



the BottlingLine

Issue No. 348 • Spring/Summer 2023

2023 Schedule

CCLT Meetings

August 23
September 12 - 13
December 6 - 7

Mainstream Calls

September 25
December 14

CCBA Annual Meeting

October 17-18
HOUSTON, TX

NAOU Ready-to-Execute

October 18-20
HOUSTON, TX

Fall Risk Management Forum

Nov 1-3
ORLANDO, FL

Scan the QR code to check the CCBA website for schedule updates



Heartland Coca-Cola is Beverage Bottler of the Year!



Beverage
Industry

heartland
Coca-Cola
BOTTLING COMPANY

Each year the January issue of Beverage Industry announces its annual Bottler of the Year Award. This prestigious honor is the result of evaluating businesses across the beverage Bottling landscape on key business metrics. One of those intangible metrics is heart, with this year's Beverage Bottler of the Year Award going to Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling Company!

In the beverage market, no one understands the importance of the hometown community more than the bottlers and distributors of Coca-Cola. Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Lenexa, Kansas, with its close community ties, supportive local programming, and commitment to its team members have helped this midwestern Bottler thrive and grow.

While its territory in Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, and some counties in Iowa and Nebraska, is long established across the Coca-Cola Bottling franchise footprint, Heartland's company structure began in 2016 when The Coca-Cola Company advanced its North America refranchising plan. As part of that plan, Ulysses "Junior" Bridgeman closed on a deal that created Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling Company, and the Company officially began operations in February 2017.

Mr. Bridgeman, whose earlier career includes 12 years in the NBA as well as the franchising and ownership of various Wendy's and Chili's restaurants, has strived to establish Heartland Coca-Cola as a business that serves hometown communities and that invests back into local neighborhoods. "Without a doubt, family is a core value – what we do together as a team, with our shared vision," Bridgeman says. "And a lot of hard work. That's what leads to personal and organizational growth." Time flies when an organization is focused on a shared vision. Heartland Coca-Cola just celebrated its fifth-anniversary last year, in 2022.

Hometown instincts drive Midwest bottler



Heartland Coca-Cola's Executive Director, Justin Bridgeman (left) and Chief Executive Officer, Ulysses "Junior" Bridgeman

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Mainstream Bottlers Meet in Scottsdale, Arizona

Mainstream Bottlers convened for their Annual Spring meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona on February 23rd & 24th. As our system continues to evolve – this meeting remains an important benchmark for beginning the business year and tackling key topics important to driving and optimizing our business.

Day One was kicked off by Mainstream President Rob Feeney (Atlantic CCBC) and CCBA VP, Bottler Support Services and Customer Governance, Ilene Grimes, who summarized the agenda and offered an overview of the current state-of-the-business and organizational landscape. Outgoing Mainstream President, Bruce Long (Ozarks Coca-Cola) was honored for his service. Bruce has been and continues to be a key contributor to our business and an overall ‘force of nature’ in our Bottling community. John Gould, CCBA’s CEO and Executive Director, provided an Association stewardship update followed by a Bottler-only Member discussion to tee up points that needed to be addressed during the meeting.

Brittany Dunlap, (NAOU) provided an update on the North America Operating Unit’s leadership with key updates to Franchise Points of Contact. Brian Johnson and Brian Sappington walked the group through detailed 2022 business performance results and insights, and the 2023 Business Plan. They also addressed details around growth acceleration with a comprehensive Roadmap for System Health.



Patrick Plunkett and Eileen Thanner, (NAOU) shared updates on supply chain and commercial, infrastructure and transition updates. Patrick and Eileen provided an overview of learnings from 2021 and how these informed actions and changes in 2022, leading to a strategy to execute for growth this year, in 2023. Patrick and Eileen were followed by Preston Lee and Mickey Urmann, who provided an outlook on commodities and NPSG updates on Investment and System Health Initiatives respectively.

Lori Bates, BODYARMOR Chief Commercial Officer kicked off the afternoon and provided a comprehensive review of their 2023 marketing plan. Lori continued to highlight BODYARMOR’s newest Brand Partner, Jennifer Lopez, as well as the exciting marketing campaigns for each of BODYARMOR’s beverage platforms, with details on integration and support around the POWERADE brand.

Darren Bedard (NAOU) offered updates on Bottler Capability tools and new ways to access enhanced resources for Bottlers. Roy Howard (Clark CCBC) provided a NorthStar SteerCo update with details on the 2023 eoStar release plan.

After the break Preston Lee (CCBSS), Debra Hanson (Heartland) and Stephanie Griffin (CCBA) shared a best practice on enhancing the system’s labor force via military recruitment, highlighting The Coca-Cola Company’s long-standing relationship with all branches of the military. This program has evolved to enhance recruitment opportunities for veterans as well as offer ways to create standards and best practices with the recruitment process for the Coca-Cola Bottling system.

Mainstream President, Rob Feeney closed Day One. The Coke Affiliated Sales Organization (CASO) Bottlers remained to engage in a discussion with Jason Butter of Keurig Dr Pepper and his leadership team, followed by a CASO Bottler-only discussion. All attendees were then welcomed to an evening of rekindling connections while enjoying dinner and drinks!



It's a full house for the NPSG Update!

Mainstream Vice President Tiffany Olsen (Lehrkind), joined Rob (Feeney), and Ilene to formally open the meeting for Day Two!

Dea Zurliene (Monster Energy Company) shared Company news and offered a comprehensive look at the portfolio with system performance and updates on Monster's priorities, supply continuity, and plans for innovation. Congratulations to Coca-Cola Beverages Florida and Coca-Cola Williston, who earned Monster Bottler of the Year status for 2022!

Jeff Ryan (CCBA) took the stage with an overview of the Financial Survey Review. He shared planned enhancements with general timing and encouraged Members to participate in this resource to continue to enrich the data the tool can provide. Mainstream Meeting presenting sponsor, Verizon followed with an overview of technology available that can make business operations easier. Most of us think of mobile phones when we see Verizon, however complementary technical resources such as asset tracking and fixed wireless access can provide improved performance and security in your operating environment.

