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Walt's Recognized with *Community Partner of the Year* Award

St. Paul (October 2, 2023) – The Minnesota Retailers Association is pleased to recognize Walt's with its *Community Partner of the Year* award as part of the 2023-2024 *Minnesota's Retail Champions* program.

"Walt's embodies the true spirit of community partnership, and their generosity sets an inspiring example for all retailers in Minnesota," praised Bruce Nustad, president of the Minnesota Retailers Association, commending Walt's for their outstanding dedication to community service.

Scott Barney, co-owner of Walt's, reflected on the spirit of giving passed down from the founder and namesake, Walt Gislason, saying, "I don't think there's ever been someone who's walked through these doors that's said 'We have a fundraiser,' that we've ever said no to."

"Walt's is a key community partner and a great example of what makes the Willmar Lakes Area an exceptional community," said Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce retiring President Ken Warner. "The team at Walt's shows up every day to make a difference, and at the Chamber we couldn't be more grateful for the example they set for others."

Walt's has gone above and beyond in contributing to the well-being of their community. They have actively participated in numerous fundraisers, charitable donations, and acts of kindness. Their commitment to saying "yes" to opportunities to support their community has made them a cornerstone of goodwill in Willmar.

Walt's is the sole recipient of the Minnesota's Retail Champions *Community Partner of the Year* award. Eleven other organizations and individuals will be recognized in other categories such as *Retail Entrepreneur of the Year*, *Retail Mentor of the Year*, *Family Business of the Year*, *Advocate of the Year*, *Advocate Partner of the Year*, *Advocacy Leadership*, *Retail Collaboration*, *Customer Experience*, *Vendor Partner of the Year*, *Social Responsibility*, and *Retail Community of the Year*.

Barney and Walt's other co-owners will accept the award during the *Retail Rally* event on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, beginning at 2:00 p.m. in Bloomington. The event features practical, game-changing, cutting-edge retail innovations, strategies, and ideas. *Retail Rally* event information can be found at www.retailrally.com.

About the Minnesota Retailers Association: The Minnesota Retailers Association promotes, preserves, and enhances the retail industry in Minnesota by taking a leadership position in development of public policy and regulatory measures that impact members. MnRA also works to enhance the public image of the retail industry by providing information, services and support that adds value to its members. www.mnretail.org.

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