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Our Objective & Strategic Priorities

The Mushroom Council plays a very important role in the national promotion of fresh mushrooms through consumer public relations, foodservice communications and retail communications.

Overall Industry Objectives

- Forecasted based on historic trend in shipments report and US population projections.
- Increase fresh mushroom per capita consumption from 2.9 in 2018 to 3.1 lbs in 2024 (+13%)
- Increase fresh mushroom shipments by 127 million pounds from 2018 to 2024
- Equates to an average annual shipment growth of 2% from 2018 to 2024

Overall Marketing Objectives: Consumer

- Increase awareness of fresh mushrooms
- Increase favorable beliefs and attitudes
- Increase trial
- Increase purchase intention, frequency and amount

Overall Trade Objectives:

- Increase merchandising and promotion of fresh mushrooms across Foodservice and Retail points of distribution
- Increase support of industry sales teams in selling into their respective trade partners
- Maintain momentum of Blend adoption and promotion in K-12, colleges and universities, and foodservice channels
- Expand awareness of and interest in the Blend in the Retail channel to support expanded adoption

The Blend Positioning

- Mushrooms are the meaty food with major flavor impact, health benefits and culinary versatility
- So, mushrooms and meat combined create a great flavor experience that's also better for you and the planet

Overall Strategies

- Use The Blend as our primary marketing platform to promote the benefits of fresh mushrooms
- Employ a double-barreled message of flavor/taste, followed by "better for you"
- Continue to use the blended burger as the gateway food
- Expand and leverage the existing success of foodservice adoption
- Increase direct-to-consumer engagement
- Use partnerships to build credibility and extend resources
- Leverage manufacturing, distribution and promotional scale of large food companies
- Use more integrated and consistent messaging across campaigns and channels
- Prioritize decisions based on facts and ROI
- Share assets and campaign platforms with industry members for their own customization and amplification

Comments from the Chair

Gale Ferranto, Bella Mushrooms/Buona Food



Mushrooms in the 'Catbird Seat' a position of great prominence.

Our family has been in the mushroom farming business for over 3 generations! Living and breathing the industry life, I have developed the knowledge and skill needed to be a leader as Chair. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve on the Mushroom Council.

A few years ago, at one of our board meetings, the phrase 'Catbird Seat' was mentioned in reference to the positioning of mushrooms as a powerhouse, and this has stuck with me ever since. Whether you are a small, mid-sized, or large business in the industry, mushrooms are in 'catbird seat'!

Mushrooms continue to lead nutrition platforms, from scientists to sports nutrition, to innovative products born from The Blend culinary technique. They have been added to more menus in schools, restaurants, and foodservice sectors than any other produce. Mushrooms have penetrated more household kitchens as a direct result of social media, digital, and traditional marketing efforts that put educational pieces and new recipes in the hands of consumers.

The Mushroom Council and industry members are a collective group that together are committed to the creative positioning of mushrooms in a constantly evolving, very large food space.

"Whether you are a small, mid-sized, or large business in the industry, mushrooms are in Catbird Seat" Our partnerships with the James Beard Foundation, colleges and universities, dieticians, and media have resulted in numerous successes, opening new doors and keeping mushrooms in the spotlight!

The Council has listened to our needs and responded with numerous programs and initiatives. There is sales data, marketing materials, and nutritional information that can be utilized by companies of any size and adapted to your organization based on needs and marketing goals.

As industry leaders, the demand for our attention and expertise is needed every day. I understand that finding time is challenging, but I would like to ask that you continue to support the work being done by the Mushroom Council and consider participation on the board. Having a voice has tremendous benefits for our industry and you.

Our future in mushrooms is in the 'Catbird Seat' and I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to give back to our industry.

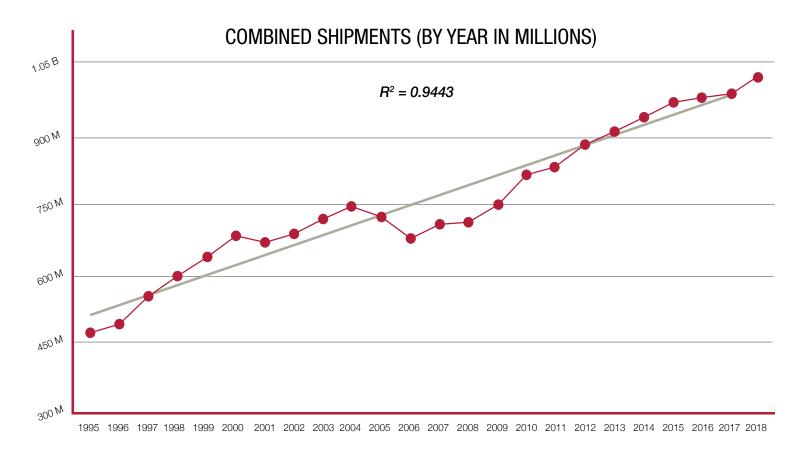
State of the Industry:

Retrospective and Forecast

Yet another year for the record books. Mushrooms garnered millions of hits via media coverage. Pinterest reported a 64% increase in searches for "mushroom recipes." SONIC Drive-In and Blue Apron, the meal service, played a supporting role in overall exposure. Total fresh shipments in 2018 set many more new highs: total pounds, average pounds per month and percentage of total domestic crop, to name a few.

