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**AWG exec to retire, successor named**

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Associated Wholesale Grocers Inc. announced Jeff Pedersen, executive vice president and chief sales and support officer, is retiring after 45 years in the grocery business, effective December. Emile Breaux will succeed Pedersen in the role of senior vice president of sales and member support, effective Sept. 20.

Pedersen began his grocery career in 1976 with Hinky Dinky. After joining AWG in 1997, he has played a key role in many of the exciting growth opportunities for AWG throughout the years. He moved from Kansas City to the Nashville Division in 2003 as vice president of merchandising. He later transferred to Oklahoma City as AWG built a new replacement division, and became senior vice president, division manager. In 2013, Pedersen moved back to Kansas City to become senior vice president of member services. In 2015, he became executive vice president of division operations, and in 2018, was asked to lead in a new role as executive vice president, chief sales and support officer.

“Although I am nervous and excited to begin my retirement, I am even more excited to see the great things on the horizon for AWG/VMC and the members,” said Pedersen. “I believe with Emile Breaux stepping into my role, AWG will continue our momentum in helping the members in the areas of Sales and Support for many years to come.”

Breaux will assume the same responsibilities as Pedersen, leading sales and services, which includes marketing, advertising, retail business solutions, store engineering, Design Source Group, Valu Merchandisers, and Media Solutions Corporation. Breaux will also continue to oversee real estate as he did in his previous role. Breaux joined AWG in 2019 as senior vice president, regional supply chain operations. In this role, he provided regional leadership within the Gulf Coast Division and supported and led multiple supply chain strategic projects within the company. Breaux has experience in all areas of the grocery business, leading wholesale distribution business units and serving independent grocers throughout his career. Previously, he served as the president and CEO of Associated Grocers in Baton Rouge, LA.

“Jeff Pedersen has built his career on creating and maintaining excellent relationships with teammates, members, and vendors alike,” said Breaux. “While we will miss him at AWG, the foundation of meaningful relationships he has created in this role will make the transition as smooth as possible for all involved.”

*Photo: Jeff Pedersen and Emile Breaux*