

**Convenience
Store**

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Business Solutions for Retail Decision Makers

Decisions

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2017 40 UNDER 40

This year's 40 Under 40 class represents a wide range of individuals who boast innovative thinking, business smarts, community engagement and professionalism. It's also what keeps the c-store industry sprinting forward.

A CSD Staff Report

REGULARLY WHEN PUNDITS EVALUATE athletes they often compile career statistics, crunching the numbers to determine the best quarterback, most talented goalie, elite point guard or top outfielder.

Numbers come into play in everyday business as well when evaluating staff. Often the best employees, managers, directors or executives who demonstrate intangibles such as creativity, leadership, originality and loyalty are harder to quantify.

The individuals in the following pages represent big corporations and small retail chains—but all demonstrate the type of qualities that most employers seek. Each member of this year's 40 Under 40 class plays an important role in determining the future course of his or her respective company.

Included are category managers, financial officers, marketing directors, vice presidents and CEOs. If you look closely, you'll find that all of the individuals in the 2017 class likely share many of the same qualities—qualities that go above and beyond the regular stat line of a good employee or a responsible manager.

ON THE BALL

There are few industries that better connect to the people within a local community than c-stores. They are there for the customers that come in

every day for a cup of joe or a breakfast sandwich or to fill up their gas tanks. And because many on this year's list belong to family-owned companies, these young professionals are that much more in tune to ensuring their customers are receiving the highest quality service, each and every day.

Those who work in this business are members of an evolving and diverse industry, which is not surprising given the diversity of U.S. consumers who frequent today's c-stores. As the face of the channel's customer base becomes even more diverse, companies willing to embrace social media, technology and even meal kits are becoming more successful.

The challenges in 2018 will be numerous: local laws that stifle business growth, rising healthcare costs, a booming ecommerce movement and the ongoing search for capable workers loom large. However, the young professionals that make up this year's group seem up to facing any obstacles.

CSD and the National Advisory Group's (NAG) Young Executives Organization (YEO) tallied the votes, crunched the numbers and came up with 2017's 40 Under 40 class.

For those interested in nominating your future leaders for the class of 2018 or to join YEO, contact CSD Editor and NAG Executive Director John Lofstock at jlofstock@csdecisions.com.



Blair Alderson, 25
Human Resources Manager

Company: The Kent Cos.
Headquarters: Midland, Texas
Number of Stores: 44
Years with the Company: 2

BLAIR ALDERSON TRANSITIONED INTO a new role as human resources manager for The Kent Cos., earlier this year, overseeing the company's in-house recruiting and benefits departments.

So far, she has left her mark.

"I really enjoy being involved in the recruiting process. It's crucial to our company, both who we are today and

where we are headed in the future," she said. "Our mission is to be a guest-driven, quality power retailer, and the only way to achieve that goal is to first make sure we are taking care of our own people and empowering our team members with excellent training and future career goals."

Alderson began her tenure at the Texas c-store chain in the corporate communications and brand development department, where she focused on company events, volunteer/community outreach and advertising promotions.

A graduate of Arizona State University, Alderson met owner Bill Kent, another Arizona State graduate. Afterward, she decided the retailer was the place for her, said Alderson, who also played on the Sun Devil women's soccer team.

"I love the opportunity of taking on a good challenge and look forward to growing with the company," she said. "Looking ahead at 2018, The Kent Cos. will continue to grow and expand."



Sonya Amill, 28

Foodservice Specialist

Company: **FriendShip Food Stores**

Headquarters: **Fremont, Ohio**

Number of Stores: **24**

Years with the Company: **1**

SINCE JOINING FRIENDSHIP FOOD Stores, Sonya Amill has made an impact on the chain's foodservice program in a short time. She brought years of hands-on experience in the foodservice industry.

Most recently, Amill worked in the quick-service restaurant industry, serving as a general manager. She became accomplished in staff development and training and leadership. These skills will come in handy, with the task of elevating FriendShip Kitchen's foodservice program.

"The expectations of our guests are increasing, and serving high-quality products at our stores each and every day is our goal," said Amill. "Building the business does not happen overnight. We want to grow our food offer as a destination for breakfast, lunch and dinner."

Improving the product mix through new product development, leading selection and rollouts as well as the implementation of new items at 24 locations keeps Amill busy at FriendShip Food Stores, which is the retail division of Fremont, Ohio-based Beck Suppliers.

Amill's commitment to growth extends beyond the workplace. In addition to the hectic work schedule, Amill returned to college to earn a degree in applied sciences. Balancing her life and work is still clear cut.

"I know that everything cannot be done at once," she said. "Prioritizing and understanding the needs of our staff in introducing change is one of the keys to success."



Jared Bartle, 34

Director of Operations

Company: **Blueox Corp.**

Headquarters: **Oxford N.Y.**

Number of Stores: **11**

Years with the Company: **20**

JARED BARTLE HAS BEEN around the convenience store industry since the young age of 14.

"Much of my experience comes from working the front lines of the business. Aside from c-stores, we operate a home heating fuel distribution and HVAC business," said Bartle, referring to the diversified Blueox Corp. in New York State. "This is where I spent most of time, but in the last few years, I've started to get much more involved in the store side of the business. I've been very fortunate to be surrounded by people who have helped to teach, nurture, guide and challenge me to be a better and more effective leader."

Like any effective leader, Bartle is looking to the future. In 2018, he and company executives plan on reinvesting in store locations.

"We would like to do a lot of remodeling/rebuilding of some of our older stores, with the intention of then being able to offer new products/services that will hopefully increase foot traffic, revenue, margins, etc."

Management will also be focusing on rebranding all of the company's locations over the next few months, including exteriors, interiors and the foodservice program.

"For many years we flew under the Nice N Easy franchise flag," said Bartle. "However, after the franchise was sold, following the passing of Nice N Easy founder John MacDougall, we decided to launch our own brand."



Jaquilyn Bohn, 30

Construction and Planning Coordinator

Company: **Cumberland Farms Inc.**

Headquarters: **Westboro, Mass.**

Number of Stores: **558**

Years with the Company: **5**

WITH NEW LEADERSHIP, NEW vision, new store designs, new products and even a new logo, Cumberland Farms, over the past decade, has evolved. Since 1939, Cumberland Farms is still family owned and operated, continuing to reflect the values it was built upon.