Here are a few of the highlights from a review of data supplied by **First Handlers Report** and the **Retail Data Sales Tracker by IRI**:

- 2.3% growth over 2017, strongest growth since 2015, shipping an additional 22 million pounds in 2018 vs 2017. And with 94% confidence, the trend is to continue to grow at this pace.*
- New highs 9 out of 12 months were recorded.
- The monthly average exceeded 80 million pounds for the first time ever, with March approaching 90 million.
- Domestic fresh shipments began 2018 at a record pace, setting new monthly highs 5 out of the first seven months, up 2.67% through July from the year 2017. However, while the year-end total was a record high, up 1% for the year (8 million pounds), 4 of the last 5 months did not keep pace with 2017, let alone establish new highs. *According to the August 2018 NASS report, a record high 91% of total domestic production was shipped to the fresh market.



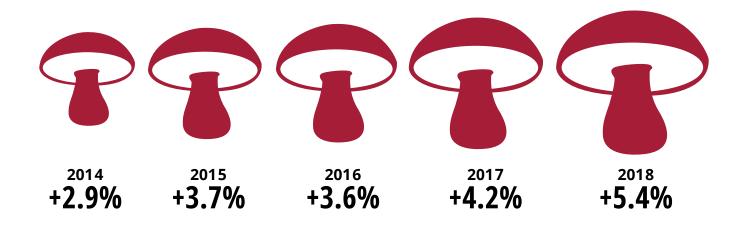
Fresh Mushrooms Are a Growing Category

Robust retail sales growth* appears to have accounted for roughly two-thirds of the total category shipment increase in 2018, moving over 15.6 million incremental pounds vs 2017. Thus this would suggest that foodservice pounds are estimated to have grown by 7.5 million pounds.

Further retail sales analysis reveals that 88% of volume was comprised of white and brown mushrooms. This breaks down to the following incremental volume:

White: 6,650,000 pounds
 Brown: 7,107,000 pounds
 Value-Added: 935,000 pounds

The retail sales growth rate increased at an even faster pace than in prior years: 5.4% in dollar sales and 5.1% in volume (pounds) in 2017. By comparison, Mushrooms AGAIN outperformed Total Produce – with Produce dollar sales increasing 3.0% in 2018. Organic mushrooms now hold a 12% share of total fresh retail sales, up 8% in 2018 vs 2017, though this is down from 16% growth in 2017 vs 2016.



This equates to an increase of **OVER \$202 MILLION** in additional retail sales in just the past several years.

Moreover, category growth was seen across all varieties, with Specialty mushrooms experiencing the highest growth (as a percentage), while White and Brown dominated in terms of total volume and dollar sales.

Mushrooms Sales Dollars and Pounds 2018 vs 2017

MUSHROOMS VARIETY	DOLLAR % CHANGE	VOLUME % CHANGE
WHITE	3.5%	3.2%
BROWN	6.7%	7.9%
SPECIALTY	16.8%	16.4%
VALUE ADDED	22.1%	26.2%
TOTAL CATEGORY	5.4%	5.1%

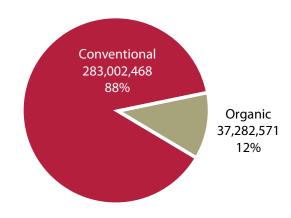
^{*} Source: IRI FreshLook Total U.S. week ending 12/31/18 vs prior year

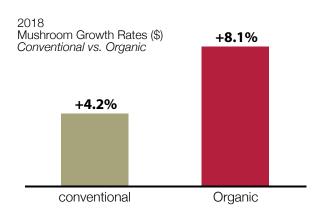
Conventional and Organic:

While Conventional mushrooms continued to be the main drivers of sales at retail, Organic mushrooms experienced a faster rate of growth.

Organic mushrooms comprised 12% of the category at retail with over 37 million pounds sold in 2018. This growth is expected to expand throughout 2019 and beyond.

Organic mushrooms provided a \$1.00 per pound premium at retail with the average price at \$4.94 nationwide. This average was even higher in various regions (example: \$6.13 per pound in the Northeast region). Conventional mushrooms' average retail price nationwide was \$3.94 per pound. Again, this average price fluctuated by region, with the West at a high of \$4.27 per pound.





Imports

Imports of fresh mushrooms (Agaricus Bisporus) increased 13 percent in volume over 2017; the average unit value (AUV) increased 9 percent.

Canada continues as the leading exporter of fresh Agaricus, shipping 78 percent of the 126 million pounds of fresh mushrooms shipped into the United States. Fresh imports from Canada increased 19 percent from 2017. While Mexico is a distant second, shipping 21 million pounds, it has TRIPLED since 2014.

The volume of non-Agaricus mushrooms, described in the Harmonized Tariff System (HTS) as Not Elsewhere Specified or Indicated (NESOI) and commonly referred to as specialty mushrooms, increased from slightly less than 22 million pounds in 2017 to 24.7 million pounds in 2018. For the fourth year in a row, the largest exporter is Korea, shipping 50 percent of that total. The AUV increased from \$0.93 to \$1.00 for the NESOI category.



