dust off that “to-do” list that you shelved in November because it's time to hit the ground (though still muddy) running.

Like the seasons, the retail industry is always changing. From cash, to cards, to online shopping and delivery, retail has many layers. As the industry voice, we aim to represent every nook and cranny of retail; thus, Michigan Retailers Association must also evolve.

I'm very excited to share that the Michigan Retailers Association has embarked on an ambitious rebrand project that will breathe new life into our identity as the largest state retail association in the country.

The most visible aspect of our current brand is our logo. Internally, we affectionately call our current logo the “Jungle Gym” and it's served the Association well for over 40 years. Our management, board, and marketing team have spent the last year workshoping a new look for the Association that will be unveiled later this year.

While our look will change, our commitment to you remains strong as ever. Our core mission has always been to advocate fiercely for our members, both through legislative advocacy and by providing services, such as insurance and credit card processing, that help your business thrive.

Our updated look will reaffirm our devotion to this industry, because everything we do here at MRA is *For the Good of Retail.*

William J. Hallan  
MRA President and  
Chief Executive Officer

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#### **Josh Delany**

*Design, Layout, and  
Photographer*

#### **Shandra Martinez**

*Contributor*

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"Technology is the biggest thing we have to stay on top of. We've implemented Computer-Aided Design programs so customers can design their pieces alongside us. It makes the experience more personal and interactive."

– Lesley Milkins-Alban, Owner, Milkins Jewelers

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Visit us online to see what's new in the industry and to learn more about the services we provide members.

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## LEGALLY SPEAKING



### Spring Cleaning of a Different Variety

**Thomas Clement**  
MRA Chief Operating Officer  
and General Counsel

Every year many of us go through the usual spring cleaning routine including tasks like sweeping out the garage, rotating your wardrobe, and prepping outdoor furniture, among others. Michigan Retailers Association engages in a different sort of annual spring cleaning: making sure that we're fully prepared to maintain business continuity in the event of a disaster, whether it be cyber, natural, flooding, fire, epidemic, or otherwise. Doing the same will save you time, money, and may even save your business if an unfortunate event occurs.

MRA's annual disaster recovery exercise simulates an event where our operations have been fully interrupted. It outlines the restoration process in such detail that any recovery team member can restore operations in a relatively short time. We focus on four distinct areas; facilities, information technology, communications, and overall management, while maintaining some overlap for shared responsibility.

When developing a disaster recovery plan for your business, several critical priorities should shape your efforts, with employee and customer safety being first. While predicting a disaster is impossible, preparation is not. Take care to ensure that every safety measure is up to date.

Once safety measures have been attended to, the next priority for most businesses will be information technology (IT). Back-up systems and protections against cyber-attacks are at the top of issues related to IT security. At MRA, we back up our systems regularly and store those backups offsite. Each year, our group goes through an exercise to access the back-up system. We also maintain extensive security precautions to prevent cyber attacks, including multi-factor authentication, employee training, phishing tests, penetration testing, and professional consultation.



Did you know, all workers' compensation policyholders with Retailers Insurance Company enjoy up to \$100,000 in cyber-security protection with their policies?

Once the business is operational from an IT perspective, effective communication to staff and customers will ensure staffing continuity and let your customer base know that you are either open for business or engaged in the process of becoming so. Your plan should outline exactly how communications will be made, depending on the situation.

This is nowhere near an exhaustive list of considerations, but space limitations prevent me from going into greater detail. Consider MRA as a resource in preparedness for any emergency that may arise. Feel free to reach out for more details at [askusfirst@retailers.com](mailto:askusfirst@retailers.com).



## UNDER THE DOME



### Meet MRA's Newest Team Member

**Andrew Beardslee**  
MRA Vice President,  
Government Affairs

Hi, I'm Drew Beardslee, the new Vice President of Government Affairs for Michigan Retailers Association. I am thrilled to be joining the team and for the opportunity to represent Michigan's retailers throughout the legislative process.

I was bit by the politics bug at a young age, volunteering in local campaigns in my hometown of Marshall, Michigan. That interest in politics grew throughout high school and college, and set me up for a career where I could engage in Michigan's legislative process from several angles, first in member offices in the House and Senate, and later in the executive branch departments under Governors from different political parties. Most recently I worked on state-level political issues for the National Pork Producers Council in a role that found me engaging with legislators from across the country. I'm excited to bring this experience back to Lansing to advocate for Michigan retailers.

On the personal side, I'm blessed by a wife and three kids who keep me busy (and humble). We live in Grand Ledge and spend our summers on the shores of Lake Michigan.

In my first month with MRA, I've already found much to be excited about. This legislative session will offer the chance to build on the success of the Organized Retail Crime program with continued funding and an expansion to cover gift card fraud. Despite a divided government, there are opportunities abound to make meaningful policy decisions that affect Michigan's retail industry.

Thanks for the warm welcome from Michigan's retail community. I'm excited to work together!

### Connect With Me



[abeardslee@retailers.com](mailto:abeardslee@retailers.com)



517.327.8919





## CREATIVE COUNSEL



### Welcome a Change in Your Strategy

**Vic Veda**  
MRA Vice President,  
Communications

In March, I had the pleasure of attending Crain's Power Breakfast, themed "Women Who Mean Business." We heard from great panelists and speakers who shared their stories and tips for succeeding in business. One of the key takeaways from the event was this: Retail is evolving, and you need to be ready (and willing) to change.

We're a quarter of the way through 2025 already, and the world has changed a lot in just the past 90 days. With ever-changing tariffs impacting different parts of the retail industry day-to-day, we're in an unstable economic environment. Improvements and technology advancements with AI are enabling retailers to streamline their systems, dive deeper into their data, and automate manual tasks that bog down their workforce. With rapid change happening across so many business areas, it's critical that your marketing and communications are evolving too.