Building on its legacy, the third-generation retailer based in Westboro, Mass., is adding new convenience stores and updating the design on its existing units, said Jaquilyn Bohn,

the chain's construction and planning coordinator.

"Over the next year our goal is to raze and rebuild 16 stores, add 17 new-to-industry sites and build seven new offsets across New England, New York and Florida," Bohn said. "This fall we started rolling out our newest prototype, which we are calling the AIM 3.0 stores."

With the new store design is a renewed focus on foodservice and providing outstanding service, in which Bohn has played an integral role.

"As seen in our new AIM 3.0 stores, we are focusing on a more food and customer service based environment to grow our footprint in the c-store industry," Bohn said. "We now have self-service terminals, an expansive menu and added a second floor for storage, all while maintaining the classic feel of the neighborhood Cumby's. We have appealed to the needs of our customers and we will continue to evolve to keep up with the times."



Jessica Boyd, 27
General Manager,
Express Petro Transportation

Company: The Kent Cos.
Headquarters: Midland, Texas
Number of Stores: 44
Years with the Company: 1

JESSICA BOYD MOVED FROM Alabama to Midland, Texas to help The Kent Cos. start a fuel transportation company called Express Petro Transportation in June 2017. She met the owner of Kent Cos., Bill Kent, in Mobile, Ala., where he proposed a job opportunity.

At the time, Boyd was involved in a similar project in Alabama where she was the office manager of Hunter Livery and in charge of managing the profitability and operations for the company.

"The challenge seemed appealing to me," she said of the chance to help build a fuel transportation business. In her current role, Boyd is directly responsible for the start up of what will be known as a common carrier dedicated to The Kent Cos.

Boyd also aims to combat the diminishing stereotype that Millennials aren't ambitious, by scoring one professional success at a time in her own career.

In fact, for young professionals looking to succeed, Boyd said one of the biggest challenges in corporate America still is dealing with the perception that Millennials aren't totally committed to the organization.

"I have found the biggest challenge as a young executive is the constant expectation of failure or lack of willingness to make the same sacrifices as our elders," she said.

Midland, Texas-based Kent owns and operates 44 convenience stores and quick lubes.



Courtney Buckley, 32
Manager of Training and Development

Company: VERC Enterprises
Headquarters: Duxbury, Mass.
Number of Stores: 28
Years with the Company: 6

A FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS WITH LOCATIONS in Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire, VERC Enterprises continues to grow its business while upholding a traditional commitment to its customers. The convenience chain is implementing a new employee training program in 2018, headed by Courtney Buckley.

"We'll streamline training so people feel confident in their jobs sooner and push themselves to do more," said Buckley, manager of training and development. "Things can change overnight. We need up-to-date processes in place to ensure everyone is on the same page. It's my job to make sure everyone understands why changes are made and how to implement them correctly at store level."

At VERC, Buckley has taken on many roles successfully, including category manager and district manager. Along the way, she has been involved in various issues that have impacted the course of the future of the company.

In the coming year, there will be increased focus on technological upgrades. Buckley will play an integrate role.

"We're focusing on analyzing our data in order to have a clear picture on what items sell best, which will help us keep up in a quickly changing market," Buckley said. "Any retail channel that uses technology or delivery service to give customers speedier service poses a challenge. VERC must keep up with marketplace changes, but continue to provide fast, friendly service. Some people still appreciate face-to-face interaction."



Jimmy Clifford, 29
Fuel Operations Manager

Company: Clifford Fuel Inc.
Headquarters: Marcy, N.Y.
Number of Stores: 19
Years with the Company: 7

JIMMY CLIFFORD BEGAN WORKING with his family's business, Clifford Fuel, back in college during his summer vacations.

"It gave me a strong interest and appreciation for our family business as well as the c-store business in general," said Clifford.

After he graduated from Union College, Clifford joined the company full-time, part of a third generation to work in the family business. Clifford Fuel was founded in 1961 by

his grandfather Jack Clifford. His father, Jim Clifford, joined the company in 1980.

Today, in his role as fuel operations manager, Jimmy Clifford's responsibilities include the pricing of gas and fuel at retail locations, environmental compliance and helping manage Clifford Fuel's dealer business.

Throughout his time at the company, Clifford has been involved in marketing campaigns and advertising as well. He was also involved in the process of the chain's c-store branding change from Nice N Easy to Cliff's Local Market, which took place earlier this year.

The biggest issue facing the region has been fighting fraud on transactions such as skimming at the pump. It's the same issue that Clifford Fuel is working on to ensure its customers are protected. "Even with the EMV upgrades we need to stay diligent in taking the necessary steps to make sure our locations are a secure place to do business," Clifford said.



Mike Clifford, 28
Category Manager

Company: Clifford Fuel Inc.
Headquarters: Marcy, N.Y.
Number of Stores: 19
Years with the Company: 6

A S CATEGORY MANAGER, Mike Clifford knows the ways of doing business are changing. As brand champion, he also understands the need to connect with customers.

"Increasing awareness and building the reputation of our convenience store brand, which debuted this past May, is a top priority," said Clifford. "Another priority is growing the social media and technology component to engage with our

customers better and meet their convenience needs."

Engagement is a key component in a market that is seeing dollar stores and drug chains move in on the family-owned business with buying power to offer lower prices on items key to Clifford's margin.

"Dollar General has been growing rapidly in our marketplace," Clifford said. "Quick-service restaurants are a significant threat to our foodservice and coffee business as well."

Between chain stores, non-convenience brands and regulations like minimum wage increases, business can be challenging. But the category manager is working to help advance Clifford Fuel's operations to stay ahead of the competition while still engaging its clientele.

"The most challenging issue is staying in front of the changes that the retail and fuel industry will undergo in the future," said Clifford. "The changes could be drastic, and we'll need to adjust the current model to stay profitable."



Alex Davidovich, 28
Executive Vice President

Company: Town Star Holdings
Headquarters: Port Saint Lucie, Fla.
Number of Stores: 18
Years with the Company: 3

A S THE EXECUTIVE VICE president of Port Saint Lucie, Fla.-based Town Star Holdings, Alex Davidovich oversees the daily operations of the company's 18 convenience stores.

A second-generation leader in the industry, he credits his early success to hands-on experience gained in his upbringing. "Having a strong operational base means that I can lead effectively from the front," said Davidovich. "I love being able to help a new manager order cigarettes or jump behind a busy Subway counter during a lunch rush. I can set the standard and motivate at the same time. You can't do that from an office."