Two Sharing Practices panel sessions followed. The first, moderated by Tiffany Olsen (Lehrkind) discussed Merchandising Tools with Panel members Wendy Aguilar, Yakima/Tri-Cities; Joe Carter, Odom and Cale Walter, Atlantic. Each shared tools they have used to improve aspects of their merchandising for their respective markets.

This session was followed by a panel that discussed Operating Learnings - What's Hot and What's Not, led by Rob Feeney. Panel members Bruce Long (Ozarks), Andrew Marchesseault (Coke NE), and Ken Williams (Corinth), offered learnings from their experiences.

A Bottler-only discussion followed to close out the formal discussions and address necessary follow-ups. As the meeting came to a close, Rob and Ilene wrapped up the session and addressed questions before officially adjourning.

The Spring Mainstream meeting offers an excellent venue for Members to stay informed on our business, connect with fellow Bottlers and System colleagues, and offer input on plans as they come together and evolve. Hope to see you in 2024!



A Coca-Cola corner for collaborating and connecting!

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The Coca-Cola Bottlers' Association

35th Class of Coca-Cola Scholars Welcomed at Official Banquet



The 2023 and 35th class of Coca-Cola Scholars was officially welcomed and celebrated in Atlanta at their reception and awards banquet on April 13. This was the first time since 2019 that the celebration was in person, and indeed, it was a wonderful celebration - fantastic speakers and world class entertainment!

Coca-Cola leadership, sponsors, program alumni, and community dignitaries applauded as the 2023 class of Coca-Cola Scholars walked across the stage and joined a family of 6,750+ alumni who are leading positive change in their communities and around the world.

Less than 1/6th of 1% of applicants were chosen to receive this extremely competitive award. These 150 students, who were selected from an initial pool of 91,000+ applications from across the country, not only exemplify superior leadership, service, and academics, they are change agents, positively affecting others in their communities.

A joint effort of Coca-Cola Bottlers across the country and The Coca-Cola Company, the Coca-Cola Scholars Program is the largest corporate-sponsored, achievement-based scholarship program in the United States. With the addition of the 2023 class, Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation will have provided more than 6,750 Coke Scholars nationwide with over \$81 million in scholarships over the course of 35 years!

The 2024 application will be available on the CCSF website from August 1 - October 2, 2023, for students who will graduate during the 2023-2024 academic year. The submission deadline is earlier than in prior years.

Look for your Bottler Toolkit with promotional materials from CCSF the first week in August.

Scan the code to read more about this year's Scholars



COMMUNITY & MEMBER Updates

Clark Beverage Group Plans New Operations-Distribution Center



Clark Beverage Group announced plans and broke ground this month to expand its operations in Madison County, Mississippi. The company will be relocating from its current location in Jackson once the new facility is completed in the first quarter of 2025. The \$100 million project is expected to create 30 jobs.

The investment includes the addition of a new 400,000-square-foot sales and distribution facility, as well as the acquisition of more equipment to better serve the company's consumers of Mississippi and neighboring states. Operations are scheduled for 2025.

"This \$100 million investment and expansion into the Madison County Mega Site represents Clark Beverage Group's commitment to our employees and their families for growth, as well as our strong relationship with our consumers and communities which we serve every day in Mississippi," Ken Skutnik, Clark Beverage Group Chief Operating Officer said.

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) is providing assistance in support of the project through the Mississippi Flexible Tax Incentive, or MFLEX. Madison County also is assisting with the project. "MDA is proud to support Clark Beverage Group's new location at the Madison County Mega Site, which is certainly an economic boost for the area and entire region. But most important is the fact that 30 new opportunities are being created that will positively impact Clark Beverage's new employees and their families now and well into the future," MDA Deputy Executive Director Laura Hipp noted.

Clark Beverage Group is a fourth-generation family-owned Bottler that began distributing Coca-Cola in 1903. The company offers a diverse group of national and international brands of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages in Alabama, Kentucky, Indiana, Mississippi and Tennessee and employs approximately 950 people across the five states.



Pictured left to right: Dallas Clark, Harold Clark, Houston Clark, Bailey Clark, Steve Clark, Robert Clark, Morgan Clark-Schnur, Albert Clark, Cameron Clark

Mississippi State University Names Albert Clark National Alumnus of the Year!

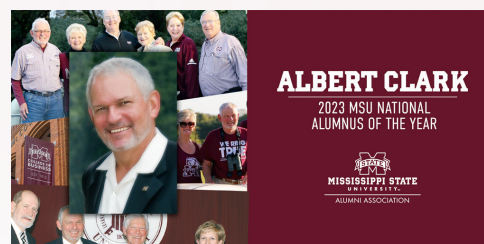
Mississippi State University formally recognized Albert C. Clark with its highest alumni honor in a campus ceremony on May 19, as the university's 2023 National Alumnus of the Year.

Albert is a Starkville native and a 1965 business administration graduate of MSU's College of Business. He is president and CEO of C.C. Clark Inc., a regional beverage distributor, and vice president of Clark Distributing Co. in Kentucky.

Albert is a leader in the community and within his industry, having served in a number of voluntary roles over the years. He has served on the board of BancorpSouth Bank Inc. and as former chairman of First Federal Bank for Savings. He is current president of the Gulf State Cannery Inc. board. A longtime member of the Greater Starkville Development Partnership, he also has dedicated his time and support to the Oktibbeha County Economic Development Authority board, Starkville Rotary Club and the Starkville Chamber of Commerce.

At MSU, Albert has a strong history of support and service. He is a member and past president of the MSU Foundation board of directors and previous board member for the Bulldog Club. He was honored as the College of Business's Alumnus of the Year in 2004 and was named among the college's 100 most distinguished graduates during its centennial celebration in 2015.