The fact of the matter is this: the way we marketed 20 years ago doesn't work anymore. The way we marketed 10 years ago isn't as effective as it used to be. It's never too late to evolve your strategy and try something new – but you have to be willing to try.

**Plants need repotting.**

**Computers need software updates.**

**Strategies need to evolve.**

Initiating significant change in your strategy can be intimidating, but letting your business die a slow, sad death because you aren't willing to make a change or take a chance? That's much worse.

As Bill mentioned in his column, MRA is evolving right alongside our members. For about 40 years, the current MRA logo has remained the same. We're thrilled to unveil a new look later this year that more accurately reflects who we are and who we serve. We are redefining what it means to be a Michigan retailer, and we can't wait to share more of this evolution.

# Save the Date!

## Buy Nearby Weekend

### Oct. 3-5, 2025

**Donate now to support our biggest weekend yet!**

[Shop.retailers.com/product-category/buy-nearby/](https://shop.retailers.com/product-category/buy-nearby/)



*scan here*





# What is Legislative Advocacy

## and Why Does it Matter?

A conversation between MRA's VP of Government Affairs, Andrew Beardslee and MRA's VP of Communications, Vic Veda

Legislative advocacy is at the heart of what we do. It plays a crucial role in shaping the policies that directly impact the retail industry. Retail leaders need to be actively involved in legislative efforts and do their part in shaping the future of the industry. Learn more about the importance of engaging with legislators to ensure that the voices of retailers, big and small, are heard during the policy-making process.

What is legislative advocacy in the context of the retail industry and why is it essential?

Retailers feel the impacts of legislation, so it's important we have a say in the process. Legislators have to make decisions about every industry, whether or not that industry is at the table. Business, healthcare, technology, infrastructure, environmental impacts, and more. They work on a wide variety of issues, they can't be experts in everything. When legislators have to make decisions that impact the retail industry, it's in retail's best interest to be at that table.

What are the primary goals of MRA or retail organizations' engagement in legislative advocacy?

We focus on advancing public policy that is friendly to retail. But there's value in building relationships just for the sake of having those relationships, too. Our advocacy puts a face to an issue and helps legislators think of that person/human as they make policy decisions.

How does legislative advocacy differ from public relations and awareness efforts?

Legislative advocacy is specific to the legislative process. Its specific messaging is tailored to the legislative audience and process. Public relations targets a more general audience and is important in raising awareness about issues that impact retailers and small businesses, and can help generate public support on key issues.

How do you educate legislators about issues affecting the retail industry, especially when they may not have a deep understanding of the sector?

Good advocacy is a mix of data and storytelling. We share examples from their district that highlight real-world impacts and support these examples with data, and that hits home. The ability to put a face to an issue and share what it will *actually* mean is important, just as important as the data.


How do retailers, particularly smaller businesses, get involved in legislative advocacy efforts?


MRA's Capitol Day is a great way to directly engage with state legislators. MRA can even help schedule meetings. We host this event because it's important. But, you don't have to come to Lansing to get engaged! Bring your rep to you and show them what you do. Invite your legislator to your store for a visit. Engage in some good ol' grassroots advocacy - send an email, send a letter, speak up. Legislators WANT to hear from their constituents.

In your opinion, why should retail leaders care about legislative advocacy, especially in today's fast-changing political landscape?

The legislature cares about (and impacts) you whether you like it or not. You might not be thinking about politics, but politics is thinking about (and impacting) you. We have the freedom to get engaged and should take advantage. It's your opportunity to shape the future of retail. It's to your advantage to take advantage.

### Have Questions? Feel Free to Reach Out!

 [abeardslee@retailers.com](mailto:abeardslee@retailers.com)

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# How Retailers Can Use **Social Districts** to Their Advantage



Photos By: Alison  
Jakubcin for the  
Alpena DDA

In 2020, social districts were introduced to support struggling restaurants and bars amid capacity restrictions due to the pandemic.

## **Bringing a Social District to Alpena**

Alpena Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Executive Director, Anne Gentry, saw the opportunity to create a social district in her community and quickly got to work on the necessary paperwork to bring it to life.

"We knew this could be a game-changer for downtown businesses, so we worked closely with the city to ensure a smooth and efficient process," Gentry said.

The process took about three to four months, from initial discussions to final approval. Gentry recognized early on that this initiative would not only benefit the local bars and restaurants, but Alpena's retailers too.

"By allowing people to enjoy a drink while they browse shops, we've created a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere that encourages visitors to stay downtown longer."

## **How Retailers Can Get Involved**

Wayne Calkins, owner of Bolenz Jewelry in Alpena, agrees that the social district has made a positive impact on Alpena's retail scene, drawing in both tourists and residents.

"As a jewelry store, we're not typically the place to make an impulse purchase, but as a business that relies on brides and brides-to-be, we see groups of women wander in and look at, try on, and wish-list rings. They may not be making a purchase in that moment, but they'll remember us when the time comes," Calkins said.

Calkins encourages other restaurants and locations able to participate in the social district to get involved. "As a collective group of businesses, your local social district gives you an



# What is a Social District?



An area where alcoholic beverages can be purchased and enjoyed outdoors within designated spaces, intended to promote increased economic activity.

"We wanted to make sure that the district was well-maintained and easy to navigate, so clear signage and proper waste management were top priorities," Gentry said.

Jeremy Sahr, owner of Thunder Bay Winery, found the process straightforward and well worth the effort.

"The DDA kept us involved from the start and asked us local businesses if we would be interested," Sahr said. "They also helped us get started with purchasing a round of cups for us. It was very easy to get started."