Marketing Program at a Glance

Under guidance of a scientific nutrition Research Advisory
Panel, the **Nutrition Research Program** discovers
mushrooms' role in a nutritious diet to help improve consumers'
health and lower their risk of modifiable chronic diseases.
Nutrition research provides the credible scientific base to
support consumer and nutrition influencer communications
efforts by developing timely nutrition content for the Council's
website, e-newsletter Nutrition News about Mushrooms and
educational resources for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists;
providing content support for other Council program areas; and
monitoring public policy initiatives that impact mushrooms' role
in health promotion.

The goal of the **Consumer Program** is to increase awareness and demand for fresh mushrooms through a strategic mix of targeted media outreach, social/digital campaigns, event activations and influential partnerships.

Throughout the year, we reached and engaged with consumers through a variety of channels, including national media tour, a "Blenditarian Challenge" recipe contest, an Ambassador program, partnerships with top social influencers and a collaboration with Blue Apron. These efforts helped position mushrooms as a trend and resulted in national coverage in the New York Times, Washington Post, Food & Wine, Eater, Fast Company and Outside to name a few.

The Foodservice Program saw heavy penetration of The Blend in non-commercial accounts, as larger commercial chains began looking at their own opportunities. The Blend and fresh mushrooms were presented as a benefit to plant-forward diets at numerous college and university events including the National Association of Colleges and University Food Service (NACUFS) Conferences and Menu Directions. While many new universities adopted The Blend on campus, Princeton University was the top of the class. The university adopted what they are calling their 'Crafted Burger' and even referenced it in their Campus Vision for the Future of Dining.

The 4th annual James Beard Foundation's Blended Burger Project™ returned and ran from Memorial Day through July 31, customers voted more than 250,000 times for their favorite burgers. In August, a panel of judges reviewed the 20 burgers which received the most votes to determine this year's five winners.

2018 for **School Nutrition** was a year of rebuilding our brand as well as our website. As we look forward to 2019, we are pleased to say we are now on our way to its launch. In 2018, more Mushroom Council partners were introduced to National opportunities provided through the School Nutrition Associateion (SNA). Council representatives attended the SNA Patron's meeting and Industry Bootcamp, which provided opportunities to better leverage our membership in SNA.

We have been very pleased to partner with some major districts who pioneered the back of the house blending of Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) USDA mushrooms, most of whom also have long utilized fresh mushrooms in their operations.



Memorable Moments

A Retail Marketing Program book was designed to be customized to include each shipper's unique programs and messages.

Once again, mushrooms topped the trends lists and appeared in more than two dozen articles including a spotlight from Pinterest noting searches for mushroom recipes were up 64% in 2018.

The Blend began to work its way into household kitchens and vernacular – with thousands of consumers discussing, sharing and engaging with "Blenditarian" content (*up 250% from 2017*).

SONIC Drive-In, one of the top five burger quick service restaurants (QSR), went all in this year with the Sonic Slinger, their version of a blended burger. It was so successful in its spring debut that it made a comeback in the Fall due to its rave reviews and popularity. The Slinger itself was honored with a Menu Master Award for Best Limited Time Offer (LTO) 2018 by Nation's Restaurant News (NRN).

This year, blended burger competitions broke out all over the country. Culinary Fight Club, a national organization that hosts live cooking competitions, held blended burger cook-offs in nine cities.

Six years of partnering in the K-12 channel, our Mushrooms In School brand is now being defined and refined as we continue our messaging and support for serving both fresh mushrooms and frozen mushrooms.

Our new brand and logo are launching soon. The website will feature the many incredible recipes we have been gathering so we can share how #RealSchoolFood includes delicious mushrooms.



Under guidance of a scientific nutrition Research Advisory Panel, the Nutrition Research Program discovers mushrooms' role in a nutritious diet to help improve consumers' health and lower their risk of modifiable chronic diseases. Nutrition research provides the credible scientific base to support consumer and nutrition influencer communications efforts by developing timely nutrition content for the Council's website, e-newsletter Nutrition News about Mushrooms and educational resources for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists; providing content support for other Council program areas; and monitoring/commenting on public policy initiatives that impact mushrooms' role in health promotion.

Nutrition Influencer Communications

- Feel Fuller, Longer with Mushrooms: Satiety research by Slavin
- Scientific Research Abstract Spotlight: Solano-Aguilar. The effect of dietary Agaricus bisporus mushroom consumption in pigs on intestinal microbiota composition and host immunological function
- Mushrooms Shift the Composition of the Gut Microbiome. Cantorna prebiotic effects of mushrooms in mice

National Nutrition Policy

- Submitted comments on topics and questions for the development of the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans: "Mushrooms, for example, are used both as a vegetable and in a plant-forward protein system to help lower energy density and intake of added fat and sodium. Depending on the variety, mushrooms are an excellent source of riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, and a good or excellent source of selenium and copper. Mushrooms exposed to UV light can provide 100% of the Daily Value for vitamin D, now a required nutrient for labeling. The Mushroom Council developed a culinary technique of blending ground mushrooms with meat to help create tasty meals, enable consumers to vary protein options, and help increase their intake of vegetables as recommended by the current Dietary Guidelines."
- The implementation date for the revised Nutrition Facts label is January 1, 2020 for manufacturers with more than \$10 million in annual food sales and January 1, 2021 for those with less than \$10 million in annual food sales.





