



GHRA In Action

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR MISSION! VOL. 10 | NOVEMBER 2023



KUDOS Celebrates Grand Opening

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A NOTE FROM THE CEO

BRIAN TROUT, CEO

Greetings Members,

I want to thank all the members that attended this year's tradeshow. This was by far our largest and best attended tradeshow in GHRA history. I also want to thank all the volunteers, staff members, and vendors for making this year's show a great success.

As we move into the last two months of the year, the holiday season is here, and the cooler fall weather brings us a break from the summer heat. I encourage all members to reflect on the past 10 months of 2023 and start planning for 2024. The staff at GHRA are kicking off the budgeting and planning process, and we are working hard to prepare for 2024 and are putting the final plans together to help propel GHRA to even greater heights. We will continue to invest in IT systems and capabilities, warehouse capacity and delivery systems, KUDOS brand expansion, Big Madre, and our new Chicken food service platforms as well as GHRA Fuels.

GHRA is an amazing organization, and I am proud to serve the membership as the CEO. I look forward to the future with great expectations.

Thank you for your trust and your continued support, and, as always, continued blessings!

Sincerely,

Brian Trout

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR MISSION!



THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY HOURS

GHRA CORPORATE OFFICE

In observance of Thanksgiving, the GHRA Corporate Office will be closed on Thursday, November 23th, and Friday, November 24th.

GHRA WAREHOUSE & DISTRIBUTION

In Observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday, the GHRA Warehouse "Cash and Carry" will **CLOSE EARLY on Wednesday, November 22nd at 3 p.m.**

GHRA Warehouse will be closed Thursday, November 23rd.
Will re-open Friday, November 24th, at regular hours.

Your current order cut-off time will not change due to the holiday schedule, but your current delivery day will.

All Thursday Deliveries will be delivered on Friday, November 24th.
All Friday Deliveries will be delivered on Saturday, November 25th

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Welcome Members

*On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff at GHRA,
please welcome our new members:*

K-1
CORNER MARCADO
FUELZ PRO
TIME MART #33
FUEL MAXX #87
FUEL MAXX #26

SWIFT
BEST STOP #10
AMERICAN FOOD & GROCERY
WAYSIDE FOOD MART
SUUNY FOOD MART

ON WAY
ROAD TRIP
ROADTRAC #18
FUEL EXPRESS #13
PRIME SPOT #38
FUEL MAXX #75



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C-Stores Retain Fastest Growth in Confection

Channel reaches \$8.3 billion in sales in August, up 14.5% from a year ago.

By CSP Daily News

Convenience stores remain the fastest growing channel for confection, reaching \$8.3 billion in sales for the 52-week period ending Aug. 13, according to data from Circana. This marks an increase of 14.5% compared to year-ago levels.

In all traditional channels, confectionary dollar sales have surpassed \$34 billion. Confectionery continues to be one of the strongest growth leaders across the store, according to a report from the National Confectioners Association (NCA).

The chocolate sector across channels accounted for about 55% of dollar sales during the 52-week period, hitting \$19 billion. That represents growth of 9.5%, but gains have started to slow significantly in the shorter term, said Anne-Marie Roerink, principal at market research firm 210 Analytics. For the four weeks ending Aug. 13, dollar sales increased 5.6% while units were down 5.4%. This mirrors a trend seen in 2022, where dollar gains were strong but fully boosted by inflation, said Roerink and reported by NCA.

A few areas within chocolate are still experiencing double-digit growth in the full-year view, according to NCA, such as seasonal candy, snack size and bags/boxes/bars smaller

than 3.5 ounces. Gains for sugar-free chocolate, however, have dropped to single-digits, at 7.2%.

Non-chocolate candy continues to outperform chocolate in both dollars and units. For the 52-week period, non-chocolate dollar gains increased 15.6%. Units were mostly flat, dropping 0.5%. However, much like chocolate, non-chocolate sales gains are showing signs of slowing down, with the latest four weeks experiencing a unit decline of 1.9%, according to Circana data.

Chewy candy represents 50% of all dollars and grew 14.6% during the past year. Several other areas experienced double-digit growth, including sugar-free candy, seasonal, mints, novelty, caramel and breath fresheners. Roerink noted that novelty non-chocolate had the highest growth, at 43.7% and also experienced unit growth of 25.7%, said NCA.

Gum sales continued to recover. Dollar sales reached \$3.3 billion, which was up 18.6% over year-ago levels. Most dollar sales, 87%, were generated by sugar-free gum, which also led all growth, at 20.4%. ■



Huntsville Big Madre
Location #38





New Retail Brand to Open First Site

Group sets goal to grow to 250 convenience stores.

By CSP Daily News

One year after announcing its intention to launch a new convenience-store brand, the Greater Houston Retailers Cooperative Association (GHRA) will host the grand opening of the first Kudos site next week.

Kudos is a new-to-industry convenience-store brand developed by GHRA “to provide a friendly, refreshing and rewarding customer experience every day,” the group said.