"We are proud to salute Albert Clark on behalf of Mississippi State University for his professional success and for his loyal lifelong connection with his alma mater. He is an excellent example for the entire Bulldog family, and his outstanding professional and personal achievements serve as an illustration of the success MSU inspires each of our graduates to attain," said Jeff Davis, executive director of the MSU Alumni Association. "Of more than 158,000 living alumni, Albert is a distinguished selection for this honor."



Coca-Cola UNITED Announces Key Appointments



Almost simultaneously with sharing his farewell message to Coca-Cola UNITED employees, Claude Nielsen, one of the greatest Bottling leaders of our generation has completed his passing of the torch!



Conrad Rafield III Named Chairman of the Board for Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED

The Board of Directors of Coca-Cola Bottling Company United, Inc. (UNITED) appointed Conrad Webb Rafield III as its Chairman of the Board in April. He succeeds Claude B. Nielsen, who is retiring after serving as Chairman since 2000.

A Birmingham native, Mr. Rafield is UNITED's longest-serving director, having joined the board in 1979. He is president/owner of Rafield Investment Company, and he is a founding partner and shareholder of Red Mountain Entertainment, a Live Nation Company. "With more than four decades of service on our board, Conrad brings broad business experience and a deep understanding of our company's principles and culture," said Claude Nielsen who, in addition to being chairman, served as Coca-Cola UNITED's president and CEO for more than 30 years. "Conrad has always been a steadfast advocate for Coke UNITED, our associates, and our local operating model." Rafield attended the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and has a B.A. from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is passionate about civic and community involvement and has held leadership roles at United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham (now United Ability) and Magic Moments. In addition, he has served on the boards of American Sports Medicine Institute, Baptist Hospital Foundation, Glenwood Mental Health, the President's Advisory Council of Birmingham-Southern College, and the President's Cabinet of the University of Alabama. Rafield and his wife, Peggy, reside in Birmingham and have three children and five grandchildren.

Alexia B. Borden Elected to Coca-Cola UNITED Board of Directors

Borden is senior vice president of customer and community engagement for Alabama Power, with responsibility for overseeing customer operations and the local community affairs initiatives carried out by the company's six geographic business divisions. Previously, she served as senior vice president and general counsel, and prior to that role she was vice president of governmental affairs, responsible for all aspects of the company's governmental affairs at the state level and interactions with elected officials, cabinet members and agency representatives. Prior to joining Alabama Power, Borden was a partner with a law firm in Montgomery and Birmingham, representing clients on environmental and natural resources issues and governmental relations. "Alexia's business, governmental and legal expertise will be a great addition to our board," said Nielsen. "On top of that, her civic involvement is consistent with Coca-Cola UNITED's culture and the importance it places on stakeholder and community relationships." Borden serves on numerous boards of directors, including the Birmingham Zoo, Greater Alabama Council of the Boy Scouts, and Legal Services of Alabama. She is also a member of the Georgia Tech President's Advisory Board and a member of the Georgia Tech ISyE Advisory Board. She is a graduate of Leadership Alabama, Signature Leaders, and the Alabama Leadership Initiative. Borden received a Bachelor of Science in industrial engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a Juris Doctor from the University of Alabama School of Law. Borden and her husband Gray live in Birmingham and have two children.



Michael A. Suco Elected to Coca-Cola UNITED Board of Directors

Mike was named president and CEO of Coca-Cola UNITED on August 1, 2022. He has been with the company for more than 25 years serving in numerous executive and senior leadership positions in Alabama and Georgia. From 2016 to 2021, as vice president of the company's East Region, he led the integration of the Atlanta market unit when more than 2,000 new associates and 13,000 new customers joined the Coca-Cola UNITED family. Mike has a B.S. in Business Administration from Jacksonville State University and began his career with The Ernest and Julio Gallo Winery in 1991. He has a long history of community engagement, both in Birmingham and in Atlanta, including leadership and board affiliations with Oglethorpe University, Fernbank Museum of Natural History, Georgia Beverage Association, Hispanic Business Council, Fiesta Hispanic Cultural Festival, YMCA of Greater Birmingham, The Boy Scouts of America, the Petroleum and Convenience Marketers of Alabama, and Holy Family Cristo Rey Catholic High School. Suco and his wife, Shelley, have two children and reside in Birmingham.

Liberty Celebrates 5 Year Anniversary

Liberty Coca-Cola celebrated five (5) years in October 2022. In honor of this milestone, the Liberty Coca-Cola family gathered and celebrated on historic Liberty Island, where the Statue of Liberty stands in Manhattan. And for the grand finale, in true **Liberty** Coca-Cola fashion, a fireworks display illuminated Coca-Cola colors across the New York City skyline.



Left to right: Bob Zimmerman, Paul Mulligan, Fran McGorry and Faith McGorry



The vision of the iconic Statue of Liberty coupled with the celebration of Liberty Coca-Cola offered an inspiring moment for everyone!

Liberty Coca-Cola is owned and operated by Fran McGorry and Paul Mulligan, Co-Founders and CEOs. Liberty is the 7th largest Bottler in the U.S., operating in the territories including New Jersey, metropolitan New York, Philadelphia, part of Connecticut and Delaware.



Liberty Purpose, Values and Vision Statement

Developed by Liberty's leaders when the Bottler began its journey in 2017. Five years later the Liberty Coca-Cola teams are living it!

We know CCBA Members join us in congratulating everyone at Liberty Coca-Cola on their 5 year anniversary!



Chuck Wyant Named Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling Company President and Chief Operating Officer

Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling Company, LLC, announced that Charles (Chuck) Wyant has expanded his leadership role at the company with his promotion to president and chief operating officer. Wyant was a member of the founding leadership team for Heartland, joining the company in 2017 as vice president and general manager, and was named president in 2021. He came to Heartland with more than 30 years of experience in the Coca-Cola Bottling system, all of that time in the Midwest.