## The Future of Social Districts

Social districts have proven to be an effective way to boost business for both hospitality and retail establishments. By creating a welcoming and vibrant environment, they encourage visitors to stay longer, explore more, and ultimately spend more within the community. Michigan retailers looking to take advantage of this trend should consider advocating for a social district in their own downtowns.

immediate edge. In this super competitive market, any advantage to encourage people to explore the downtown is vital to the growth of your community."

"Having a staff that is willing to sell the entire downtown and share their experiences with other local businesses can give you an upper hand in getting customers to stay downtown longer, thus increasing the amount of time shopping and making purchases," Calkins said.

## Starting the Process

A governmental organization, such as a city or Downtown Development Authority, must apply to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) to establish a social district. Once approved, eligible downtown businesses can then apply for individual permits to sell beverages for consumption within the district.

Alpena's team focused on setting up the necessary signage, additional trash receptacles, and portable restrooms to maintain a clean and enjoyable environment.



## Bring a Social District to Your Town



Social District Permit Information  
For Local Governmental Units



Social District Permit  
Application For Businesses



LARA Social District  
FAQ



# Milkins Jewelers Marks 120 Years of Family Tradition

The jewelry store has evolved while preserving family legacy and craftsmanship.

**M**ilkins Jewelers began with a dream and a \$50 investment.

In 1905, Archibald Burdette Milkins opened a small jewelry store in Wyandotte, along the Detroit River. His great-granddaughter and current owner, Lesley Milkins-Alban, isn't sure what drew him to the jewelry business.

"He just decided that's what he wanted to do for a living," Milkins-Alban said. "So he invested in himself and the business, and from there, it has continued for generations."

The store remains a family operation. Milkins-Alban was recently joined by her daughter, Skylar, 22, the fifth generation to carry on the family legacy.

"She's been with the business for two years now and is already learning so much," Milkins-Alban said. "She's come into it early, and I feel like she's going to be ahead of the game."

## Blends tradition, modern thinking

This year, Milkins Jewelers, which has operated in nearly the same location for most of its history, celebrates its 120th anniversary. Milkins-Alban credits the store's longevity to a commitment to excellence and the ability to evolve with the times.

"We specialize more in custom pieces now," she said. "With technology and social media, customers have endless inspiration from pictures and ideas. They come in with a vision, and we help bring it to life. We've always been customer-focused, but now, more than ever, we tailor each piece to their specific desires."

Milkins-Alban formally joined the business in 2006 after a career in education.

"I was always around the store growing up," she said. "I worked during college breaks, but I didn't know I wanted to be part of it full-time until later. After traveling for my husband's job for a decade, I started taking gemology courses and fell in love with the field."

Since relocating just a few blocks to its current location in 1915, Milkins Jewelers has remained a fixture in downtown Wyandotte. The historic building retains much of its original charm.

"We're in a very old building with original brickwork and some historic equipment stored in the basement," Milkins-Alban said. "We're in the process of updating our electrical system, but we love preserving the character of the space."

## Keeping up with trends

The store has evolved over the decades.

"At one point, we sold more than just jewelry," she said. "We carried crystal, china, servingware, figurines, and picture frames. People could even register here for wedding gifts. Now, we focus more on custom jewelry and personalized pieces, reflecting how shopping habits have changed."

That connection to history remains central to the business.

"Jewelry is like fashion – it's always changing," Milkins-Alban said. "Trends don't shift as quickly as clothing, but styles come and go in cycles. Right now, we're seeing a big '80s influence."

Herringbone chains, yellow gold, and heavier pieces are back in style, she said.

"I'm sure the people who held onto those pieces for decades are thrilled," she added. "Or maybe they've passed them down to a grandchild, which makes it even more special."

Milkins Jewelers has been featured in exhibits at the Wyandotte Museum.

"Our historical society does a great job," Milkins-Alban said. "We've had some nice write-ups and contributed what knowledge and items we have when we can."

Customers often share stories of how Milkins Jewelers has been part of their family history.

"We have multigenerational customers who come in with their grandparents' rings," Milkins-Alban said. "Some want to keep them as they are, while others want to repurpose the stones into modern settings. One of my favorite stories is about two sisters who inherited their mother's diamond but couldn't agree on a setting. They decided to reset the diamond every six months so they could take turns wearing it. It was a beautiful way to share their mother's legacy."

Another memorable moment came when a customer wanted to verify whether an old ring had been purchased at Milkins Jewelers. "We have handwritten record books dating back to the 1920s," Milkins-Alban said. "It takes time to go through them, but we found the original purchase record. It's always rewarding to help connect people to their past."

Pieces of Milkins history have surfaced in unexpected places.



"A few years ago, someone remodeling their home found a Milkins Jewelers calendar from 1926 inside their walls," she said. "It had been tucked away for nearly a century, perfectly preserved. We occasionally display it in the store, along with some of our antique ring boxes from different eras."

### Part of special moments

For Milkins-Alban, jewelry is more than just an accessory; it holds memories and meaning.

"I have a few pieces from my grandmother, who passed away," she said. "Those diamonds are mounted in a pendant, and I have some gold pieces from her as well."

She loves when customers bring in heirloom pieces with sentimental stories.

"We just resized a wedding ring for a woman who inherited it from her grandmother," she said. "When I think of my grandma, I think of that ring on her finger. It's those moments that make this job so special."

The store also enjoys being part of engagements.

"We always joke about it because we get so connected to the guy buying the ring," Milkins-Alban said. "We learn all about his proposal plans, when they're getting married, then we see them about a year later for wedding bands. After that, sometimes we don't see them for a while, until they need a baby gift. We always wonder, 'When will we see them again?'"