Preparing for the Future: Mushroom Mini-Summit

At its June meeting, the Council called for a "mini-summit" to review past research efforts and identify a path forward to create greater visibility for mushrooms in the anticipated 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The mini-summit was hosted for April 2-3, 2019 to discuss gaps in existing clinical, behavorial and/or culinary research and issue Requests for Proposals to fill these gaps.

Key Highlights During 2018

Abstracts/publications/presentations presented in 2018 are noted here. Other manuscripts are in the draft stage. New research in priority topic areas is anticipated to be identified and initiated in 2019.

Cantorna, Margherita, Penn State University, State College. "Prebiotic effects of white button mushroom feeding on succinate and intestinal gluconeogenesis" published in the *Journal of Functional Foods*, June. Results presented at Council- supported June summer science research conference on nutritional immunology and the gut microbiota, Leesburg, VA.

Chavarro, Jorge, Harvard School of Public Health,
Boston, MA. "Mushroom intake and cardiometabolic
diseases risk in US women and men" presented at Nutrition
2018, the annual conference of the American Society for
Nutrition, Boston, June. Two manuscripts in preparation.

Meydani, Mohsen, USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, Tufts University, Boston, MA. "Potential prevention of atherosclerosis by edible mushrooms" manuscript prepared.

Slavin, Joanne, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

"Impact of *Agaricus bisporus* mushroom consumption on gut health markers" presented at Nutrition 2018, June meeting of the American Society for Nutrition. The "Impact of *Agaricus bisporus* mushroom consumption on gut health markers in healthy adults published in *Nutrients*, October.

Solano-Aguilar, Sonia, USDA Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Beltsville, MD. "The effect of dietary mushroom *Agaricus bisporus* on intestinal microbiota composition and host immunological function" presented at Nutrition 2018, June meeting of the American Society for Nutrition and published in *Nutrients*, November.

Xiaofen Du, Texas Women's University, Denton.

Received separate funding from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture to investigate the palatability, consumer acceptance and effect of a mushroom-egg white blend on satiety and blood glucose response. The Council is providing guidance for the implementation of this research.

Nutrition Promotion

The Council has built and maintains strong relationships with the nutrition community including media, retail and sports dietitians. Through strategic partnerships with this influential community, mushrooms have been positioned as a superfood source of powerful nutrients. As part of the nutrition promotion strategy, we partnered with key organizations to reach a wider audience and regularly updated the nutrition community through quarterly newsletters to more than 5,000 nutrition professionals.

American Society for Nutrition

In June 2018, the Council partnered with the Almond Board of California on an informative seminar that reviewed the latest evidence on health, nutrition and sustainability. Specifically, it looked at the considerations for the development of a scientific definition of sustainable nutritious eating patterns, the role of the private and public sectors in transforming the food system, and how to empower consumer behavior change to help build a healthier plate and planet. Speakers included:

- Marianne Smith Edge, MS, RD, LD, FADA (Chair)
- Timothy Griffin, PhD, Director, Agriculture Food and Environment Program, Tufts University
- Alissa Kendall, PhD, Agriculture Sustainability Institute, U.C. Davis
- Sam Kass, former White House Chef and Senior Policy Advisor for Nutrition; Founder, TROVE; Partner, Acre Venture Partners

Retail Dietitian Business Alliance

The Council had a multi-faceted partnership with the Retail Dietitian Business Alliance (RDBA). On the social/digital front, we brought "I'm a Blenditarian because..." to retail dietitians via a video contest that had them demoing The Blend and sharing their videos on their stores' social channels. Thousands of consumers were reached via eight videos from ShopRite, Fresh Thyme Farmers Market, Coburn's and HyVee.

In addition, to complement the work the Council did with the American Society for Nutrition on sustainable nutrition, we partnered again with Marianne Smith Edge, MS, RD, LD, FADA to bring "The Sustainable Shopper: How to Address Consumers' Growing Interest in Sustainability" to retail dietitians. More than 100 RDBA members registered for the webinar including representatives from Sobey's, Hannaford, Price Chopper, Festival Foods, Ahold, Weis Markets, Hy-Vee, Wakefern, Dave's Market Place and Martins Food Markets.



Collegiate & Professional Sports Dietitians Association

The Council partnered with the Collegiate & Professional Sports Dietitians Association (CPSDA) for the third year. We attended the CSPDA annual conference (May 22-24, 2018) where we sponsored a booth and demoed The Blend at the opening lunch. We have built and maintained relationships with hundreds of sports RDs through this strategic partnership.





Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE)

The Council planned and hosted a mushroom-centric cocktail reception at Jose Andres' ThinkFoodLab on October 22 during the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE).