In his expanded role, Chuck will assume oversight of business operations and work closely on strategic planning with the Bridgeman ownership group. He will continue to lead sales, operations, finance, marketing, public affairs and communications, human resources, production, legal, and technology (IT). Heartland Coca-Cola serves over 25,000 customers and employs more than 2,200 team members.

"Chuck's knowledge and expertise in our business is matched by his deep commitment to the people of this organization," said Junior Bridgeman, CEO, Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling Company, LLC. "He embodies our foundational values of family, community, inclusion, and service," Bridgeman continued. "We look forward to working with him in this expanded role as he champions continued professional growth for our associates and economic growth for our local communities and our company."

"I'm honored to represent and support our Heartland associates," said Chuck. "This is a very exciting time for our business as we continue to build our production and sales capabilities and further establish our leadership role in our local communities." Mr. Wyant is also a member of the Board of Directors for the Greater Kansas City Sports Commission.

We know CCBA Members join us in congratulating Chuck and wishing him continued success!



Heartland Coca-Cola is Beverage Bottler of the Year!

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Chuck Wyant, president of Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling Company, further emphasizes the company's love for the communities it serves and its commitment to supporting them. "Our values of family, community, inclusion, and service drive every decision that we make at Heartland – that is the commitment of the Bridgeman family," he explains. Referring to its team members as the "heartbeats" of Heartland, Wyant highlights that Heartland's success can be attributed to the integrated work done by the entire team. As such, the team makes an effort to support organizations in the community that matter to them, and this commitment is reflected daily. "The company supports many wonderful community-based organizations and has built a culture where it encourages employees to give back with their time and talent," Wyant says.

One such organization is the Veterans Community Project (VCP). VCP was founded in the Kansas City area by veterans who wanted to help other veterans who were homeless. They created a tiny home village where veterans could stay free of charge until they were able to get a place of their own. VCP is now expanding in other cities across the United States. "We are excited to see VCP expanding in St. Louis, Missouri. Recently, a group of Heartland employees spent several hours on a building project at the new St. Louis VCP village," Wyant added.

Noting that the company refers to its regional sales centers as "hometowns," each Heartland locale works at its local level with various organizations, including the Boys and Girls Clubs, the Special Olympics, United Way, and the Urban League. These regional sales centers also are involved with many smaller, local-level nonprofits such as NubAbility Athletics Foundation in DuQuoin, Illinois, which provides sports camps for limb-different children.

Heartland's senior management also plays an active role in community connections. To close out 2022, leaders from across the company met for several days to plan and hear about 2023 goals.

Chuck Wyant shared "During our planning meetings we used part of our first day to work with four different community organizations. We spent time learning more about their work in the community and then spent several hours serving them. There was so much heart and energy reflected that day. It was a powerful way to bring leadership together and 'live' the culture."

"From a communications perspective, we're excited about our introduction of Yammer as an enterprise social network platform, providing an easy and effective way for our employees to connect, build communities, and share knowledge and information," says Jeff Oberman, vice president of people at Heartland.



Ulysses "Junior" Bridgeman (left) speaks to team members at a Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling event. Also pictured is Rick Frazier, Bridgeman Family advisor at Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling.

Designing for the Future

With more than 2,400 team members, Heartland presently operates 17 distribution centers in addition to its production facility in Lenexa, Kansas. As a result of the growth achieved during the past five years, the company has announced plans to build a state-of-the-art production campus in Olathe, Kansas.

Mr. Bridgeman said, "We're modernizing our production capabilities and embracing our Heartland values of family, community, inclusion, and service with this new, 600,000-square-foot campus. He also noted that this is a "generational investment" for Heartland's production capabilities. The company anticipates that the first saleable case will be produced in the fall of 2024, with production being fully operational sometime in 2025.

Heartland's current facility was built in 1969 and opened with used equipment, but the new Olathe facility will be more than three times the size of this current facility. This all comes on the heels of the company's fifth anniversary. "Thanks to the hard work of each of our employees and the support of our partners and customers, we have delivered consistent, predictable, and sustainable results, allowing us to kick off the next five years and beyond with our announcement of the new production campus in neighboring Olathe," Bridgeman notes.

Although still in the early stages of determining equipment for the new campus, Heartland notes that the facility will feature leading-edge capabilities, with plans for four new production lines – two PET lines and two can lines.

"With modernization will come many advantages, including strengthening the company's ability to produce more products and increasing our efficiency," explains Heartland Executive Director, Justin Bridgeman. "Team members will also benefit from these improvements, allowing them to focus on growth for the company and for their own professional careers with Heartland. As Heartland grows, we will continue our close connection and support of our communities."

A Strong Beverage Foundation

As consumers' beverage demands continue to evolve, sparkling accounts for more than 60% of Heartland's portfolio, and remains the key category within Heartland's portfolio.

Jeff Carter, vice president of customers, noted success with new flavors, such as The Coca-Cola Company's Creations Starlight and Dreamworld releases as well as zero-sugar innovations.

"Heartland is the second largest BODYARMOR distributor and is among the Top 5 distributors of Monster Energy in the U.S.," Carter says. "Heartland also has the highest brand development index and a No. 1 share in the category with Gold Peak Tea!"

With such a diverse portfolio, Heartland operates in lockstep with The Coca-Cola Company to ensure the needs of its partners and ultimately, its consumers are met. "Heartland works closely with The Coca-Cola Company to develop the right strategies for its various channels and partners on advertising and marketing strategies," Carter continues. "The companies invest together to ensure that Heartland has the right packaging in the right channels and to ensure the products are available to all our customers."

Heart of the Operations

Producing approximately 30 million cases a year out of its Lenexa production facility, Heartland's 17 distribution centers, and its production facility utilize a fleet of approximately 900 vehicles to deliver its products.