Part of the jewelry store's long history is its 50-year membership with the Michigan Retailers Association (MRA). It's a partnership Milkins-Alban values.



"The MRA does such a great job of keeping us informed," she said. "I always enjoy reading the monthly newsletter. They keep us up to date on business issues and legislation. Plus, they offer benefits like group health insurance and credit card processing. It's just a great resource to have."

As Milkins Jewelers continues into its second century, its focus remains on honoring its legacy while embracing modern advancements.

"Technology is the biggest thing we have to stay on top of," Milkins-Alban said. "We've implemented Computer-Aided Design programs so customers can design their pieces alongside us. It makes the experience more personal and interactive."

Despite the changes, the store's commitment to customer service remains the same.

"The relationships we've built over the years are what make this job so special," she said. "We get to be part of some of the most important moments in people's lives like engagements, anniversaries, and family heirlooms being passed down. It's a privilege to be trusted with those memories."

As the business celebrates its 120th year, the Milkins family remains dedicated to carrying on the traditions that have made them a trusted name in jewelry for generations.

"We will continue to provide great service, and the customer is always our first priority," Milkins-Alban said. "That's what has kept us here for more than a century, and it's what will keep us here for years to come."



(L-R) Skylar Alban, Ann Christie, Lesley Milkins-Alban





## REGULATORY RUNDOWN



### Earned Sick Time and Minimum Wage

**Sean Egan**

Michigan Dept. of Labor and Economic Opportunity  
Wage and Hour Division

Michigan's Wage and Hour Division has regulatory responsibility for the Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA) and the Minimum Wage and Overtime Laws.

A few key points on ESTA, all Michigan employers are covered except the United States Government and railway employers and employees covered by the Railway Unemployment Insurance Act.

Unless you are a business with 10 or fewer employees, your employees began accruing (or were frontloaded time) on Feb. 21, 2025. For employers covered on Feb. 21, 2025 the notice provision was extended 30 days from Feb. 21, 2025.

Some employees are exempted from ESTA benefits. The common exemption question is about employees who schedule their own hours and are not subject to adverse personnel action for not scheduling a minimum number of hours.

This does not exempt employees whose workplaces have flexible scheduling practices or policies. If the employer maintains the schedule, even though employees may choose their own shifts, these employees are covered by ESTA.

Minimum Wage, also effective Feb. 21, 2025, is \$12.48 for 2025, and the tipped employee minimum is 38% of the full minimum wage or \$4.74 for 2025.

For employees earning the tipped minimum wage, employers cannot require tip pooling or tip sharing for purposes of employment or continued employment. Employees may voluntarily share tips with other employees except management or supervisors.

We know these are significant changes and we are working to ensure that employers and employees have the information they need to comply with these changes. We work hard to keep our website up to date with the latest information, so please check [Michigan.gov/wagehour](https://Michigan.gov/wagehour) for posters, FAQs, contact info, and other information.

## Regulatory Trends & Updates

### ESTA Sample Handbook Language Available

After the Feb. 20 passage of HB 4002, Michigan's new Earned Sick Time Act, businesses have been given new requirements to provide employees with designated sick time. To aid in complying with those new requirements, MRA is providing some sample handbook language that employers can use as a starting point.

Please see the document linked in the QR code below for sample language for each category of business impacted by the Earned Sick Time Act.



**ESTA Sample Handbook Language**

### Labor Law Poster Updates

With the passing of the new ESTA regulations, updated labor law posters will be ordered and dispersed to MRA members that currently have the 4.24 version in the coming weeks.

***Note: Changes are only affecting the state poster. Continue to display the state and federal posters until the updated state poster is dispersed.***

If you do not have the 4.24 version and need a poster to comply with regulations, please order a set at [shop.retailers.com](https://shop.retailers.com) using the coupon code **LABORI**.

MRA members are eligible to order a free set of posters. Additional posters can be purchased at [shop.retailers.com](https://shop.retailers.com).



## Retail Trends: 2025 Consumer Holiday Statistics

According to Numerator's 2025 US Annual Holiday Preview

### Top 5 Holidays Consumers Will Celebrate in 2025

90%	Christmas
88%	Thanksgiving
74%	Mother's Day
68%	Easter
67%	Independence Day

### Prep Time

Consumers will typically make plans within two weeks of each holiday, aside from Halloween, Hanukkah, and Christmas, which are planned 1-2 months in advance, and Cinco de Mayo, which is planned 1-2 days in advance.

### Likely to Purchase

Food and alcohol are the top purchased items to celebrate holidays. Ten out of the 14 top holidays see food being the most purchased item. Seven out of those 10 see alcohol as the next purchased item to celebrate.

Halloween is the only holiday where 46% of consumers celebrating plan to purchase decorations, while 75% of celebrators plan to buy candy.

## Deadlines and Reminders

### May – June 2025

**May 15** – Michigan Annual Report Due – Profit and Professional Service Corporations.

**June 1** – (on or before) – Bottle Deposit Fund Reimbursement Due – Form 2196.



[Michigan.gov/taxes/business-taxes/misc/bottle-deposit](https://Michigan.gov/taxes/business-taxes/misc/bottle-deposit)

**Mid-June** – Lottery licenses mailed

### Monthly reminders:

- Sales & Use Tax – Monthly & EFT – On or before the 20th day of the following month.
- Withholding Tax – Monthly & EFT – On or before the 20th day of the following month.
- Retailer's Prepaid Wireless 911 Surcharge – within 30 days of the close of each month. Receipt of a complete Form 5012 is required regardless of payment method.