Davidovich approached the development of Town Star's growing restaurant program, which comprises 22 restaurant locations, sampling food products and testing equipment from manufacturers nationwide.

"I had to experience the program from the perspective of our employees to know that it was doable. I wanted to watch customer reactions to know whether we were heading in the right direction."

He said his father influenced his hands-on approach.

"My greatest influence has always been my father, Avry. Thirty years ago, he started at the bottom of this industry and worked his way to the top. He did it by building relationships with customers and trust with his employees. I want to achieve success the same way."



Britt Davidson, 36
Manager of Loss Prevention

Company: Kum & Go L.C.
Headquarters: West Des Moines, Iowa
Number of Stores: 420
Years with the Company: 3

A S THE MANAGER OF loss prevention at Kum & Go, Britt Davidson leads the analysis, detection and prevention of control issues. This includes an array of responsibilities from monitoring cash, inventory and fuel loss to leading theft and fraud functions (detection, investigation, analysis) to loss prevention training, just to name a few.

Previously, Davidson was the corporate loss prevention leader for Scheels All Sports. Before that, he began his foray into loss prevention as inventory control manager at Menards.

Davidson began working at Kum & Go in 2013 after a mutual friend introduced him to then manager of loss prevention, Christie Sullivan, and they discussed opportunities for him to further develop the strategy and foundation of loss prevention at Kum & Go based on his experiences in his previous role.

One of the main loss prevention objectives at Kum & Go is to provide a safe and secure working and shopping environment, he said.

"In recent years, violent crimes, and specifically robberies, have seen a dramatic increase," said Davidson. "There are many theories as to why this increase is happening, but the fact remains, our job has gotten more difficult because of the sporadic nature of these crimes and it's increasingly important that we be proactive in reducing and deterring violent crimes/robberies."



Lisa Dell'Alba, 39

President and CEO

Company: **Square One Markets Inc.**
 Headquarters: **Bethlehem, Pa.**
 Number of Stores: **9**
 Years with the Company: **13**

LIKE MANY IN THE convenience store industry, Lisa Dell'Alba is looking to stir up greater profits by offering foodservice options that cater to consumers' evolving tastes for healthier choices.

"We hope to be able to offer more fresh and healthy items. We are developing new food items and trying to navigate what is still a challenging fresh food supply chain," said Dell'Alba, president and CEO of Square One Markets Inc.

The company's better-for-you initiative doesn't end there. Dell'Alba works to inspire her staff to embrace a healthier lifestyle, too.

"It's something important to me, and I want to help others in our Square One Markets family to achieve their goals. I am personally challenging a few of our team members to pursue their goals to become fitter with exercise," she said. "A few of us are taking on a workout challenge in a few weeks."

Dell'Alba also is excited about deepening relationships with vendors to provide products that will convince individuals to stop and shop at her stores in eastern Pennsylvania.

"In the past year, we have had the opportunity to work closely with one of our suppliers," said Dell'Alba. "It is truly an honor to know that the opinion of the small retailer matters so much in an industry of some very large players."



Jonathan Durling, 33

District Leader

Company: **QuickChek Corp.**
 Headquarters: **Whitehouse Station, N.J.**
 Number of Stores: **150**
 Years with the Company: **17**

WHEN JONATHAN DURLING'S GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHER started a dairy business in central New Jersey known as Durling Farms in 1888, he likely never imagined a convenience store that featured food, soup and cold cuts available through touchscreen kiosks, or more than a dozen flavors of coffee.

But 130 years later, the Whitehouse Station-based convenience market chain is taking its strategy to provide fresh products and food-to-go to a new level with its 150 store, marking a new prototype design. The new QuickChek location offers free Wi-Fi and indoor seating counters with phone and laptop charging stations in addition to a menu of fresh items with healthier and clean ingredients.

Also, the new design offers wider aisles with food stations that include extensive displays of freshly-made market items and baked goods made in the store.

In 17 years at QuickChek, Jonathan Durling has experienced this growth more than anyone. As the son of Dean Durling, company president and CEO, he understands the family aspect of the business. And while the chain varies from small family stores to larger convenience stores with more than a dozen fueling locations and pharmacies, it continues its focus in bringing more to its customers.



Nicole Earp, 33

Chief Financial Officer

Company: **Good Oil Co. (Good To Go)**
 Headquarters: **Winamac, Ind.**
 Number of Stores: **18**
 Years with the Company: **11**

DON GOOD'S FAMILY HAS run Good Oil Co. since the business started in 1941. To grow the organization, the family has surrounded itself with dependable professionals like Nicole Earp, chief financial officer.

Earp has never taken her professional success for granted, especially in an industry where competition is tight—including the challenge of identifying able workers.

"With the low unemployment rates there is a lot of com-

petition out there for the qualified employees," said Earp. "We are competing with a lot of manufacturing jobs that have very good benefit packages and higher wages. In our low-margin industry we are having a hard time getting the right people, especially customer-focused employees."

Aside from revamping its foodservice program, Good To Go is preparing to launch a digital marketing initiative to move its promotions and in-store advertisements away from standard signage to digital forms to attract customers' attention. Like most c-stores, the retailer is looking to stay ahead of impactful trends.

"I believe the online retail stores such as Amazon and Walmart are our biggest threat," she said. "We live in a pretty rural marketplace and as those sales pick up and (competitors) are delivering groceries and home supplies, we are going to see less frequency of people needing to drive the distance to town to pick up their household needs."



Fouad El-Nemr, 26

Executive Vice President

Company: Nouria Energy Corp.
Headquarters: Worcester, Mass.
Number of Stores: 116, 49 car washes
Years with the Company: 2

FOUAD EL-NEMR HAS BEEN involved with his family's convenience store business since he was 14 years old. Over that time, he was involved in all facets—from stocking the shelves to cleaning the pumps to running the cash register.

"When I got older I moved into the finance and accounting department, and once I was in college I started attending quarterly board meetings to understand every aspect of the business," he said.

Now back as executive vice president of Nouria Corp., El-Nemr, who holds an MBA in concentrated finance from Suffolk University, works with the chief operating officer and chief financial officer on analyzing data on special projects by developing financial and forecasting models, and handles budgeting and banking for the growing company, which earlier this year completed the acquisition of the F.L. Roberts & Co. Inc.

"When our father eventually retires, my brother, who is now completing his master's degree, and I will continue the family business for generations to come," said El-Nemr.

