

**For Immediate Release**

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**WAFC's Retail Management Certificate Honored  
at The White House's Upskill Summit**

(LAKEWOOD, CALIF.) — The Western Association of Food Chains' broadest-reaching educational program — the Retail Management Certificate — was formally recognized at this week's White House Upskill Summit, a forum to build support for empowering America's work force with the education and training they need to develop new skills and earn higher wages. The WAFC joined labor leaders and major employers at the summit presided over by Vice President Joe Biden.

“Education is the primary mission of the Western Association of Food Chains and our commitment to equip front-line workers with the skills they need to advance in their careers through the Retail Management Certificate program is directly in line with the Upskill Summit's call to action,” said WAFC President and Chairwoman **Sue Klug**.

The Retail Management Certificate is an accredited community college program providing its graduates with the core skills and knowledge to move into a management role in the grocery industry. The WAFC and its partner companies, in conjunction with a number of community colleges, created the certificate in 2000 to meet the specific educational and skill needs of the grocery industry. In 2013, partner community colleges received a \$12 million U.S. Department of Labor grant to enhance the certificate program and build its profile nationally in the retail sector.

“This is the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the Retail Management Certificate program, and this week’s news is a fitting tribute to the fact that we recently hit the milestone of 1,000 graduates of the program,” added **Carole Christianson**, WAFC Chief Operating Officer.

“This significant honor represents a lot of hard work by our many company and community college partners,” said the WAFC’s Director of the Retail Management Certificate **Cherie Phipps**. “The certificate was created by the grocery industry for the grocery industry to ensure employees will learn the most relevant, in-demand skills.”

### **94th Annual WAFC Convention (May 2-6)**

The White House honor comes on the eve of the 94th Annual WAFC Convention this week at the JW Marriott Desert Springs in Palm Desert, California. A record attendance of leaders from all sectors of the food industry is expected to head to the desert to learn, network, conduct business and further the organization’s educational goals. Former First Lady Laura Bush and sporting legend Earvin “Magic” Johnson Jr. are the guest speakers.

This year’s convention will celebrate the long-standing partnership with the University of Southern California’s Food Industry Management program. The program was established in 1958 and has grown to become a highly regarded, exclusive leadership program in the USC Marshall School of Business.

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### **About The Western Association of Food Chains**

The WAFC’s mission is “Advancing the Food Industry Through Education and Leadership.” To learn more about the WAFC, go to [www.wafc.com](http://www.wafc.com)