### Quarterly reminders:

- Corporate Income Tax (CIT) Estimated Returns and Payments (Jan. 15, April 15, July 15, Oct. 15)
- Sales & Use Tax – Quarterly & EFT – On or before the 20th day of the month following the quarter. (Jan. 20, April 20, July 20, Oct. 20)
- Withholding Tax – Quarterly – On or before the 20th day of the month following the quarter. (Jan. 20, April 20, July 20, Oct. 20)
- Unemployment Employer's Quarterly Wage/Tax Reports (Jan. 25, April 25, July 25, Oct. 25)

# Looking for creative ways to support Michigan's retailers this summer?

The Buy Nearby Guy has a full list of great recommendations!

- 
- Visit a small town and peruse their downtown.** Explore the locally-owned shops, markets, and stores and see what unique goods you discover off the beaten path.
  - Stay at a Michigan campground or resort.** Visit somewhere new in Michigan and support Michigan's travel and tourism retailers.
  - Rent outdoor equipment and get active outside.** Try something new like kayaking, tubing, paddle boarding, biking, or water skiing. You might find a new hobby you love.
  - Check out a craft beer tour.** Michigan has a great reputation for our craft beer scene.
  - Barbecue meat from a local butcher.**
  - Buy jelly, jam, or honey from a local farmers market.** See if you can find local bread while you're there! If not, visit a local bakery.
  - Enjoy an ice cream cone from a local ice cream shop.** Bonus points if the ice cream is Michigan-made too!
  - Eat a meal using only locally-sourced food from locally-owned businesses.** Challenge yourself to see how local you can get all your ingredients for a meal.
  - Spend a morning at a local cafe or bookshop with a coffee.**
  - Support a Michigan artist.** Find a new piece of decor for your home from a local gallery or store featuring Michigan-made art. Prints, paintings, sculptures, and more.
  - Visit a Michigan festival.** Our downtowns know how to spend a summer! Look for the local art fairs, musical celebrations, farmers markets, and annual festivals that make Michigan great.
  - Take on a summer home project with products from a locally-owned hardware.** From paint to lumber, and seed to landscape bricks, you can find a lot at your local hardware.
  - Put together a bouquet of fresh flowers from a farm stand.**
  - Buy a birthday gift from a local specialty store.** Yes, gift cards count!
  - Enjoy live entertainment at a local venue.**
  - Send a Michigan postcard in the mail.** Your out-of-state friends will love some snail mail!
  - Get your back-to-school supplies locally.** Watch for sales all summer long to find great deals at local retailers on all things back to school.
  - Support your favorite Michigan business online.** Shout them out on social media, leave them a great Google review, and offer recommendations in local online forums.

How many items can you check off before Labor Day?



## June 2025

**General Themes:** School's Out for Summer, Graduation Season

**Monthly Awareness/Themes:** National PTSD Awareness Month, Migraine and Headache Awareness Month, National Safety Month, Men's Health Month, Pride Month

**June 3** - National Egg Day

**June 8** - National Best Friends Day

**Idea:** Plan an event and encourage shoppers to bring their best friend for a day of fun!

**June 14** - Flag Day

**June 15** - Father's Day

**June 17** - National Mascot Day

**Idea:** Take your brand's mascot out for a day on the town! Collaborate with others in your area for a fun customer experience.

**June 19** - Juneteenth

**June 20** - First Day of Summer

**June 27** - National PTSD Awareness Day

**June 28** - Insurance Awareness Day

**Idea:** Remind your staff about insurance benefits they have access to.

**June 30** - Social Media Day

## July 2025

**General Themes:** Patriotism, Summer Fun, Wedding Season

**Monthly Awareness/Themes:** Independent Retailer Month, National Grilling Month

**July 4** - Independence Day

**July 9** - Cow Appreciation Day

**Idea:** Feature cow-print items on an end cap or run a sale on beef products.

**July 12** - Paper Bag Day

**July 15** - World Youth Skills Day

**July 17** - World Emoji Day

**July 21** - National Ice Cream Day (and Junk Food Day)

**Idea:** Offer your staff an ice cream treat to show them your appreciation!

**July 31** - Intern Day

# Take a fresh approach to shipping.

## As a member of MRA, you can save big!

MRA members can receive discounted shipping rates on eligible services. Sign up for the FedEx Advantage® discounts program for free to start saving on eligible services.

## With the FedEx Advantage program, you'll get:\*

Up to <b>45% off</b>	FedEx Express® shipping
Up to <b>32.5% off</b>	FedEx Ground® shipping
Up to <b>42.3% off</b>	FedEx Home Delivery®
<b>25% off</b>	Delivery Area Surcharges
<b>25% off</b>	Residential Delivery Charges

**Go to [PartnerShip.com/MRA-FedEx](https://PartnerShip.com/MRA-FedEx)**



\* FedEx shipping discounts are off standard list rates and cannot be combined with other offers or discounts. Discounts are exclusive of any FedEx surcharges, premiums, minimums, accessorials, or special handling fees. Eligible services and discounts subject to change. For eligible FedEx® services and rates, please call 1.800.GoFedEx 1.800.463.3339. See the applicable FedEx Service Guide for terms and conditions of service offers and money-back guarantee programs. The FedEx Express discount includes a bonus 5% online processing discount.





# Changes to Youth Employment Laws

What Michigan Retailers Need to Know

On Oct. 1, 2026, Michigan will implement significant changes to its youth employment laws, affecting both minors seeking employment and the businesses that hire them. These reforms aim to modernize the work permit process, enhance enforcement mechanisms, and adjust wage standards.

## Key Changes

**Centralized Work Permit System:** The authority to issue work permits for minors will transition from local school districts and non-public schools to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). This shift is designed to streamline the process and ensure uniformity across the state.