Comprised of tractors, trailers, side-bay trucks, box trucks, pickup trucks and vans, Heartland's delivery operations are equipped to support safe deliveries through dash cams as well as GreenMile, a program that supports driver performance. The company also is addressing one of the key challenges impacting the bottling industry: the CDL truck driver shortage.

"Across the country, one of our industry's most significant issues is the shortage of CDL truck drivers," Oberman says. "CDL drivers play an essential role in our business, and their work is invaluable. This past March, we launched Heartland's CDL Program in hopes of acquiring new Heartland drivers while combatting the driver shortage epidemic."



Heartland Coca-Cola's leadership team helps guide the business and is heavily involved in the Company's community outreach.

Pictured Back Row (left-to-right): Ed Bryant, VP Public Affairs and Communications, Jeff Oberman, VP People, Justin Bridgeman, Executive Director, Jeff Carter, VP Customers, Chuck Wyant, COO and President, Shaun Byrd, CFO;

Front Row: Teneca Clark, VP, Supply Chain, Ramona Palmer-Eason, General Counsel, Shellie Clausen, VP GM Hometown Operations, Kevin Shea, VP Strategy

Heartland Coca-Cola is Beverage Bottler of the Year!

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"Our five-week CDL class A program is available to any Heartland employee or external hire interested in obtaining their CDL license. Our program is unique because we cover the cost of attending CDL school and pay participants while they are in training, which varies based on your location," Oberman continues. "After our driver completes the five-week program and passes their final test, they will be officially graduated and ready to hit the roads in one of our big red trucks."

Oberman explained that since its inception, the program has graduated 13 CDL drivers. Oberman summarized, "our CDL program is an excellent example of how we continue to prioritize equipping our employees with the tools and resources to advance their careers."

Whether it's comprehensive planning, a proactive approach in the warehouse or involvement in its local communities, Heartland Coca-Cola has demonstrated true leadership in the beverage bottling community.

Scan this code to read the full article on [BevIndustry.com](https://www.BevIndustry.com)



We know our members join CCBA in congratulating Heartland Coca-Cola Bottling as Beverage Industry's 2023 Bottler of the Year!

2023 Loss Control Forum Highlights

This year's Spring Loss Control Forum convened in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 24th and 25th. The Spring Loss Control Forum is an annual event that provides access to content, best practices, and subject matter experts specializing in the unique risk and loss control aspects of our bottling business.

Charles Norton, CCBA's General Counsel, began the morning by welcoming over 30 attendees from approximately 20 Bottling Companies and reviewed the agenda.

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Charles also introduced and thanked Arbill, our Presenting Sponsor for this year's Loss Control Forum. We value the support and safety programming that Arbill offers across our Coca-Cola Bottling System.

The morning began with an open discussion on the 2023 Coca-Cola Global QSE Summit, a topic of great interest. This open dialog provided an exchange of thoughts, ideas and points of view from our Bottling community in attendance. This discussion helped to inform the NAOU presentation and Q&A later that day.

William Rutchow, Esq., of Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart P.C., a nationally-recognized law firm, shared a comprehensive overview and update on OSHA Rules around managing excessive heat and the impact these new regulations are having and will continue to have on our Bottling System. William discussed the actions and standards that OSHA is focused on and the regulatory risks that Bottlers will face in the current climate. He offered a knowledgeable outlook with data that helped frame a discussion on measuring and managing heat risks our System faces, as well as how OSHA may manage inspections and enforcement.

Brad Paterson, Swire's Corporate Director - Quality Safety & Risk Management, Environment Compliance, took the stage and led attendees through research findings and popular recommendations around concepts on Listening Effectively. Brad added some fun group exercises to illustrate and reinforce the concepts.

A highlight of the afternoon featured The Coca-Cola Company NAOU's Robert Buckley who led discussion around Our Common System Objectives for Quality, Safety and Sustainability. The discussion also incorporated topics identified earlier during the roundtable covering the QSE Summit. Chris Valette and Jud Rahn from TCCC joined Robert in addressing questions and comments and committed to ongoing dialog and partnership as our System moves forward. The robust discussion carried through to ultimately fill most of the afternoon.

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COMMUNITY & MEMBER Updates



Ozarks Coca-Cola Board of Directors Elects Bruce Long as CEO

The Board of Directors of Ozarks Coca-Cola Bottling Company has elected Bruce Long as its next Chief Executive Officer.

Bruce, who currently serves as President and Chief Operating Officer, will succeed Edwin C. Rice, who has been elected CEO Emeritus. Elected to the Board of Directors in December of 2022, Bruce Long will officially be CEO and President of the company, the second to lead since the Company was founded in 1921.

Bruce graduated with a BS and MS in Education from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri. A dedicated employee of Ozarks Coca-Cola Bottling Company for more than two decades, he and his wife Sandra have one daughter, Sydney.

"Bruce's career with us spans 23 years, and through that time he has been involved in almost every aspect of the company. He's become an integral member of Ozarks Coca-Cola's leadership team, and the commitment and invigoration he's brought us has been inspiring," said Ozarks Coca-Cola Bottling Company Chairwoman and Vice President Sally Hargis. "He's served as our President and COO since 2015, and in that time his integrity, strategy, and leadership have been invaluable to the continued growth and success of our company."

"The last 20 years have been some of our most celebrated and most successful," said Edwin C. Rice. "In 2020, we celebrated 100 years as a family-owned business. In the decade before that, we expanded into Joplin, West Plains, and Northwest Arkansas. I am incredibly proud of the growth this company has achieved, and I have no doubt that this company's future will be in great hands for years to come."

"I am honored to assume the role of CEO and follow in the footsteps of Mr. Rice," said Long. "We have an amazing group of people led by a passionate leadership team, and I look forward to continuing our tradition of outstanding service to the communities and associates who have been the foundation of the Ozarks Coca-Cola Bottling Company for over a century."

Bruce has been an active Member, contributor and Mainstream Officer with the Association and we know CCBA Members join us in congratulating Bruce and wishing him continued success in his role!