Into 2018 and beyond, he said the company will focus on its private label product line, My Nouria, as well as growing both its new Nouria-branded store concept and its Golden Nozzle car wash operations within its New England footprint.



Caroline Filchak, 29

Director of Retail Operations

Company: Clipper Petroleum Inc.
Headquarters: Flowery Branch, Ga.
Number of Stores: 28
Years with the Company: 7

AS DIRECTOR OF RETAIL operations for Clipper Petroleum, boasting 28 convenience stores in Georgia and South Carolina under the Clipper, On the Run and Circle M brands, Caroline Filchak is closely linked to the company's pipeline.

Her expertise will be vital next year as Clipper tackles some significant projects. "We have a new store build on the books for mid-2018, which will feature our new store prototype, branding elements and offerings," said Filchak. "Last year, we became a Bojangles' franchisee and opened our first Bojangles' location. We have plans to open another Bojangles' in mid-2018, and we are looking forward to growing that part of our business."

Clipper is in the final stages of the planning and development of a new foodservice concept that it will begin testing at one of its stores in early 2018. To complement those program changes, Clipper is remodeling some of its store locations.

Lastly, the company is boosting workplace benefits for its staff.

"We recently implemented a chain-wide wage increase and raised our starting wage. We are building upon that to roll out other programs that will show our team members how much we appreciate their contribution and recognize their value," she said. "Our goal is to become the ultimate employer of choice in the communities where we operate."



Robert Griffith, 32

President

Company: Golden Pantry Food Stores Inc.
Headquarters: Watkinsville, Ga.
Number of Stores: 38
Years with the Company: 4

THE GOLDEN PANTRY FOOD Stores convenience chain, famous for hot, homemade biscuits and hand-breaded fried chicken, has been serving the Athens, Ga., area for 52 years. Of course, such savory offerings don't come about without a lot of hard work.

Robert Griffith, president of Golden Pantry, is tackling the challenges that many c-store retailers face, such as staying up to date on technology and finding and retaining good talent to manage the stores and serve customers.

"We have an unemployment rate in the low fours, which is great," said Griffith, referring to this part of Georgia. "However it does present some challenges in regard to staffing."

Next year, the company will be even busier.

"We will be transitioning to a new grocery wholesaler, releasing a new revision to our existing Golden Pantry brand, refreshing our website and debuting a customer-facing mobile app," Griffith said. "We have a full plate."

Simultaneously, the chain will continue its focus on employees, customers and the communities where it does business.

"We wouldn't be where we are or who we are without them," said Griffith. "We strive to make all of our decisions with our people and communities in mind."

COVER STORY



John Hiram, 38
Vice President, Power Move Division

Company: Maverik Inc.
Headquarters: Salt Lake City
Number of Stores: 304
Years with the Company: 7

MAVERIK STORES ARE FAMOUS for an outdoor image and the slogan, "Adventure's First Stop." The chain is spread across 10 Western states and is the largest independent fuel marketer in the Intermountain West. In addition, Maverik is known for a variety of proprietary products and the Adventure Club Card loyalty program.

John Hiram, vice president of the Power Move division, which includes fuel supply, logistics and marketing, plays

an important role in helping drive the convenience chain forward. In his opinion, the retailer is "the coolest retail convenience experience on the planet by balancing efforts to be a great place to work, a great operator for our customers and a great growth company."

That growth metric will expand more in 2018.

"By the end of next year, Maverik will accept commercial fleet cards at each of our 300-plus stores through a game-changing proprietary point-of-sale system," Hiram said. "And in the kitchen, we will be cooking and brewing up some hot, new Bonfire Grill items with compelling value for our customers on the go."

The consumer's demand for fresh food and expanded fuel pump offerings is evolving, and "Maverik provides the coolest retail convenience experience on the planet," he added. "There isn't any competitor, in or out of our industry, attacking our position in this space."



Sharif Jamal, 36
Operations Analyst

Company: Chestnut Petroleum Distributors Inc.
Headquarters: New Paltz, N.Y.
Number of Stores: 300
Years with the Company: 8

JUST AS CHESTNUT PETROLEUM Distributors (CPD) is a driving force of retail entrepreneurship in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, Sharif Jamal is one of the forces driving the company's future.

As an operations analyst for the company, which includes 300 company-owned and dealer-operated locations, Jamal recognizes that good customer service begins with good employees.

"I believe one of the biggest issues we continue to deal with in our region is hiring new employees," Jamal said "A c-store sales associate is not the most glamorous job so we have to do our best to make our stores fun and interesting places to work."

Of course, there are multiple facets to a successful convenience store operation and the family enterprise that has developed into the burgeoning CDP brand is preparing for the future. That includes improving foodservice offerings for company-operated sites and creating new programs to help dealers grow their business as well.

"In 2018 we are hoping to launch more technology programs that can help automate some of our daily data entry and free up more time for our site managers to work with their teams and have more of a presence on the sales floor," said Jamal.



Whitney Haslam Johnson, 38
Chief Experience Officer

Company: Pilot Flying J
Headquarters: Knoxville, Tenn.
Number of Stores: 750
Years with the Company: 14

IF 2017 WAS A busy year for Whitney Haslam Johnson, vice president of brand and guest experience at Pilot Flying J, 2018 promises to be even busier.

"We will also be rolling out the new Pilot Express concept," said Johnson. "These locations are a smaller format than our travel centers. Through this new store model, we will be highly focused on enhancing our food offerings and will provide quick, healthy options. Pilot Express locations will feature newly upgraded and modernized facilities in addition to standard offerings."

Johnson is tasked with building a strong brand presence and helping further position the company's travel centers as roadside destinations. Pilot Flying J operates more than 750 Pilot and Flying J Travel Centers across North America, serving more than 1.3 million customers daily.

Pilot Flying J in 2018 will expand its network through the addition of some 20 new locations, Johnson said. In addition, the company is also highlighting the MyPilot app, allowing users access to trip planners, its MyRewards loyalty program and the ability to access special offers with our MyOffers feature.

"Every day, our focus is to provide great service to our guests and to deliver on our mission of connecting people and places with comfort, care and a smile at every stop," said Johnson.



Mary Kolkoski, 30

Assistant Director of Marketing

Company: **Jetz Convenience Centers**

Headquarters: **Hales Corners, Wis.**

Number of Stores: **4**

Years with the Company: **15**

MARY KOLKOSKI IS A fourth-generation member of the O'Connor family business Jetz Convenience Centers. As the assistant director of marketing, Kolkoski is involved in all aspects of the business, but her focus is mainly on operations, payables and marketing.

