NEWS ALERT

National Watermelon Promotion Board
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Watermelon Board Announces Winners of 18th Annual Retail Merchandising Contest

Winter Springs, FL – October 29, 2026 — The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) is pleased to announce the winners of its 18th Annual Retail Merchandising Contest, recognizing retailers across the country for their creativity, merchandising excellence and dedication to connecting shoppers with fresh watermelon.

This year's winning entries demonstrated the power of innovative in-store and digital merchandising to capture shoppers' attention, inspire new ways to enjoy watermelon and drive engagement at retail. From consumer education and recipe inspiration to sampling, social media and eye-catching displays, participating retailers showcased watermelon's health, happiness, value and versatility.

The contest also featured a partnership with Tajín®, encouraging retailers to incorporate the popular chili-lime seasoning into watermelon merchandising and inspire shoppers to explore bold, flavorful combinations.

The 2026 Retail Merchandising Contest winners are:

First Place: Common Market, 7th Street, Frederick, Maryland

Common Market took home the grand prize for a creative merchandising program that brought watermelon's versatility to life through consumer education, a mixed display of whole and fresh-cut watermelon, social media promotion and custom "What's Cooking" recipe cards. By combining engaging in-store merchandising with digital outreach and recipe inspiration, the team encouraged shoppers to discover new ways to enjoy watermelon.

"We are excited and honored to have won the grand prize. We came together as a team to spread the word of watermelon and all of our hard-work and planning truly paid off. A big congratulations to our entire team!" said Mike Leveille, Produce Manager, Common Market.

Second Place: Barstow MCLB Commissary, Barstow, California

Barstow MCLB Commissary earned second place for its large-scale display and sampling program featuring whole and fresh-cut watermelon and an America 250 theme. The eye-catching presentation paired product visibility with sampling to encourage shoppers to experience watermelon firsthand and celebrate its appeal.

Third Place: Stop and Compare, State Street, Lynn, Massachusetts

Stop and Compare earned third place for a dynamic merchandising program featuring watermelon sampling with Tajín®, social media promotion, whole and fresh-cut watermelon, and retail advertising. The integrated

approach highlighted the exciting flavor combination of watermelon and Tajín while engaging shoppers across multiple promotional channels.

Honorable Mentions

The NWPB also recognizes the following retailers for their creative merchandising efforts and commitment to promoting fresh watermelon:

- Greer's Cash Saver - Vancleave, Mississippi
- Heritage Co-Op - Manitoba, Canada
- Port Hueneme Commissary - California
- Tops Market - Dunkirk, New York

"Retailers play a vital role in connecting shoppers with fresh, nutritious foods, and this contest is a celebration of their creativity and dedication," said Juliemar Rosado, Director of Retail & International Marketing. "This year's winning displays demonstrate how thoughtful merchandising, sampling, consumer education and digital engagement can bring watermelon's health, happiness, value and versatility to life at retail. We're thrilled to recognize these outstanding teams and the innovative ways they inspire shoppers to enjoy more watermelon."

The contest officially ran June 8 through August 31, 2026 and merchandising efforts took place a minimum of one week throughout the months of June, July or August. For images of this year's winning entries, visit **https://www.watermelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/2026-Retail-Merch-Contest-Winners.pdf**

About the National Watermelon Promotion Board
The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), based in Winter Springs, Florida, was established in 1989 as an agricultural promotion group to promote watermelon in the United States and in various markets abroad. Funded through a self-mandated industry assessment paid by more than 700 watermelon producers, handlers and importers, NWPB mission is to increase consumer demand for watermelon through promotion, research and education programs.

A serving of nutrient-dense watermelon provides an excellent source of Vitamin C (25% DV), a source of Vitamin B6 (8% DV), and a delicious way to stay hydrated (92% water), with only 80 calories per 2-cup serving. Watermelon consumption per capita in the United States was roughly 15.4 pounds in 2025. Watermelon consumption in the United States approximated 5.3 billion pounds in 2025. Additionally, the United States exported 363 million pounds of watermelon. For additional information, visit **www.watermelon.org**.

About Tajín®
Industrias Tajín® is a market leader in both Mexico and the United States in chile products, in addition to being one of the most important brands in producing and commercializing products derived from chile worldwide. Today, it has a presence in more than 65 countries around the world. Tajín was founded in 1985, surprising consumers with the perfect blend of mild chile peppers, lime, and sea salt. In 1993, Tajín made its first export to the United States, and Tajín International Corporation was established in Houston, TX, from where all commercial activity of the brand in the U.S. is managed. The brand arrived in Central American and European markets in 2006. For more information visit **www.tajín.com**.

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