Bruce Long
Ozarks Coca-Cola / Dr Pepper

ATLANTIC *Coca-Cola* BOTTLING COMPANY

Atlantic Coca-Cola Bottling Company Announces Two Leadership Promotions



Kris Martins has been named Chief Operating Officer. Kris previously served as Atlantic's Chief Financial Officer. In her new role, Kris will oversee strategy and planning, information technology, plant operations, supply chain, fleet, logistics, and facilities of the 118-year-old Iowa based bottler.

Rob Scigliano has been named Chief Financial Officer. Rob previously served as Atlantic's Controller. As Chief Financial Officer, Rob will oversee all aspects of Atlantic's Financial operations.



Both Kris and Rob will report to Atlantic Coca-Cola Chief Executive Officer, Rob Feeney.

We know CCBA Members join us in congratulating Kris and Rob on their respective promotions.

Passing the Torch at NPSG*

Coca-Cola National Product Supply Group

After serving on the National Product Supply Group (NPSG) Board of Directors since its inception in 2016 and as the Chairperson since November of 2018, Stan Ellington has decided to retire as the Chairperson of the NPSG Board. Stan, representing Coca-Cola UNITED, was one of the founding members and architects of the NPSG. He, along with Coca-Cola Consolidated and Swire Coca-Cola, helped to shape the NPSG governance and defined many of our processes that have served the system and its Bottlers over the past seven years. Stan's 50 plus years of experience and knowledge of bottling operations will be missed by all. Stan's legacy of passion, commitment and system alignment will be carried on by the NPSG members and teams.



We know CCBA Members join in congratulating Stan and wish him the best going forward!



The NPSG Board of Directors have unanimously elected Jason Reed as the next NPSG Chairperson. Jason has been an NPSG Board Member representing Coke Florida since November 2017. He currently serves as the Senior Vice President, Product Supply Network for Coke Florida. Jason has been a part of the Coca-Cola System for more than two decades. During his tenure in the system, Jason has worked for Coca-Cola Enterprises, The Coca-Cola Company, and Coca-Cola Refreshments. He brings an extensive set of strategic leadership and operations experience in logistics, manufacturing, and supply chain to his new role as chairperson. He earned his BBA in Operations Management from the University of Texas. Jason and his wife of nearly 25 years, Brandy, reside in Tampa, FL. They have two children, Jacob (24) and Brooke (21).

We know CCBA Members join in congratulating Jason and wishing him great success in this new leadership responsibility.

*NPSG administers key national product supply activities for Coca-Cola system bottlers, including product sourcing. Formed as a governing body in 2015, the Board consists of representatives of The Coca-Cola Company ("TCCC") and all Regional Producing Bottlers ("RPB").

Eddie Penick – We'll see you down the road!

Eddie Penick (Clark Beverage Group) retired in June after 35 years in our Coca-Cola system. Eddie has left a positive stamp on our business and the many Customers and System colleagues he has worked with along the way!

We know you join CCBA in wishing Eddie all the best in this next chapter!



Chelsea de Leon
VP, Customer Management

Progressive Grocer's 2023 Top Women in Grocery

Progressive Grocer's 2023 Top Women in Grocery recognizes and showcases overall excellence and continued achievement among female professionals in the North American retail food industry. This is the 17th year for the food retailing industry's longest running program recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of thousands of women at all levels in the industry. This year two executives from Coca-Cola Consolidated were awarded across two categories. Chelsea de Leon, VP, Customer Management and Morgan Hamel, Director of Customer Development, E-Commerce were recognized in the 'Senior-Level' Executive and 'Rising Stars' categories, respectively.

An awards event will be held in Orlando, FL in November.

We know our Membership joins CCBA in congratulating Chelsea and Morgan on this achievement!



Morgan Hamel
Director of Customer Development
E-Commerce

Time to Celebrate...

Welcome new members to our extended CCBA family!

Introducing...

Cameron James Ryan

February 22, 2023

8 lbs. 4 oz.

20.5 inches

Proud Parents:
Chris & Chrissy Ryan

Proud Grandparents:
Jeff and Laura Ryan



The Coca-Cola Bottlers' Association



Harrison James Hargis

February 20, 2023

8 lbs. 7 oz.

20.5 inches

Proud Parents:
Gregory & Jourdon Hargis

Proud Great Grandfather:
Edwin 'Cookie' Rice



Harrison James joins his sister Hayes Louise who turned 2 in April!



Hadley James Herauf

April 12, 2023

9 lbs. 12 oz.

22.5 inches

Proud Parents:
Kennedy Keator & Luke Herauf

Proud Grandparents:
Carol and TJ Herauf



Helen Isabel Garcia Bitzer

January 19, 2023

8 lbs. 2 oz.

20 inches

Proud Parents:
Liz Bitzer & Ruben Martin Garcia

Proud Grandparents:
Charlie & Shelley Bitzer



Big brother Gabi loves his little sister!



In Memoriam

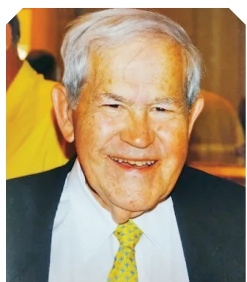


We know you join CCBA in sharing condolences...

Neil Barry passed away peacefully on July 4th. He was one of many legendary figures in our rich Coca-Cola Bottlers' Association history. He will be deeply missed, but we can be grateful for the time we had with him.

Neil Gordon Barry, Jr.
October 23, 1934 - July 04, 2023

*A full obituary (see code) will be included
in the next issue of The Bottling Line.*



Earl Andrews Denney, Jr.
April 11, 1935 - June 12, 2023

Earl Andrews Denney, Jr. went home to be with Jesus on Monday, June 12, 2023, at 2:15 pm. Surrounded by loving family, he passed away peacefully at Hospice of Wichita Falls.