This was the third year the Council has held a reception at the well-attended dietitian conference and more than 60 dietitians attended including Academy spokespeople and notable media RDs such as Ellie Krieger, Abbie Gellman and Susan Mitchell. FNCE continues to provide a great opportunity to network and maintain relationships with influential media RDs and senior-level retail dietitians.





manuel.villacorta Does he look like me?

Thanks for the caricature @themushroomcouncil and also

Thanks for the delicious food made with fresh mushrooms. #FNCE #dietitian @manuel.villacorta







Retail Program

Retail Marketing Program Book

The book is designed for sales and marketing personnel to share the information with their customer base.

It was developed for the industry to speak with a uniform voice to the retailers to help increase the sales of fresh mushrooms. It contains sales performance data of the fresh mushroom category at retail; insight into consumer shopping behavior; an overview of The Blend; Blended Burger Project™, media highlights from a variety of magazine; and other pertinent promotional information that is timely.

The book is designed so it can be customized to include each shipper's unique programs and messages. There aren't any page numbers and each page is one-sided. It was designed this way so that the information can be arranged in order of preferred presentation and pages can be omitted if they aren't relevant for a particular presentation. Additionally, blank template pages can be found at the end. These pages can be used for the shipper's logo and customized programs they may want to include.

The Marketing Program Book will be updated on a quarterly basis. The entire Book will be sent each quarter so that it is easier for the industry to have one comprehensive book each quarter. A "Special Tips" section may accompany each quarterly issue.

Southeast Produce Council's Southern Exposure 2018

In March, the Mushroom Council attended and hosted a booth at the three-day Southern Exposure 2018 event held by the Southeast Produce Council in Tampa, Florida. The Southern Exposure's "Where Produce is King" themed event included networking opportunities, innovative educational sessions and product sampling. To introduce attendees to The Blend, the Council worked with Aramark to develop and sample 70/30 Garlic Roasted Mushroom Meatballs at the Blenditarian booth. In addition, we distributed Blenditarian recipe cards to encourage attendees to try The Blend at home. The event brought together over 2,400 attendees, 270 exhibitors and 450 retail and foodservice attendees.

The Blend Retail Promotion with the Beef Checkoff

In 2018, the Mushroom Council partnered with the Beef Checkoff for the 4th annual veal summer grilling promotion. The Beef Checkoff and Mushroom Council's annual on-pack promotion encouraged home cooks to blend veal + mushrooms to create an entirely new flavor experience. This year's promotion included an active consumer component through the Mushroom Council's consumer blog posts, an e-blast to mushroom consumers, sharing through Pinterest boards and online YouTube cooking demonstrations. Support from the digital and social media campaign drove additional consumer awareness and sweepstakes entry at VealMadeEasy.com. In its fourth year, 1,800 stores participated in the on-pack promotion, nearly 200,000 consumers participated in the sweepstakes and more than 7,500 new fans opted-in to receive mushroom council e-newsletters.







IN ITS FOURTH YEAR

1,800 Stores Participted

in the on-pack promotion

Nearly

200,000

consumers particiated in the sweepstakes

The Mushroom Council increased our consumer mailing list by

7,500 NEW FANS

Consumer Media

MUSHROOM COUNCIL EARNS NATIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION

In 2018, the Mushroom Council continued to strengthen its relationships with national media through targeted outreach and media tours, earning over 2 billion media impressions.



The Mushroom Council visited two of the largest food studios in the country, the Meredith Food Studios in Birmingham and Des Moines. With the goal of bringing these national editors "inside a mushroom farm," the Council provided education around mushrooms' unique growing process, sustainability, nutrition and culinary versatility. Growers Dave Santucci and Gale Ferranto attended the media tour and brought authenticity and expertise. As a direct result of this media tour, we earned multi-page print spreads in *Midwest Living* and *Better Homes & Gardens* and built relationships with 40 media planting seeds for future mushrooms stories.





MUSHROOMS, THE 'IT" VEGETABLE OF 2019

Mushrooms once again topped trends lists, appearing in more than two dozen trends articles. Highlights include being named the New York Times "It" vegetable of the year and Pinterest naming mushrooms 2019's most trendy food due to searches for "mushroom recipes" being up 64 percent. Food & Wine, Food52, Eater, The Kitchn and others shared this Pinterest news.



Pinterest named mushrooms 2019'S MOST TRENDY FOOD

Other notable media highlights:

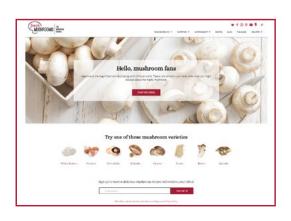
- Over 2 billion total media impressions
- Top national placements include The New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, Forbes, Fast Company, USA Today, National Public Radio, Mic, Martha Stewart, Huffington Post and Time.
- Earned 151 foodservice, retail and produce industry trade articles in publications such as QSR Magazine, FreshPlaza, The Packer, Foodservice Director, Produce News, Restaurant Business, Nation's Restaurant News, Food Navigator, Meat + Poultry, Progressive Grocer, Produce Retailer and Perishable News.

Consumer Public Relations Program

Social/Digital Activities Increase Consumer Exposure to Mushrooms and The Blend

On the social/digital front, the Mushroom Council reached consumers through seasonal campaigns, recipe contests, influential partnerships and a new consumer website.