**Online Employment Registration:** LEO will establish and maintain a free online employment registration system accessible to minors, their parents or guardians, and employers. Employers intending to hire minors must submit specific information to this system, including the business name, contact details, the minor's name and contact information, and the worksite address. LEO is mandated to approve a minor's work permit within 15 days; if this timeframe is not met, the minor may commence work immediately.

## Impact on Retail Businesses

These legislative changes will have several implications for retail businesses:

- **Administrative Adjustments:** The shift to an online work permit system will require retailers to familiarize themselves with a new platform and ensure timely submission of necessary information.
- **Compliance Obligations:** With increased penalties for violations, retail businesses must diligently adhere to youth employment standards to avoid substantial fines and potential criminal charges.
- **Financial Considerations:** The scheduled minimum wage increases will directly impact payroll expenses. Retailers employing tipped workers must also prepare for the gradual rise in the tipped minimum wage, necessitating adjustments to compensation structures.
- **Employee Benefits Management:** The revised ESTA mandates that employees accrue paid sick time, introducing additional administrative responsibilities to track accruals and manage leave requests.

## Proactive Steps for Retailers

To navigate these upcoming changes effectively, retail businesses can take the following actions:

1. **Educate and Train Management:** Ensure that managers and HR personnel are well-informed about the new youth employment regulations, wage adjustments, and sick leave policies to maintain compliance.
2. **Update Internal Policies:** Revise employee handbooks and operational procedures to reflect changes in work permit processes, wage rates, and sick leave accruals.
3. **Implement Robust Record-Keeping:** Adopt reliable systems to monitor work permit statuses, wage compliance, and sick leave accruals, thereby minimizing the risk of violations.
4. **Assess Financial Impact:** Conduct financial analyses to understand the implications of increased wages and benefits on the business' bottom line, allowing for strategic planning and budgeting.
5. **Engage in Industry Dialogues:** Participate in discussions with industry associations and peers to share best practices and strategies for adapting to the new regulatory landscape.

By proactively addressing these areas, retail businesses can ensure a smooth transition and continued compliance with Michigan's evolving employment laws.

MRA will be closely monitoring these legislative changes and will continue to provide updates as the **Oct. 1, 2026 implementation date** approaches. MRA remains committed to keeping retailers informed about compliance requirements, best practices, and any further developments. Stay tuned for additional guidance, resources, and advocacy efforts to help Michigan businesses navigate these new youth employment laws with confidence.



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**Matt Sabourin** | 1 (810) 397-1111 | [matthew.sabourin@spartannash.com](mailto:matthew.sabourin@spartannash.com) for more information.



# May is National Small Business Month

## Happy National Small Business Month!

This is your opportunity to celebrate small businesses, all month long. Whether you're pouring into your own small business, or supporting the small businesses around you, May is a great month to get intentional about how you use the power of your dollar and time.

## Get Connected

Find a local small business meet-up to attend this month. Network with other small business owners, industry professionals, and potential customers.

## Shift ONE Purchase

Look at your monthly purchases. What is one purchase you can shift from a national retailer to a small business? Look for local specialty stores with niche products.



*Doing so could increase Michigan's economic activity by \$1.5 Billion.*

## Recognize Small Business Employees

Whether you're the small business owner or a customer at another small business, May is a great time to share your appreciation for small business employees.

## Pour into Your Business

Spend some time this month doing strategic planning, updating systems, and taking care of that to-do list that's been lingering.

## Show Your Building Some Love

If you have a storefront, take an afternoon or two to give your building and property some TLC. Plant some fresh flowers, edge your sidewalks and curbs, touch up the paint where it needs it, and clean your windows.

## Treat Your Customers

As a small business, you can celebrate National Small Business Month by celebrating the customers who support you! Offer a special during National Small Business Week or all month long. Give them a shout out on social media, or offer a giveaway to drive engagement.

**99.9%**  
of businesses in the US  
are considered small  
businesses

**33.2 Million**  
Small Businesses  
in the US

**61.6 Million**  
Americans are employed  
by a small business.

**82%**  
of small businesses  
operate without  
employees.

Of wholesale and retail trade businesses,  
**74%** operate without employees, and  
**23%** have less than 20 employees.





## SAFETY TIPS FROM RETAILERS INSURANCE COMPANY

### Bloodborne Pathogens and Needlestick Safety


Exposure to bloodborne pathogens through needlesticks and other “sharps”-related injuries is a serious concern, especially for retailers handling waste, first aid, or public restrooms.


**“Sharps” are defined as a device with a sharp point or edge that can penetrate the skin, i.e. needles, scalpels, knives, glass, wires, etc.**

Bloodborne pathogens, such as hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), can be transmitted through needlestick injuries and contact with infected blood or bodily fluids. Even a small puncture wound can lead to serious health consequences, making proper risk management essential.


#### Preventive Measures for Your Business


Retailers Insurance Company recommends taking proactive steps to protect employees:

 **Develop a Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Plan:** OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard requires employers to have a written plan outlining how to handle potential exposure, including proper procedures and thorough reporting.

 **Provide Employee Training:** Educate staff on the dangers of bloodborne pathogens and the correct handling of sharps and biohazard materials.

 **Supply Protective Equipment:** Ensure employees have access to gloves, proper waste disposal containers, and first-aid kits.

 **Implement Safe Disposal Practices:** Install designated sharps disposal containers in restrooms and break areas to prevent accidental exposure.

 **Encourage Immediate Incident Reporting:** Prompt reporting of needlestick injuries or other exposures ensures swift medical evaluation and will help prevent future incidents.