“Our team’s goal is to serve great food and create a welcoming space where everyone feels appreciated and is pleased to return,” said Moez Maredia, owner and operator of the first Kudos store in Huntsville, Texas. “I truly believe in the spirit of Kudos, which is to give back to the community and recognize first responders and veterans.”

Maredia is an entrepreneur, GHRA member and resident of Houston. The Maredia family runs hospitality, real estate and retail businesses in Mumbai, Dubai, and Houston, including travel centers like Kudos. Maredia currently serves as a director on the board of GHRA and is past chair of the GHRA Food Services and Warehouse committees. In addition, he is chair of the Southwest Region for the Aga Khan Foundation USA.

Kudos No. 1 in Huntsville is part of GHRA’s ongoing growth and expansion plan to launch 250 new and remodeled Kudos convenience marketplace locations in three to five years. The newly remodeled Kudos in Huntsville was previously the Bar-T Travel Center and Truck Stop. The store is being rebranded and refreshed to provide customers with more high-quality options and experiences, according to GHRA.

“The opening of Kudos in Huntsville emphasizes our unwavering commitment to enhancing the well-being of the communities that we serve and the heroes, including first responders, who serve us,” said Brian Trout, GHRA chief executive officer. “We look forward to fostering genuine

connections in the Huntsville community as we set the stage for growing the Kudos brand throughout the Greater Houston market area.”

Kudos in Huntsville offers a breakfast program featuring fresh biscuits and breakfast sandwiches. Kudos also offers lunch, snack and early dinner menus that include bone-in chicken, hand-breaded and grilled chicken sandwiches, wraps, tenders and more.

A Big Madre Tacos y Tortas will also be open in the store, serving an assortment of authentic Mexican-style tacos, burritos, bowls, tortas and quesadillas. Big Madre Tacos y Tortas is a homestyle Mexican foodservice concept developed by GHRA in 2017. This Big Madre will be the 38th location in the GHRA portfolio.

Kudos’ personalized service options for busy customers on the go or taking a refreshing break include made-to-order menu options, self-service food kiosks, mobile-order payments, drive-thru, DoorDash delivery and clean restrooms, according to GHRA.

A ribbon cutting and open house will be held Saturday, September 30, recognizing and celebrating Huntsville area first responders and heroes who will share information on safety and community resources. Several public officials, community partners and business leaders are expected to attend the events.

Customers can also experience:

- Samples from the kitchens of Kudos and Big Madre Tacos y Tortas
- Treats from GHRA vendor partners
- An opportunity to meet members of the Huntsville Fire Department, H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum of Texas, and other first responders and heroes. ■



New-to-Industry KUDOS Celebrates Grand Opening in Huntsville With Commitments to Community and Honors Heroes, First Responders, and Veterans

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (Oct. 10, 2023) – Kudos, an innovative new-to-industry convenience store brand demonstrated its unwavering commitment to the communities it serves during its recent grand opening celebrations in Huntsville, Texas.

The Kudos convenience retail brand was developed over the past three years by the Greater Houston Retailers Cooperative Association, Inc. (GHRA). In recent weeks, GHRA leaders, Kudos owners and team members welcomed

hundreds of guests including Huntsville community heroes, esteemed dignitaries, neighbors, and media to the grand opening of the first ever Kudos at 601 State Highway 75 North, Huntsville, Texas 77320.

Community engagement commitments made by GHRA and the Kudos in Huntsville during the grand opening events included:

- A joint contribution of \$40,000 to the Houston Food Bank by the GHRA and Coca Cola Southwest Beverages in recognition of the launch of the Kudos brand in the greater Houston market.
- A \$1000 sponsorship of the Sam Houston State University Rodeo Team by Kudos in Huntsville
- Ongoing support and engagement with the H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum including catering for a future Saturday Veterans' Breakfast

In addition, GHRA delivered a pallet of bottled water to the Walker County Office of Emergency Response for first responders and those impacted by the Game Preserve Fire that happened in early September. On the day of the Kudos Ribbon Cutting, Moez Maredia, owner and operator of Kudos in Huntsville, and Jeffrey Reeder, vice president of retail at GHRA met with Walker County Emergency Management Coordinators Butch Davis and Sherri Pagoda to discuss ongoing needs of first responders.

"I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the wonderful community of Huntsville for the warm welcome and overwhelming support during our grand opening. At Kudos, we are deeply committed to engaging with and serving the people of Huntsville, especially first responders. It is our mission to provide exceptional service and to be a resource for this community," commented Moez Maredia, owner and operator of Kudos in Huntsville.

Maredia is an entrepreneur, GHRA member, and resident of Houston. The Maredia family runs hospitality, real estate and retail businesses in Mumbai, Dubai, and Houston. Maredia studied computer sciences and information sciences at the University of Houston. Maredia currently serves as a director on the board of GHRA and is past chair of the GHRA Food Services and Warehouse committees. In addition, he is chair of the Southwest Region for the Aga Khan Foundation, USA.