The Mushroom Council kicked-off 2018 with an all-new consumer website at **MushroomCouncil.com**, showcasing mushrooms' diverse health, culinary and environmental benefits. The new website features a modern design, details on the most popular varieties, new recipes and how-to videos.



The Blend Enters Home Kitchens across America

The #BlenditarianChallenge

This year, more than ever, the Mushroom Council challenged consumers to make The Blend in their own homes. In 2018, the Mushroom Council presented the first-ever "Blenditarian Challenge," a monthly sweepstakes asking consumers to share on social their take on a timely, seasonal blend recipe while using the #BlenditarianChallenge hashtag. The Mushroom Council estimates The Blenditarian Challenge reached more than 500,000 users throughout the year, with participants entering more than 400 original blended recipe photo posts.







70% said they are likely to **TRY THE BLEND AGAIN**

A Blue Apron Debuts Blended Burger

Another way the Mushroom Council brought The Blend to home kitchens was through a partnership with Blue Apron to create a Beef and Mushroom Blended Burger meal kit. The blended burger meal kit was delivered to 300,000 U.S. homes and earned 10 million media impressions in publications including Mic ("The Blended Burger Could Replace the Classic American Hamburger"), Fresh Plaza ("Blended burgers working their way into meal kits") and The Packer (Blue Apron Debuts Blended Burger). The burger received rave reviews and survey results indicated that 70% said

they were likely to try The Blend again after the meal kit experience.

Influencers



The Mushroom Council also expanded its reach to consumers through an Ambassador program and partnerships with key influencers. The year-long "I'm a Blenditarian Because..." campaign asked industry, foodie and health Ambassadors to share why, and how, they blend finely chopped mushrooms with meat through original videos, recipes, social posts and images. Monthly Ambassadors included **Melissa d'Arabian** (celebrity chef and TV host), **Kris Moon** (James Beard Foundation), **Dayle Hayes** (School Meals that Rock), and **Gaby Dalkin** (chef and blogger at WhatsGabyCooking.com).

Additional social media influencers shared 46 pieces of original content (blog posts and videos) that received 5,904 social shares and 50,000+ engagements.







Gaby Dalkin Chef, author, and blogger at WhatsGabyCooking.com



Chef Amir Hajimaleki, Oasthouse Kitchen + Bar and District Kitchen + Cocktails

Key 2018 social/digital campaigns included Setting Healthy Resolutions with Mushrooms (January), "Green" recipes and tips (April), Back to School (August), Bowls for National Mushroom Month (September) and Holiday dishes (December).

The introduction and adoption of #blenditarian gained traction in 2018:



Social media posts with hashtag

+232%



Users posting with hashtag

+249%



Engagements with hashtagged posts

+66%



Reach of hashtagged posts

+1,426%



Hashtag Impressions

+1,998%

Foodservice Program

The Blend again took center stage in foodservice and accelerated penetration of key targeted market segments as set out in the 5-Year Blend Adoption Plan.

SONIC BOOM

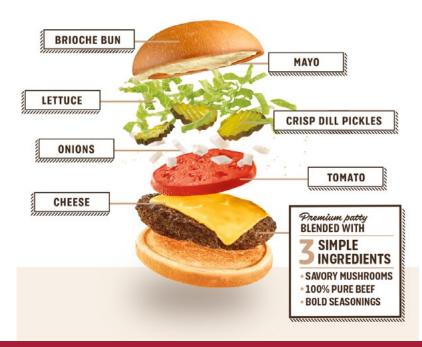
SONIC Drive-In, one of the top five burger quick service restaurants (QSR), went all in this year with the Slinger, their version of a blended burger. Coming in at 340 calories, the burger won taste tests against other QSR burgers. It was promoted as a "Premium Patty Blended with Three Simple Ingredients: 100% Pure Beef, Savory Mushrooms, Bold Seasonings," and was so successful in its spring debut that it made a comeback in the fall due to its rave reviews and popularity.

Scott Uehlein, SONIC's Vice President of Product Innovation and Development, talked about the success of the Slinger on CNBC and was also named one of the top 50 Food Influencers by Nation's Restaurant News. The Slinger itself was honored with a **Menu Master Award for Best LTO 2018** by NRN.

The Mushroom Council partnered with Buzzfeed and SONIC to show fans how to "hack" the Slinger in a video that was viewed more than **3 million times**. The Council also expanded coverage of the Slinger in national media efforts. Top media coverage included NPR's The Salt, Fast Company and The Packer. While most articles focused on the innovation of the Slinger in the QSR sector, some articles noted the environmental advantages of blended burgers.

"Since its release earlier this year, the Sonic Signature Slinger has received overwhelmingly positive reception from Sonic fans, many of them sharing that the Slinger is perfectly-sized and one of the best-tasting burgers around. The Slinger is something new, but accessible, and a delicious guilt-free option for a snack or entrée. It performed so well that we brought it back for the fall."