#### Mitigating Risk and Reducing Costs

Taking proactive safety measures not only protects your employees but also reduces the likelihood of costly workers' compensation claims. Needlestick injuries and exposure to bloodborne pathogens can lead to expensive medical treatments, lost productivity, and potential legal liabilities. By implementing proper training, safety protocols, and disposal methods, you minimize the risk of incidents, keeping insurance costs down and ensuring a safer work environment.

Investing in prevention today can save your business from costly claims in the future. For more workplace safety and risk management tips, visit [RetailersInsurance.com](https://RetailersInsurance.com).

# Member News

## 16 Hands Celebrates 50 Years, Prepares to Close Doors

After 50 years in business, 16 Hands, a beloved artisan shop in Ann Arbor's Kerrytown district, is closing its doors. Since 1974, the store has showcased handcrafted works from local and national artists, becoming a staple in the community for unique gifts and home décor. While this chapter is ending, the legacy of 16 Hands and its impact on Ann Arbor's arts scene will be remembered for years to come. The store celebrated their success and said thank you and farewell to their customers with an anniversary party on March 2.

## Neiman's Family Markets Recognized as a Top Independent Retailer



Neiman's Family Markets has been honored by Shelby Publishing as one of the Top 80 Independent Retailers Nationwide at the National Grocers Association's Annual Conference. This recognition highlights their commitment to quality, customer service, and community engagement. As a proud Michigan-based retailer, Neiman's continues to set a high standard in the independent grocery industry. Congratulations to the entire Neiman's team on this well-earned achievement!



MILESTONE MEMBERS

# Thank YOU

for your continued loyalty to Michigan  
Retailers Association!