"I currently manage our Hales Corners location and am learning the financial part of the business," Kolkoski said. "When I am not at one of the stores, or in the office, I work on our pump advertising and digital marketing."

Kolkoski and the Jetz team are excited for a busy 2018, preparing plans to help the chain grow its offerings in the new year.

"We are currently working on new store designs, and I am excited to be a part of the process," said Kolkoski. "This is a new area of the business for me and I am anxious to watch and participate as we deploy many of the current trends and new best practices."

Jetz also recently introduced higher blends of ethanol, specifically E15 and E85, to the forecourts. "I'm watching as the performance of that new sector grows," she added.



Jillian Kreamer, 29

Store Systems Administrator

Company: **Freedom Oil**

Headquarters: **Warsaw, Ind.**

Number of Stores: **6**

Years with the Company: **5**

IT WAS THE ENTHUSIASM that Freedom Oil owners Greg and Sheila Cobb had for their business that convinced Jillian Kreamer to join their team five years ago.

Today, that same level of enthusiasm still drives her and the company, which distributes gasoline to c-stores and gas stations while also operating six of its own c-stores under the Freedom Oil banner. As store systems administrator, Kreamer is responsible for the financial end of the business from accounts payable to petroleum accounting to managing the Pricebook.

One of the biggest issues she sees facing convenience stores in Freedom Oil's retail-saturated market areas is finding the right people to staff the stores. The company found some success by using social media such as Facebook to make connections.

"We also increased our minimum wage, which has also helped to increase the pool of qualified and quality applicants," said Kreamer. "To help keep and motivate the staff, the company also instituted a bonus program a few years ago."

Kreamer describes it as a kind of profit-sharing program that gives everyone a stake in seeing that the company does well. The program has been very rewarding, not just for the employees, but for the profitability of the company, she said.



Nick Lacaillade, 34

Senior Vice
President of Retail
and Corporate
Development

Company: **Certified Oil Corp.**

Headquarters: **Columbus, Ohio**

Number of Stores: **70**

Years with the Company: **5**

AS IT NEARS ITS 80th anniversary, Certified Oil is a company on the move.

Founded by Carlyle Baker, in Piqua, Ohio in 1939, Certified remains one of Ohio's leading c-store operators and retail fuel suppliers. Collectively, the family business operates or supplies more than 140 locations in Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia.

Nick Lacaillade, a third-generation executive for Certified Oil, has been senior vice president of retail and corporate development since 2012. Before returning to the family business, he spent seven years working on Wall Street.

His father, Peter, is chairman and CEO of the Columbus, Ohio-based company.

Looking ahead, the thriving retailer will be revamping its loyalty program to better meet its customers' needs. The new program will be called "For You Rewards," said Lacaillade.

"In addition to the loyalty program, we will overhaul much of our human resources practices, including recruiting, interviewing and hiring standard operating procedures and rolling out a mystery-shop program," Lacaillade said.

On top of this, the Certified convenience chain in January will open a new-to-industry store in Ohio—a move to grow its footprint.

"I'm also head of corporate development, including spending our growth capital on rebuilds and new builds," Lacaillade said. "We're currently looking at a slew of properties at various stages to grow our store base."



Bailey Lyden, 33
Vice President
of Retail

Company: Truenorth Energy LLC
Headquarters: Brecksville, Ohio
Number of Stores: 110
Years with the Company: 10

A S VICE PRESIDENT OF retail for Brecksville, Ohio-based Truenorth Energy, which operates the 110-c-store chain truenorth, Bailey Lyden faces a number of business decisions every day.

While government regulations in general don't appear as burdensome as in years past, he believes there's an ongoing need to challenge regulations at both the state and local levels in the categories of tobacco, labor and fuel.

Lyden said that among primary initiatives for Truenorth in 2018 are two major initiatives: "We will continue our aggressive investment plans on development in order to keep delivering an updated retail experience for our customers. At the same time we will continue to expand offers that are fresh and 'better for you.'"

Among the c-store's additional business plans for the next 12 months are strategies to enhance current foodservice offerings and launch new food lines that complement its current program.

"We also want to focus on marketing the truenorth brand more than in previous years," Lyden said.

Like all other retailers, the Ohio retailer is keeping keeps a weather eye on Amazon's rapid incursions into various areas of retail. Amazon's recent investments in the Whole Foods Market will force food providers to be more aggressive on several fronts.

"One of those fronts will continue to be c-stores," said Lyden.



Lindsay Lyden, 35
Vice President of Administration/Development

Company: Truenorth Energy LLC
Headquarters: Brecksville, Ohio
Number of Stores: 110
Years with the company: 11

I N HER ROLE AS vice president of administration and development at Truenorth Energy, Lindsay Lyden's responsibilities touch on many areas of the convenience chain's operation. The goal is to continue to build a profitable business that's well positioned to serve its customers while continuing to growing its market presence.

That growth strategy also includes identifying new ways to market to a diverse Millennial base and ensuring a modern store design that keeps pace with evolving demand. "Truenorth is well into a revolving five-year plan of upgrading our network of stores," said Lyden. "We rebuild six to eight stores every year and remodel another six to eight, focusing on signature features such as our restrooms, beer caves and food area."

Lyden and the executive team focus a considerable amount of time and thought on how the family-owned company, which operates 110 truenorth-branded store locations in Ohio and Indiana, can make the shopping experience for its customers quicker, simpler and more seamless.

The demand for c-stores to remain nimble while providing U.S. consumers efficient service is only increasing. "I think our industry has always been tuned into what the quick-serve restaurants, drug and grocery [channels] are doing," Lyden said. "But more and more, we are seeing Amazon being more convenient in people's lives—with the key word being convenient."



Stephanie Martone, 34
Category Manager, Other Tobacco Products

Company: Cumberland Farms Inc.
Headquarters: Westboro, Mass.
Number of Stores: 558
Years with the Company: 11

S TEPHANIE MARTONE WOULD NEVER say that she's the face of Cumberland Farms. However, it's fair to say that there are many local community members who know her as the face of the New England convenience chain.

That's because as Cumberland Farms' category manager who oversees OTP (other tobacco products), she regularly attends meetings of city councils and township trustees to discuss the latest local tobacco ordinances, which have become common in many of communities where the c-store chain operates.