Earl was born to Lida Wilhelmina Biedenharn Denney and Earl Andrews Denney on April 11, 1935, in Wichita Falls, Texas. Earl attended Ben Franklin Elementary, Zundy Junior High, and Old High. He was a proud graduate of the WFHS Class of 1953. Upon graduation, Earl attended Sewanee, but he left because it wasn't "co-ed." He transferred to the University of Texas, where he served as the President of the Omicron chapter of the Kappa Alpha Order.

After graduating in 1957, he moved back to Wichita Falls, where he went to work at the Wichita Coca-Cola Bottling Company. He worked there until 1963, when he moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, to work at the Shreveport Coca-Cola Bottling Company. It was during this time that Earl met the love of his life on a blind date, arranged by his friend, Dick Waggoner. He and Sandra Jo Hunt were married on December 21, 1969, in Shreveport, in the same church where his parents were married.

Earl was living in San Antonio at the time of their marriage, as he had purchased an interest in Stainless Ice Tainer Co. (Sitco), which manufactured soft drink fountain equipment. Earl was Vice-President of the Company from 1966-1969. He and Sandy moved back to Wichita Falls, where he re-established his role working at the "coke plant." He proudly served as manager beginning in 1969 and later President of the company until 1993. It truly was his passion. Sandy and Earl traveled extensively with their family. They spent many summers in Colorado at the C-Lazy-U and the Broadmoor, spring breaks in Hawaii at the "Pink Palace," and countless trips to Walt Disney World. But their home away from home was at Possum Kingdom, where they welcomed countless family and friends for many years.

Earl's devotion to the Coca-Cola bottling business went far beyond just Wichita Falls. He led the acquisitions of Vernon Coca-Cola Bottling Co. and Childress Dr. Pepper. He also served as President of Coca-Cola Bottling of Cheyenne, WY, and assistant manager of Shreveport Coca-Cola Bottling Co. from 1963-1966. Earl also served on the boards of the Biedenharn family Coca-Cola Bottling plants in Shreveport, Texarkana, Temple, TX, Vicksburg, MS, Uvalde, TX, Wichita Falls and Coca-Cola Bottling of Northern Arizona. Earl was also instrumental in launching Sprite in the Southwest and served as President with warehouses in Lubbock, Plainview and Amarillo. He served as a Board member of Western Container and Southwest Cannery.

Earl also served on the following boards: City National Bank, North Texas Rehab, First United Methodist Church, WF Symphony Orchestra, and Rolling Meadows. He was a Century Club member of the Wichita Falls Boys' and Girls' Club and a founder of the One Hundred Club.

Earl was preceded in death by his parents, Wilma and Earl; Sisters Lida Lee Erben and Robbie Dell Conkling, and son-in-law, Andy Kreston.

Survivors include wife, Sandy; Children, Elise Denney Kreston of Houston, Dianna Denney Alden, and Andrea Denney Russell (Chuck) of Wichita Falls. Grandchildren: Matthew (Jennifer) Kreston, David and Sarah Kreston; Christopher, Denney and Mitchell Norrie; Nick (Hannah) Russell, Hayden and Travis Russell. Great grandchildren, Tate & Brooks Russell. Cousins Mary Ellen & Delton Gwinn, Nephews Randy (Carolyn) Mayo and Mitchell (Ann) Brownlee, Nieces LeeAnn (Doug) Finlayson, Adelle Brewer, Louisa (David) Stegmann. Brothers-in-law Steve (Kelly) Hunt and Peggy (Ron) Nader. Special thank you to dear friends and caregivers Jim Adams and Danita Potter, and ALL of his countless drivers. He will be dearly missed by his grandchildren who affectionately called him "Url D."

Donations can be made to HOWF 4909 Johnson Rd. 76310, MSU Tennis 3410 Taft Blvd. 76308, or the Good Samaritan Fund c/o Presbyterian Manor 4600 Taft 76308.



Robert David 'Bobby' Franks
June 1, 1939 – June 2, 2023

Robert David Franks, age 84 of Pulaski passed away June 2, 2023.

He was known as Bobby, Bob, Dad, GrandBobby, GrandBob, G-Bob, Uncle Bobby, and sometimes Mr. Bobby, but never Mr. Franks, a title he reserved for his father.

A local businessman, Bobby was the owner of Franks Vending Service, Inc., Coca-Cola Bottling Works, Inc., and Select Foods, Inc. He grew up in the vending world from early childhood, helping his dad with runs to downtown Nashville's Standard Candy and Lovelace Candy warehouses in the family station wagon. They'd cram every available square inch with products to bring back to Minor Hill for resell to area businesses (after he was given a dollar to walk down Broadway to watch a double feature, get a sack of White Castles, and still have change left over).

Following in the footsteps of his dad, the entire business was a family business, whether you were related or not. Bobby was known for his fair dealing, above-board practices, "killing them with kindness," doing everything he could to make his customers happy, and making sure the job was done right or it was done over. He was not known for keeping a tidy office, or car, or chair-side table, although he somehow knew where every single thing was and amazingly never got crushed by a falling pile of paperwork.

Bobby never met a stranger. Whether he was at the Pulaski Post Office or Madison Square Mall, Memorial Gymnasium at Vanderbilt or Cameron Indoor Arena at Duke, you could guarantee that he'd run into someone he knew and strike up a conversation that would last past closing time and annoy his teenage children and grandchildren. But he also had plenty of friends and wasn't up for unsolicited social gatherings where he was forced to make small talk, and he'd thank you for not inviting him.

Bobby served as a past president of the Tennessee Automatic Merchandisers Association, served on various boards and committees with TAMA and the National Automatic Merchandisers Association, was on the board of directors for SunTrust Bank, served as chairman of the board of directors for Highland Christian Academy, led the finance committee, the pastor search committee, and taught Sunday School for a number of years at Highland Baptist Church, and was a member of the executive committee of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. He was recently honored by Canteen Franchise Group for 20 years as a franchisee.