- Scott Uehlein, Vice President of Product Innovation and Development



The Blend On Campus

The Council showcased The Blend and the use of fresh mushrooms in plant-forward diets at a variety of university forums and the Council presented the benefits of The Blend at the National Association of College and University Food Service's national conference, UMASS Culinary Conference, FoodService Directors' Advisory Board, ChefNet for West Coast University Chefs and Menu Directions in a joint presentation with Sodexo. The Council also participated and presented at the Culinary Institute of America's (CIA) Flavor Quality Summit and Appetites and Innovation.

While many new universities adopted The Blend on campus, Princeton University was the top of the class. The university adopted what they are calling their 'Crafted Burger' and even referenced it in their Campus Vision for the Future of Dining - it states, "This year we introduced our Crafted Burger—an exclusive blend of grass-fed beef and local mushrooms (Kennett Square area) that supports our commitment to sustainability and wellness without sacrificing taste. Portabella mushrooms provide a juicy texture and tread lightly on our environment, requiring only 1.8 gallons of water to yield one pound..."









350Restaurants



250,000 Consumer Votes



JPrestegious
Judges



Simple
Ingredient

Five "Bearded" Chefs

In October, chefs from the five winning restaurants in the James Beard Foundation's 4th Annual Blended Burger Project™ competition presented their burgers to more than 75 media, foodies and culinary influencers at a special celebration in New York's prestigious James Beard House.

Restaurants nationwide participated in the summer-long initiative, which featured esteemed high-end eateries, casual diners, prominent hotel chains like Omni and Hilton and business operations including Pinterest and Twitter. Top Chef and Iron Chef Stephanie Izard, Girl and the Goat restaurant, served as the spokesperson for the two-month promotion.

From Memorial Day through July 31, customers voted more than 250,000 times for their favorite burgers. In August, a panel of judges – Andrew Zimmern, James Beard Award-winning TV personality; Susan Westmoreland, Culinary Director, Good Housekeeping; and Antoinette Bruno, Editor-in-Chief, StarChefs – reviewed the 20 burgers which received the most votes to determine this year's five winners.

The winning restaurants and their chefs are:

The Bearded Chef, Palm Bay, FL. The "Thai My-Shroom" Mushrooms blended with beef, pork, ginger, lemongrass, cilantro, and chili, topped with spicy Thai ketchup, pickled enoki mayo, smoked Maitake bacon on a toasted mushroom dusted brioche bun.

Burgh'ers Restaurant, Pittsburgh, PA. The "Fox Chapel"

A blend of local beef and roasted mixed mushrooms topped with goat cheese, pickled red onion, avocado, spring mix and a balsamic glaze.

Courtyard Cafe at Raymond James, St. Petersburg, FL. The "Smokey Mushroom Venison Blended Burger"

A blend of venison, angus beef and maitake mushrooms, chargrilled and seasoned with smoked sea salt and porcini mushroom powder, on a pretzel roll with beet ketchup, smoked cheddar and ramp béarnaise.

Curb Side Bistro, Odessa, TX. The Drunken Texan

A blend of ground beef, shiitake, white and portabella mushrooms, topped with pulled pork, tangy BBQ sauce, a jalapeno and mushroom corn fritter, cilantro ranch, pickled red onions and a mushroom white queso cheese sauce.

Toltec Brewing, Albuquerque, NM. "The Royale"

Brisket and roasted crimini patty topped with aged white cheddar, New Mexico green chile, herb and ancho mayo, applewood bacon, local fried egg, heirloom tomato on a jalapeno brioche bun.





Game On!

This year, blended burger competitions broke out all over the country. Culinary Fight Club, a national organization that hosts live cooking competitions, held blended burger cook-offs in nine cities.

StarChefs, a leading online resource for restaurant professionals, featured a blended burger battle at its International Chefs Congress, an industry-only symposium featuring the world's preeminent culinary talent.

Five chefs including Jennifer Cox (Levy), Jason Dady (Jason Dady Restaurants), Elizabeth Falkner (Falk Yeah!), Richard Rosendale (Roots 657) and Jehangir Mehta (Graffiti Earth) competed with their blended burgers, with judges from the James Beard House, "The Burger Show,", Sonic, Parcel 32 and Porter House picking the top burgers.





Jehangir Mehta

Graffiti Earth, New York, NY Angus Beef and Portabella blended burger with turmeric, jalapeños, tomato with a green curry sauce.



Richard Rosendale

Roots 657, Leeburg, VA Lamb-maitake blended burger with shiitake, black bean sauce with garlic, Hayarti and furikake.



Jason Dady

Jason Dady Restaurants
San Antonio, TX
Beef-crimini blended burger
with ponzu marinated
tomato, char-glazed onions,
Emmentaler and nori aioli.



Jennifer Cox

Levy Restaurants, Chicago, IL Peking Duck blended burger with duck-crimini-oystershiitake blend, Kikkoman teriyaki mayo, Asian slaw and wild blueberry-hoisin ketchup.



School Nutrition Program

We have been very pleased to partner with some major districts who pioneered the back of the house blending of IQF USDA mushrooms, most of whom also have long utilized fresh mushrooms in their operations.

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District, Texas uses 200 lbs of fresh mushrooms per week and 900 lbs of USDA IQF mushrooms per week. Orange County School District, Orlando, enrolls 176,000 students (#10 in enrollment nationally), uses local Florida mushrooms in their Pot Roast, Salisbury steak and as a Salisbury Steak Burger.