"The biggest issue we face right now is keeping up with the local legislation happening in the Northeast and evolving legislation at the federal level," said Martone. "We do our best to keep up with the changing landscape, but it is definitely a moving target with lots of change."

Cumberland Farms continues to focus on serving patrons and being the best destination for their everyday needs. That objective remains clear as the chain extends its retail reach into other areas including Florida—the test ground for its concept store design that was launched a couple of years ago.

As for OTP, Martone expects 2018 to be bright and sunny.

"Our biggest initiative is always to grow sales," Martone said. "Product mix and innovation are key to that. We will continue to review and strive to make 2018 a great year for tobacco sales."



Julia Miller, 31
Director of Business Growth
and Development

Company: Blueox Energy
Headquarters: Oxford, N.Y.
Number of Stores: 11
Years with the Company: 7

GROWING UP IN THE family fuel and c-store business, Julia Miller developed an intimate knowledge of its customer base and their purchasing habits. For example, she knows some of their retail locations serve as a grocer on top of being a traditional convenience store.

Miller, director of business growth and development, sees this larger community presence and service as an opportunity to add even more value.

"We service a lot of rural areas with few options as far as places to eat," said Miller, who's been part of Blueox Energy for the past seven years. "We want to see families unload from their cars, sit down at our tables and spend time together enjoying good food, great staff and true convenience to their busy lives."

She wants to add value to the Blueox name, too. Very soon, all 11 stores will be rebranded as Blueox Neighborhood Markets.

"The really unique thing about this new brand is it brings together our energy divisions and our store divisions," said Miller. "We get to capitalize off both sides of our business. We have customers who don't know we have stores and customers who don't know we do energy. This is a great opportunity to bring those worlds together and service customers at their homes or on the road."



Dana Moloney, 29
Strategic Workforce Partner

Company: Warrenton Oil Co. (FastLane
Convenience Stores)
Headquarters: Warrenton, Mo.
Number of Stores: 35
Years with the Company: 4

MANY NEXT-GENERATION C-STORE LEADERS have been groomed for success and understand that the business challenges they face today are significant. This is also true for Dana Moloney, who was promoted to strategic workforce partner in April 2017 after serving as FastLane's food service director for three years.

At family-owned Warrenton Oil, which operates 35 FastLane stores, 11 car washes and three hotels, Moloney has enjoyed support from experienced leadership. "I've been able to learn from industry veterans, and been given the freedom to make my own decisions. I've also been introduced to several trade organizations and encouraged to take an active role."

Inherently there is a lot of pressure on next-generation executives when they are trying to fill the shoes of successful past leaders. The key is to continue learning the industry and carving your own path with employees and customers, said Moloney, who also sits on the Young Executives Organization (YEO) board.

"As members of YEO, we are afforded the priceless opportunity to network with and learn best practices and cost-savings solutions from top industry leaders," Moloney said.

Overall, Moloney views the convenience store industry as a great place to build a rewarding career.

"Our whole purpose is to offer a service that helps make peoples' lives easier," she said. "If we can help brighten someone's day with a quick, tasty breakfast sandwich and coffee, that's pretty cool. And it's evolving, so it keeps things exciting."



Daniel Moran, 31
Category Manager

Company: Robinson Oil Corp., (Rotten
Robbie Convenience Stores)
Headquarters: Santa Clara, Calif.
Number of Stores: 35
Years with the Company: 1

I'M A RECENT ADDITION to the Robinson Oil team, so learning about our unique stores and customer base has been a fun challenge," said Daniel Moran, a category manager covering 35 Rotten Robbie c-stores in northern California.

Prior to his current position, Moran worked in the consumer packaged goods industry for more than a decade. That experience provided him in-depth knowledge of various product families, but viewing them daily from the

convenience store level is rather fresh to him still.

His approach has been a boon to Rotten Robbie's retail operation.

"I love being able to walk into a store and make changes that directly interact with customers and their shopping experience," said Moran.

Of course, some changes come about because of external forces including the threat of sugary drink taxes.

"These initiatives have the potential to harm retailers based on geographic location, and fail to do little more than redirect purchases to another area, effectively hurting the local economy," Moran said.

To keep customers interested, he plans to cash in on consumers' preference for locally-sourced products.

"I want to focus on carrying more local brands, products that are hyper-local and haven't blown up yet," said Moran. "I want customers to come into my stores knowing we'll have classic brands, but also something new and exciting."



Whitney Douglass Oestreich, 28

Credit Manager

Company: Douglass Distributing (Lone Star Food Stores)

Headquarters: Sherman, Texas

Number of Stores: 22

Years with the Company: 4

IN TODAY'S TIME-STARVED WORLD, c-stores continue to have a place in U.S. retail as consumers want frictionless transactions. Whitney Douglass Oestreich is doing her part to ensure Lone Star Food Stores is meeting customers' expectations.

In 2018, Lone Star is rolling out a mobile app and expanding its proprietary Mexican quick-service restaurant, Mi Taco. Moreover, the retailer is opening its first coffee lodge (TexaKona Coffee Lodge). All of these initiatives will happen against the backdrop of a revamped employee-training program.

Just as important, the chain is adding renewable diesel and gas without ethanol to its fuel offerings and implementing near field communications (NFC) to fuel dispensers, which enables flex pay.

For all the projects at the pump, fuel is also one of the family business' biggest challenges, Oestreich said.

"Our biggest issue is trying to price competitively in a market where we do not get the RIN (Renewable Identification Number) while the competition around us does. To quote my grandfather, Bill Douglass, 'the point of obligation needs to be moved to the rack or the government economics of subsidizing the large retailers will spell the eventual end to the small, independent retailer. The small retailer attrition, currently created by the uneven playing field has already begun, with hundreds selling out where possible or just closing.'"



Alex Olympidis, 30

President of Operations

Company: Family Express Corp.

Headquarters: Valparaiso, Ind.

Number of Stores: 70

Years with the Company: 9

IT'S A BEEN A busy year at Family Express as the company rolled out a new design that is focused on center store and foodservice. Overseeing these initiatives is Alex Olympidis, who was recently promoted to president of operations.

Olympidis, who also serves as the vice chairman of the Young Executives Organization (YEO), said Family Express "strives to be the finest small chain of convenience stores and fueling centers in the world."