He was the proud patriarch of an ever-expanding family, famous for telling people that he never missed his three kids when they moved out, "...because they always come back and bring more with 'em." As a GrandBobby to 12 and a Great-GrandBob to six, he held the honor of having a magic chest that infants would fall asleep on, being the first to feed toddlers ice cream whether he had permission to or not, finding bugs to pop in every grandchild's scalp, and while he rarely – if ever – yelled, he would make an exception if "someone's fingers are about to get smashed in that door!"

Bobby was a devoted husband twice over: he was married to Nell for 41 years, surprising her with an all-black living room suite that she hated (because it was truly ugly) during the early years of their marriage, dragging his feet on subsequent house updates (because he "was getting around to it") for most of their marriage, and selflessly caring for her during a ten-month cancer battle towards the end of her life.

He was married to Sandra for almost 21 years, somehow convincing a South Carolina girl to transplant to Tennessee, integrating her into a mostly fantastic but kind of chaotic family structure, and finally giving in to most of those house updates. It was during these years that he graduated from "Bobby" to "Bob," but he'd still mostly answer to both, depending on who was calling him from the other room and whether or not his hearing aids were turned up. This was also the time when he (reluctantly) cheered for the South Carolina Gamecocks when Vandy wasn't playing.

He carried the titles of leader, GrandBobby, Dad, and husband, but Bobby cherished the label of Christ-follower more than anything else. To know Bobby was to know his faith in Jesus. The gospel informed everything about the way he lived, worked, loved, and led. You couldn't know him without feeling like you knew a bit more about the character and goodness of the Lord. In every valley in his life - especially during his battle with cancer beginning in January 2022 - Bobby said, "God is in control, and I trust him 100%." He never complained for a moment during that journey (except when he was supposed to take medicine on a schedule, because "I have a process"). He served and loved his local churches: Minor Hill Baptist Church in his early years, and Highland Baptist Church since 1963. He'd want you to know that there's no substitute for a life that's built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, and he's more alive now than he's ever been because his eternity was secure. He frequently paraphrased Philippians 1:21: "If I live, I win. If I die, I win." Bobby Franks won.

He was born June 1, 1939, to the late E.W. and Warren Ada Cole Franks. He was preceded in death by his wife, Nell Long Franks, his sister, Patsy Franks Herndon, and his nephew, Marty Herndon.

Survivors include his wife Sandra Young Franks of Pulaski, his sons, David Franks of Pulaski and Danny Franks (Merriem) of Durham, N.C., his daughter, Debbie Franks Gowan (Kerry) of Athens, his grandchildren, Lindsey Franks, Lauren Franks, Lexy Franks Herron (Mikey), Rob Franks (Maddie), and their mother Lynnae Blackwell, Dane Whitworth (Candice), Mallory Whitworth, and their father Mark Whitworth, Jacob Franks (Summer), Austin Franks (Alyssa), Jase Franks (Carleigh), Haven Franks, Jackson Gowan (Taylor), and Anna Harper Myers (Will), his great-grandchildren, Alaina and Everly Herron, Ronin, Rayne, and Kara Whitworth, Skylar Franks, and soon to be great-grandchildren Wright Myers and Alfie Franks, and numerous nieces and nephews. Memorial Contributions may be made to Highland Baptist Church, 1823 Mill Street, Pulaski, TN 38478, or The Sarah Cannon Cancer Institute, 2410 Patterson St., Nashville, TN 37203.

Coca-Cola Merchandiser Celebrates 97th Birthday!



Bottling Company of Hot Springs

Albert "Dub" Ballard celebrated his 97th birthday on March 10th and is not looking to retire anytime soon!

The 23-year veteran of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Hot Springs (Arkansas) stocks Coke products at a local Walmart, and according to General Manager Bruce Fikes, Mr. Ballard, a full-time employee, can still outwork many of his coworkers. Bruce describes Ballard as "The Real Thing," referencing the longtime slogan for Coca-Cola. "He's amazing to us," he said. "This is a family-owned business, so I think that has a lot to do with Dub and friends. It just means a lot to him to be able to work."

Bruce (Fikes) added, "longevity at our Coca-Cola Bottling Co. is not uncommon. It's a family business. It's just a good place to be."

While many people much younger than Mr. Ballard look forward to retirement and spending time at home, that does not appeal to him. "I just don't like staying home sitting on my front porch," he said. Ballard said even though he is over 30 years past retirement age, he is planning to keep working "as long as I can."

"We won't let him go either," Fikes said, "He is one of a kind!"



Pictured from left, General Manager Bruce Fikes, Albert "Dub" Ballard, Vice President Dee Anna Formby and Sales Manager Rick Stevens - Photo by Donald Cross of The Sentinel-Record



Scan code to read news article:



Scan code to view video interview:

2023 Loss Control Forum Highlights *(... continued from page 10)*

Day two kicked off with an Update on Trends in Litigation, Verdicts, Investigations and Regulations presented by Rob Moseley, Esq. Mr. Moseley provided an eye-opening review of our current environment regarding truck accident statistics, liability, and verdicts. He detailed considerations for accident prevention, corporate/company and employee management, with keen insights on liability and asset management. Mr. Moseley also discussed the current environment around safety ratings, drug and alcohol testing standards and financial responsibility.

Charles Norton closed the session, addressed any necessary follow-ups, and thanked attendees for their participation. The annual Loss Control Forum enables members to share and learn about new best practices currently being implemented across the Coca-Cola Bottling System and beyond. We look forward to your participation next year. For more information, contact Charles Norton at 678-539-2304 (cnorton@cbanet.com)



Scan the code to view presentations from this Forum (password required.)

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If you have stories or information about your Bottling organization or employees that you want to include in our next edition of the Bottling Line, contact Linda Peluso at the Association at 678-539-2309 or lpeluso@cbanet.com.