## Celebrating 10 years with MRA

**Ann Arbor P.T.O. Thrift Shop Inc.,** *Ann Arbor*

**Condat Corporation,** *Saline*

**Cotton Bay,** *Holland*

**Countryside Veterinary Service,** *Cement City*

**Crown Industrial Services Inc.,** *Jackson*

**Donny's Funky Broadway Enterprises Inc.,** *Detroit*

**Electrical Unlimited LLC,** *Alto*

**The Foundry,** *Jackson*

**Great Lakes Belting & Supply Corp.,** *Paw Paw*

**Jan's Bar,** *Swartz Creek*

**M & M Equipment Auto Sales Inc.,** *Battle Creek*

**Rainbow Bar,** *Owosso*

**Vollwerth & Baroni Companies,** *Hancock*

**World Magnetics ACQ Company LLC,** *Traverse City*

## Celebrating 25 years with MRA

**A B Milkins Co.,** *Monroe*

**American Fence Erectors Inc.,** *Grandville*

**Craig A Flickinger DDS PLLC,** *Sault Ste. Marie*

**Edward A Tashjian MD,** *Auburn Hills*

**Prakken Publications Inc.,** *Ann Arbor*

**Schepers Lawn Sprinkling,** *Jenison*

**Scott's Sportscards, Coins & Jewelry,** *Portage*

**Vision & Sensory Center LLC,** *Wyoming*





## NEW MEMBERS

# All of us at MRA look forward to serving you!

W Johnson Service Inc., *Adrian*

Albion Moose Lodge, *Albion*

Igloo Store LLC, *Big Rapids*

Hooks Farms, *Breckenridge*

Snappy Apple Farms Inc., *Casnovia*

Big Rock Corp., *Chesaning*

Zippy Agriculture LLC, *Clare*

Clancy's Restaurant LLC dba  
Hennessy's, *Clinton Twp.*

Centennial Fruit Inc., *Conklin*

Onasis Coney Island Inc., *Detroit*

Pure Van Dyke LLC, *Detroit*

Wheelhouse Detroit LLC, *Detroit*

Louie's Ham & Corned Beef Shop Inc.,  
*Detroit*

The Legend Inn LLC, *Dimondale*

The Producer Advantage, *Florida*

Village of Fowlerville, *Fowlerville*

Buds Blueline LLC dba Fraser  
Hockeyland, *Fraser*

Bellwether Harbor Animal Shelter,  
*Fremont*

Who's Your Daddy Ent Inc.,  
*Grand Rapids*

West Michigan Band Instruments  
LLC, *Grand Rapids*

Masonic Temple Association of  
GR, MI, *Grand Rapids*

Never Enough, *Grant*

18th Street Deli Inc., *Hamtramck*

Farm Marcellus LLC, *Hanover*

J D Landscape & Trailer LLC, *Haslett*

Detroit One Seven Mile Coney Island  
LLC, *Highland Park*

Ready for School, *Holland*

Canvas Marine LLC dba Canvas  
Innovations, *Holland*

Neighborhood Legacy Cleaners LLC,  
*Jackson*

Crimson Oak Wood Co., *Jackson*

Christoff and Sons Floor Covering  
Inc., *Jackson*

Bes Naturals LLC, *Jonesville*

Auto Trim Group, *Kalamazoo*

D & S Masonry Inc., *Lake Orion*

Cars on Demand LLC, *Lansing*

Joe Burke Painting LLC, *Macomb*

Heritage Farms Manistee LLC,  
*Manistee*

Frog Dog Holdings LLC, *Marine City*

United Contractors Inc., *Marquette*

St. James Catholic Church, *Mason*

Cross Enterprises, *Melvindale*

Keene Small Engine Sales & Service  
Inc., *Millington*

Mini Mitten Pediatric Therapy LLC,  
*Monroe*

Mid Michigan Spray Foam LLC,  
*Morrice*

Tarantula Genetics LLC, *Mount Morris*

Land's Grocery Inc., *Muskegon*

Lakes Inc., *Muskegon*

D & S Restaurant Inc., *New Baltimore*

Dance Studio 3 Inc. dba Center Stage  
Dance Co., *Northville*

GLFS Inc. dba Designer Furniture  
Services, *Pontiac*

My Select Cars & Trucks LLC,  
*Richmond*

Bright Colors Painting LLC, *Rochester*

The Aubrey Group Inc., *Roseville*

1203 Main St. LLC dba Holiday Market,  
*Royal Oak*

Skyweb Network Inc., *Saginaw*

Comet Burgers SCS LLC,  
*Saint Clair Shores*

Country Neighbors LLC, *Scottville*

Charlie's Bar Inc., *Scottville*

Highland Heifer LLC, *Sebewaing*

Paint It Red Entertainment LLC,  
*Sebewaing*

Bread and Roses LLC, *Shelby Twp.*

Advanced Automation Services LLC,  
*Shelby Twp.*

Elite Indoor Sports LLC, *Shelby Twp.*

Lulu's Gourmet Foods & Desserts LLC,  
*South Lyon*

Dry Clean Depot LLC, *Southfield*

GJR Bowling Corp., *Sparta*

Zerka's General Store Inc., *Stanton*

Online Auto LLC, *Swartz Creek*

Taylor Conservatory Foundation,  
*Taylor*

Creative Home Design LLC,  
*Traverse City*

The Instant Framer Inc., *Traverse City*

Marsh Painting LLC, *Troy*

Frazer Hockeyland Inc., *Utica*

Reese Adventure Club, *Vassar*

Redwood Convenience Inc., *Westland*

H and A Gas Station Inc., *Wyandotte*



FROM THE ARCHIVES

# Every now and then, we stumble upon gems from our archives.

May 1956 • Vol. 2, No. 2

## MICHIGAN WEEK—1956

By THE MICHIGAN WEEK STAFF

Michigan Retailers will again this year, as for the past two years, have an unparalleled opportunity to cooperate with the industrial and service sections of our state economy in promoting Michigan during the week of May 20-26.

Michigan Week is a "grass roots" program. It extends from the Governor down to the first grader. Its objective is to awaken our people to the past, present and challenging future of our great state for the purpose of building an **Even Greater Michigan**.

Its success in sparking local activity is evident in the many meetings, events, celebrations and gatherings in every corner of the state. Local church, school, labor, business, social and cultural organizations cooperate to make it a success.

The Michigan Week spirit naturally attracts the attention of those outside Michigan. Anyone likes to see, to take part in, and in a sense to become part of a place that helps make its people prosperous, happy and eager for the challenge of tomorrow.

This is indeed an occasion when each of us can present to the people of our communities a great array of products made or raised here in Michigan—products that were made possible by Michigan capital, with Michigan labor and Michigan ingenuity, products which the whole world has come to accept as the standard of excellence.

Actually we retailers can view this whole promotion from a selfish viewpoint because in promoting Michigan

products during Michigan Week, we are in all probability promoting our own sales. The Michigan retailer should check to see if he has a local supplier of some product manufactured or grown in his immediate neighborhood and can feature that local product, in addition to other Michigan-made products.

Retailers can:

Display one of industry's local manufacturing products with appropriate placards of information.

Display Michigan products with merchants competing for the best window.

Include in advertising both the week before and during Michigan Week a boxed information statement of events of the day.

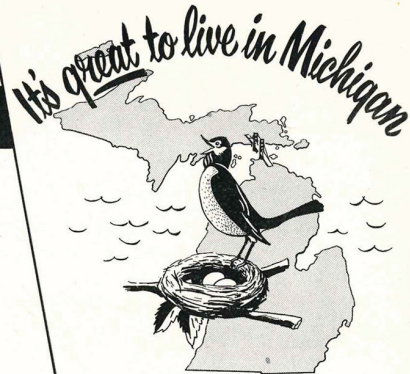
Display the American Flag and the Michigan Flag during Michigan Week.

Arrange industrial visits for clerks and management of local retail establishments. Local store clerks should know your community and be proud of it.

Plan to include your rolling equipment, freshly washed, in a parade.

Schedule your time so you can assist on at least one local committee through your chamber of commerce or association.

Plan informal hospitality gestures in your store (coffee and cakes; a chocolate treat; a corsage for customers, etc.)



**MICHIGAN WEEK  
MAY 20-26**

Check information from the Retail Merchant's Association for additional ideas.

There is much promotional literature available through the Michigan Week committee: envelope stuffers, hand bills, display cards, bumper stickers for automobiles, all can be obtained at the actual cost of printing.

You can play a part! The fact that you are in business in Michigan constitutes a contribution to the prosperity of our state. It is to people like you that the state and community also look for support of forward-looking civic ventures. That is why you are being invited and urged to do everything in your power to make the Michigan Week program a success.

Don't you agree

**IT'S GREAT TO LIVE  
IN MICHIGAN**

Michigan Week  
May 20-26



# How much could you be **SAVING?**

ALL-INCLUSIVE  
WEEK-LONG  
TRIP FOR TWO  
TO BORA BORA

AN ENTIRE  
FULL-TIME  
EMPLOYEE'S  
WAGES

YOUR  
DAUGHTER'S  
WEDDING

A DIGITAL  
MONUMENT  
SIGN FOR  
YOUR  
BUSINESS

A DOZEN  
MACBOOK  
PROS

AN  
E-COMMERCE  
WEBSITE  
BUILD-OUT

A  
MID-SIZE  
SEDAN

A  
DOWNPAYMENT  
ON A NEW  
HOUSE

A SEMESTER  
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## Share Your Story!

We'd love to hear more about your business and how you are navigating today's retail landscape.

**Who knows, you may be featured in  
a future issue of *Michigan Retailer*...**

Email us at **[communications@retailers.com](mailto:communications@retailers.com)**  
and let your voice be heard!