To help meet that goal, over the past 12 months, the Valparaiso, Ind.-based chain debuted a new made-to-order hot foodservice offering, labeled Cravin's Kitchen, as well as rebranding the inside of its stores with a focus on foodservice. Cravin's Kitchen features made-to-order breakfast sandwiches and an exciting upscale, customizable pizza offering.

Over the next year, the company looks to continue its expansion of the Cravin's to Order foodservice program across all three dayparts, Olympidis said. The deployment of Cravin's Kitchen is synchronized with the rebranding of Family Express store interiors designed to bring focus to its foodservice program.

"The family of our proprietary brands has evolved over decades of marketing, but they existed in silos as opposed to speaking with one voice," said Olympidis, who oversees 70 Family Express locations across northwest and north central Indiana.



Robby Posener, 37

Vice President of Store Experience

Company: RaceTrac Petroleum Inc.

Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.

Number of Stores: 500

Years with the Company: 14

WITH A 6,000-PLUS SQUARE-FOOT convenience store design, offering more than 4,000 items, Swirl World frozen yogurt, free Wi-Fi and both indoor and outdoor seating, RaceTrac Petroleum has become a model of consumer satisfaction.

Helping the Atlanta-based convenience chain delight customers is Robby Posener, RaceTrac's vice president of store experience. In 2018, foodservice will be a higher priority.

"We have finally gotten comfortable with our ability to execute food at the levels that our guest expects and our menu is headed right where we want it, which is allowing us to feel confident in our investment to roll out a first-class food operation," Posener said. "Our continued enhancements in immediately consumable beverages are also supporting that work along with great bolt-on purchases from our private label line."

As RaceTrac grows and expands into new markets, Posener said other retail channels such as dollar stores and online retailers will vie for its customers.

"The threats to c-stores are coming from all angles, which makes it harder to pinpoint how to react," he said. "The space we are headed into is very crowded as we become a restaurant that also happens to provide a great c-store and fuel offering. At RaceTrac, we feel that our ability to offer consistency, variety and speed are going to be three distinctive advantages."

COVER STORY



Ashley Quint, 34

District Supervisor

Company: Kum & Go L.C.
Headquarters: West Des Moines, Iowa
Number of Stores: 420
Years with the Company: 3

WITH STORES IN 11 states, Kum & Go continually strives to differentiate its operation from that of other retailers.

One example is the convenience retailer's &Rewards loyalty program, which rolled out more than a year ago, said Ashley Quint, district manager. "We're now connected with over 700,000 of our best customers and use that connection to stay relevant through their feedback."

In 2018, Kum & Go will launch a new initiative that focuses on connecting with people.

"Retailers are inherently drawn toward execution," said Quint. "However, an execution-only focus will eventually deteriorate your ability to provide the best customer service possible. We're working to connect with our customers through small, meaningful details. We have some of the best associates out there, and it will be my job to help them understand how their connections will make Kum & Go the convenience store of choice."

Faster, easier shopping is becoming both commonplace and expected in the c-store industry. Staying ahead of the curve is important.

"Some companies are trending towards smaller footprint stores that allow a faster shopping experience," Quint said. "In certain markets, you can order online and have the products delivered within an hour. Kum & Go's ability to stay relevant with fresh food, dependable service, fuel choices and ease of shopping is critical as other channels merge into our 'convenience' zone."



Matthew Redmond, 30

President

Company: Raymer Oil Co.
(Fast Phil's and Run In)
Headquarters: Statesville, N.C.
Number of Stores: 20
Years with the Company: 7

LED BY MATTHEW REDMOND, company president, Raymer Oil has earmarked 2018 as the year for some important company initiatives. Raymer Oil comprises 10 Fast Phils and 10 Run In branded locations.

"We have had great success growing our retail business over the last two years and are looking to continue to make smart acquisitions into next year with a focus on continuing investments into foodservice," he said.

That includes continuing to add foodservice to every store that has a footprint large enough to accommodate it, said Redmond, who joined the family company seven years ago. That's despite the challenges of competing retail channels and larger c-stores.

"We have some of the best in class operators in our area and having to compete with them helps us to continue to remain focused on delivering the best customer experience possible with the lowest possible price," he said.

The burgeoning retailer isn't focused solely on business. It also supports the local communities where it operates by giving back through golf tournament participation, charity luncheons and sitting on social committees. The company recently helped a local elementary school in need of funds procure playground equipment.

"I'm incredibly proud of all the great causes that we have the benefit to be involved with," said Redmond.



Jared Scheeler, 37

CEO

Company: The Hub Convenience Stores Inc.
Headquarters: Dickinson, N.D.
Number of Stores: 3
Years with the Company: 6

FOR JARED SCHEELER, LEADERSHIP means balancing what has been done with what's to come.

"It's important to keep an eye on the future, but we must also remember to balance that with the basics of the past," he said.

So how do leaders achieve that?

"I believe there's a natural inclination for young leaders to continuously look forward, looking for that next great initiative or progressive leadership style," said Scheeler. "But we need to remember that the things our predecessors in this industry did yesterday, helped set us up for the success of our industry today."

That success is helping Scheeler overcome challenges in the Bakken Oil region, where oil industry volatility affects sales forecasts, volume and pricing. With a mix of forward thinking and respect for the past, he is working to build new programs for The Hub in branding and foodservice.

"Though we are looking hard at some technological initiatives for 2018, the bulk of our energy will be put towards updating acquired stores to properly represent The Hub's branding," Scheeler said. "We're still focused on developing ourselves as a quality alternative to the quick-service restaurants. We're continuing to work on developing our identity in the food channel."



Michael Schiemer, 32
Digital Marketing
Manager

Company: Colbea Enterprises (Season Corner Market)
Headquarters: Cranston, R.I.
Number of Stores: 60
Years with the Company: 3

A S THE DIGITAL MARKETING manager for Colbea Enterprises, Michael Schiemer is prepared for a big year ahead doing everything he can to help spread the word of Seasons Corner Market, both online and offline, to consumers throughout New England.

"Seasons Corner Market has had another incredible year of growth and 2018 will be even better. It's an exciting time for both the convenience store industry and the growing use of digital marketing as a tool to brand and promote c-stores," Schiemer said.

As customers spend an increasing amount of time on computers and mobile devices, Schiemer said it is critical to reach the right consumer on the right digital platform at the right time.

"There are countless areas of our digital marketing strategy that we plan to improve, expand, evolve and refine," he said.

