

VIP PROFILE



Facing a host of challenges and opportunities, NCA's new President and CEO John H. Downs, Jr. plans to use his extensive experience in the public sector to develop the Association's strengths and drive the industry forward.

Downs Commits To Building Member Value

JOHN H. DOWNS, JR. STEPPED INTO the position of president and CEO of NCA in August. Prior to joining the Association, Downs took time out to sit with **Candy & Snack TODAY** to discuss the factors that attracted him to the confectionery industry's most visible position. He also outlines his plans for enhancing stakeholder value and how working at The Coca-Cola Co. for 28 years has given him a unique perspective into the challenges the industry is facing.

Candy & Snack TODAY: When you learned of the opportunity at the NCA, what about it was immediately attractive to you?

Downs: NCA is a well-known, multifaceted trade association with a membership comprised of family-owned businesses as well as large global companies with iconic brands. This is a powerful combination, with industry dynamics that I know well.

The members of NCA are pillars in their local communities and able to communicate with governors, members of Congress, retail customers, the media, non-governmental organizations and consumers about the emotional connection we all have to candy and to these brands that have been part of our lives since childhood.

Given my experience working in the global Coca-Cola system, I also understand some of the unique challenges and issues facing the confectionery industry and look forward to taking NCA to the next level of success. My job will be to help tell the story of the role our products play in everyone's lives and strengthen our relationships with key stakeholders to reaffirm these principles.

Candy & Snack TODAY: What are those unique challenges, in your opinion?

Downs: We all recognize that among the big issues we need to successfully address is the health and wellness challenge. The retail, consumer, public affairs and communications environments are changing dramatically. We

have to be nimble and responsive in addressing those changes, but we also must acknowledge candy's unique place as a fun and special treat as we tell our story.

Candy & Snack TODAY: What stood out about the industry and the Association during your initial meetings with the NCA search committee?

NCA

National Confectioners Association

Making Life Sweeter Since 1884

'I will lead NCA with a passion for member service, stewardship, results and developing and growing the capability of the staff.'

JOHN H. DOWNS, JR.
NCA

Downs: During the interview process I was impressed with the level of passion and commitment everyone had to NCA and the overall confectionery industry. Everyone was fully engaged in ensuring the Association's success going forward. The members of the search committee devoted a lot of time and effort to the process of selecting a new leader.

I also appreciated that the committee represented a variety of types and sizes of members — from small, family-owned companies to large, publicly traded corporations. There was excellent chemistry with the group as well.

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