About the Kudos #1 Grand Opening Celebrations

The grand opening festivities included a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Open House held on Thursday, Sept. 28, and a Grand Opening Community Appreciation Event held on Saturday, Sept. 30. These events provided attendees with the opportunity to meet the friendly faces behind Huntsville's newest convenience marketplace and food stop.

The Ribbon Cutting and Open House featured a Presentation of Colors by American Legion Sam Houston Post 95, remarks by business and community leaders, and music from DJ Scoop. Several dignitaries showed their support at the Ribbon Cutting and Open House including teams of U.S. Congressman Pete Sessions, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz, and Texas State Representative Kyle Kacal, Huntsville Mayor Andy Brauninger, Huntsville Mayor Pro Tem Russell Humphrey, Walker County Sheriff Clint McRae, Huntsville

Walker County Chamber President Ray Hernandez, and several other Walker County community leaders.

The Grand Opening Community Appreciation Event honored and celebrated Huntsville area community heroes, first responders, and veterans. Guests had the opportunity to meet and interact with representatives from the Huntsville Fire Department; Huntsville Police Department; Walker County Emergency Medical Services (EMS); Walker County Sheriff's Office; Texas Department of Criminal Justice community outreach team; Huntsville Walker County Chamber of Commerce; American Legion Sam Houston Post 95; H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum of Texas; Veterans of Foreign War (VFW); Walker County Veterans Services; and the Sam Houston State University ROTC. These organizations shared information on public safety and community resources. Guests also had the opportunity to win several prizes including suite tickets to the Houston Rockets, suite tickets to the Houston Texans, a mountain bike, visa gift cards, and more.

Kudos #1 in Huntsville is part of GHRA's ongoing growth and expansion plan to launch 250 new and remodeled Kudos convenience marketplace locations in three to five years. The newly remodeled Kudos in Huntsville was previously the Bar-T Travel Center and Truck Stop. The store has been rebranded and refreshed to provide customers with more high-quality options and experiences they need and want.

"Kudos is not just another convenience store; it's a testament to innovation in the retail industry and our attention to the evolving needs and expectations of our customers," commented Brian Trout, GHRA chief executive officer. "We are proud to bring this fresh concept to Huntsville and expand GHRA's presence in the convenience store industry. Kudos honors the everyday heroes within the communities we serve and celebrates those who tirelessly take care of others."

The Kudos team strives to consistently provide a welcoming, refreshing, and rewarding customer experience. Their goal is to ensure every Kudos guest is treated like a hero as they travel from point A to point B, rewarded for a hard day's effort and a job well done.

Kudos offers a delicious breakfast program featuring fresh biscuits and breakfast sandwiches. Kudos also offers a lunch, snack, and early dinner menu that includes bone-in chicken, hand-breaded and grilled chicken sandwiches, wraps, and tenders. Kudos personalized service for busy customers on the go or taking a refreshing break include made-to-order menu options, mobile order payments, drive-through and DoorDash delivery and, of course, sparkling clean restrooms.

A Big Madre Tacos y Tortas is open in the store and serves a wide assortment of authentic Mexican-style tacos, burritos, bowls, tortas, and quesadillas. Big Madre Tacos y Tortas is a rapidly growing homestyle Mexican food service concept developed by GHRA in 2017. This Big Madre is the 38th location in the GHRA portfolio. ■

KUDOS™

Grand Opening in Huntsville

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Open House held on Thursday, Sept. 28





KUDOS™ #1



Stocking the Shelves: *It's the Little Things*

To build the best experience possible for your customers, you want to make sure everything in your store is as good as it can be. You have great employees, a great store layout, and an amazing selection of products – but are those same products being displayed as well as they should be? Stocking your shelves well can be deceptively difficult, and very easy to overlook if you're not checking them often. Many employees think that it's “just” stocking shelves, so how hard can it be? Unfortunately, that leads them to miss a lot of the nuances involved in the process.

By Ready Training Online

Get Your Employees on Board!

Anyone can take a product and put it on a shelf, but you'll want your employees trained in the proper way to stock the shelves, and make sure they're checking the dates on the products. You can use a learning management system (LMS) to train them on this method, as well as other duties important to convenience stores. Shelf-stocking in particular is an excellent opportunity to use blended learning in the training – you can use role-play to make sure your employees know how to help any customers that need it while the employee is stocking shelves. Plus, roleplaying about helping customers gives an opportunity to practice suggestive selling as well! When your store's merchandising goes well, it can improve your store's image and how smoothly inventory goes as well, but your employees must be ready to help you get there.

Keeping Up Appearances

Shelves are only one part of your store – to truly impress your guests, don't neglect the rest! Ensure your employees know the proper way to clean other parts of your store that customers see during every visit, like your doors and windows, the floor, and the restroom! ■

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844.777.4472 (GHRA) Phone
281.295.5399 Fax

GHRA WAREHOUSE
7110 Bellerive Drive
Houston, Texas 77036
844.777.4472 (GHRA) Phone
281.295.5347 Fax