As the c-store industry grows more competitive each year, he said it's vital to follow current trends, but also to listen to those with decades of valuable experience.

"I've learned a great deal over the years from my father who worked extensively in the industry. I continue to learn new things every day from all of the talented leaders here at Colbea Enterprises," said Schiemer. "I greatly appreciate the wisdom they have shared with me and I will continue building on it."



Bart Stransky, 38
Executive Director of Merchandise and Supply Chain

Company: RaceTrac Petroleum Inc.
Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.
Number of Stores: 500
Years with the Company: 10

A N ARMY VETERAN AND graduate of the University of Georgia, Bart Stransky has led some of RaceTrac's largest initiatives and served in a variety of leadership roles over his 10 years with the convenience chain.

Now as executive director of merchandise and supply chain, one of his top priorities is to integrate the operational systems in which the company has invested. "We are focused on leveraging technology to automate a number of store processes around invoicing, ordering, receiving and other inventory functions," he said. "Helping the stores with these processes allows them to focus more on our guests' needs."

Another initiative that will be coming to life for RaceTrac in 2018 is increasing its internal product distribution abilities, especially around perishable products. "This will support our expansion of freshly prepared foodservice offers across the fleet," Stransky said.

Over the next 12 months, RaceTrac will also continue to focus on organic store growth, investing heavily in upgrading its self-distribution capabilities, with a tight focus around perishable products.

"As we grow stores we are also focused on expanding the advanced food offering we have in our locations," Stransky said. "Our guests have shown that they desire these types of offers from us and we are working to deliver them across the company."



Jared Sturtevant, 39
Supervisor of Digital Marketing

Company: Alimentation Couche-Tard / Circle K
Headquarters: Laval, Canada
Number of Stores: 13,600
Years with the Company: 22

JARED STURTEVANT'S ROLE HAS changed significantly compared to a year ago with the acquisition of CST Brands by Circle K. He continues helping the company during the transition.

"Currently, I am actively assisting Circle K global, national and the respective business units with the transition of the Corner Store and Nice N Easy Grocery Shoppes digital assets to Circle K," said Sturtevant. "We are in the process of migrating our robust audiences to the Circle K App, website and social platforms."

Sturtevant has had the opportunity to learn from some of the industry's most respected leaders during his 22-year career in the c-store industry. He began his career with Nice N Easy Grocery Shoppes in 1996 as a clerk shortly following high school.

Prior to CST's acquisition of Nice N Easy, Sturtevant served as the director of marketing at Nice N Easy for five years. Before that, he was director of category management. Sturtevant is also the chairman of the National Advisory Group's (NAG) Young Executive Organization (YEO).

Although so much of Sturtevant's past is closely tied to the industry, his focus remains on the future.

"My focus for 2018 will be ensuring a smooth transition for our customers as they are introduced to the Circle K brand. I will also be exploring new and exciting (career) opportunities."

COVER STORY



Spencer Thomas, 24
Brand Manager

Company: Southwest Georgia Oil Co.
Headquarters: Bainbridge, Ga.
Number of Stores: 80
Years with the Company: 3



Whitney Thomas, 25
Executive Assistant

Company: Southwest Georgia Oil Co.
Headquarters: Bainbridge, Ga.
Number of Stores: 80
Years with the Company: 4

COMPETITION FOR C-STORES COMES not only from other convenience stores, but also from grocers, general discount stores, big box chains, and now, online retailers that deliver purchases to homeowners' doorsteps. Achieving growth within this crowded field is an accomplishment for any retail business

Then again, expansion presents its own set of predicaments to overcome as Spencer Thomas can attest.

"Our company has tripled in size over the last few years, and this has been a challenge," said Thomas, brand manager for Southwest Georgia Oil Co. "The amount of growth our company has taken on the last few years [affects] the level of consistency and execution to our stores."

Currently, its retail division features several store names, including SunValley Market & Deli, Inland Fuels and S&S Food. For 2018, though, leadership has decided to consolidate its identity by creating and promoting a new brand name for all locations. With 80 sites, that's no small task; however, Thomas, whose duties include construction development, said it's been a valuable learning experience for him professionally.

"The most influential development for my career...has definitely been having the opportunity to work on different concepts that we are working on rolling out in 2018," he noted. "I am always learning from the leaders of our company."

AS AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, Whitney Thomas is often assigned to oversee elements of a multitude of projects for Southwest Georgia Oil Co. Currently, she is attending to details related to unveiling a new retail concept for 2018.

"We have a few concepts beside c-stores that we want to nail down, [including] a non-fuel site on a college campus, a grocery/market/c-store concept and a travel center," said Thomas.

The company, which operates locations in Alabama, Florida and its home state of Georgia, also is preparing to overhaul its existing retail chain, which would include a significant redesign.

"The new concept is unlike anything we have seen in the marketplace, so we are very excited to get this rolling out," she added.

Having an active role in a variety of endeavors keeps Thomas inspired. In fact, it's what she enjoys most about working in the convenience store industry.

"Changing concepts within the stores and creating new ideas to stay innovative is a fun task," Thomas said. "People will always need to fuel their cars, and it's a fun challenge to maximize each visit and make it special so they keep coming back to our stores."



Mark Zietlow, 30
Real Estate Development Manager

Company: Kwik Trip Inc.
Headquarters: La Crosse, Wis.
Number of Stores: 615
Years with the Company: 6

MARK ZIETLOW CREDITS HIS early professional success to the good fortune of having a mentor in his grandfather, Don Zietlow.

"He has laid the foundation for both the company and our family," he reflected. "He has set us up for success, and has ensured the sustainability of the company. As part of the third generation of family ownership, along with my siblings and cousins, it is our privilege and responsibility

to take the company forward into the future. We have an incredibly strong management team supporting us, and they provide a vast experience and knowledge base, both within themselves and in the teams they have built. As Gramps says, 'Life is good, and the best is yet to come.'"

Among Kwik Trip's major initiatives that will spill over into 2018, he explained, is its retrofitting of this year's acquisition of the PDQ convenience chain, which operates mainly in Milwaukee and Madison.

"This acquisition has allowed us to enter critical markets in our overall real estate strategy, and will complement our year-over-year initiative of building 50 stores per year," said Zietlow.

His company's focus and goal remains consistency.

"We strive to provide excellent food at a value for our guests, the best fuel options and quality, and superior guest service for our seven-million guests per week," said Zietlow.