Mushrooms in Schools Fresh and IQF































School Year 2017/18

Total Servings: 24,169,171

Share: 0.4384% total school lunch based on 5 billion servings/year

Total Pounds of

Mushrooms: 1,347,293 Fresh Pounds: 600,000 Frozen Pounds: 747,293

School Year 2018/19

Total Servings: 30,069,171

Share: 0.6014% total school lunch

based on 5 billion servings/year

Total Pounds of

Mushrooms: 1,797,293 Fresh Pounds: 750,000 Frozen Pounds: 1,047,293

Mushrooms in Schools at United Fresh

Chicago, IL, June 2018

Promoted fresh mushrooms and blended mushroom products to School Nutrition leaders from large and small districts including:

- Los Angeles (CA)
- Miami-Dade (FL)
- Bibb County (GA)
- West Ada (ID)
- Chicago (IL)
- Minneapolis (MN)
- Londonderry (NH)

- Cincinnati (OH)
- Philadelphia (PA)
- Austin (TX)
- Dallas (TX)
- Houston (TX)
- Alexandria (VA)
- and Fairfax (VA)





















School Nutrition Association Annual Nutrition Conference

Las Vegas, NV, July 2018

Culinary specialist Malissa Marsden promoted bright ideas for IQF mushrooms, and other USDA Foods, in pre-conference and educational sessions - Creative recipes using USDA foods, like Peppy Pasta Salad with Mushrooms. Exhibit hall booth promotes fresh and IQF mushrooms to thousands of food show attendees.

CIA Healthy Kids Collaborative

Napa, CA, November 2018

Promoted fresh mushrooms and The Blend to School Nutrition chefs and other industry leaders. Attendees created recipes using fresh and IQF mushrooms, enjoyed mushrooms prepared by CIA staff, for afternoon break, and explored a "Veggies on Fire" demo, with Chef Juan, from San Diego Unified School District

Independent Auditors Report



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Governing Body Mushroom Council Redwood City, CA 94065

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities and the general fund of Mushroom Council, an instrumentality of the United States Department of Agriculture, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2018, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise Mushroom Council's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statement

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express opinions on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Opinions

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, and the general fund of Mushroom Council, as of December 31, 2018, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matters

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the required supplementary information, such as management's discussion and analysis and budgetary comparison information on pages 4-6, and 19 be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Other Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise Mushroom Council's basic financial statements. The Schedules of General and Administrative Expenses – Budget and Actual, the Schedule of Program Expenses – Budget and Actual, and the Schedule of Cash Receipts and Disbursements are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements.

The Supplementary Information listed in the table of contents is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the Supplementary Information is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Report on Summarized Comparative Information

We have previously audited Mushroom Council's 2017 financial statements, and we expressed an unmodified opinion on those audited financial statements in our report dated April 30, 2018. In our opinion, the summarized comparative information presented herein as of and for the year ended December 31, 2017 is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements from which it has been derived.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued our report dated April 16, 2019, on our consideration of Mushroom Council's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Mushroom Council's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering Mushroom Council's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Tenney and Company April 16, 2019

MUSHROOM COUNCIL STATEMENTS OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION

For The Year Ended December 31, 2018 (With Comparative Information for December 31, 2017)

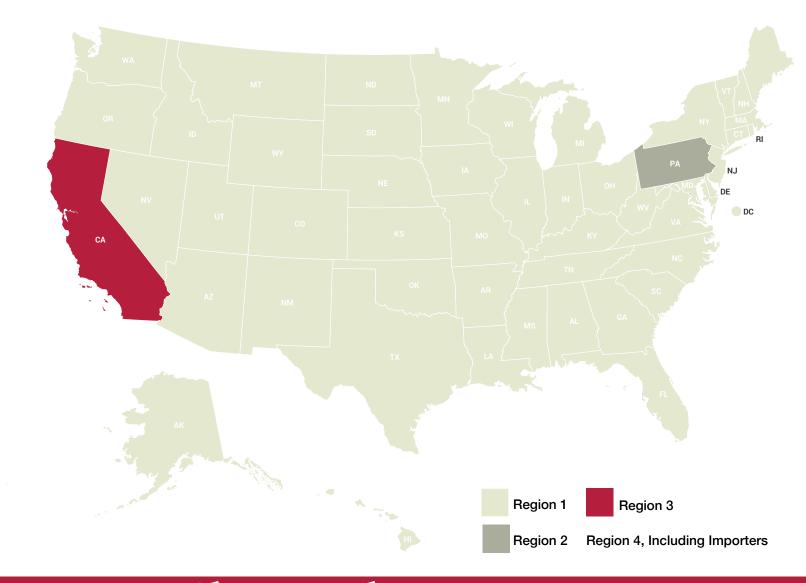
REVENUES:		2018	2017
Assessments:			
Domestic	\$	4,310,285 \$	4,206,967
Imports		823,278	745,286
Other income and interest	_	25,040	15,733
Total Revenues	_	5,158,603	4,967,986
EXPENDITURES:			
Administrative expenditures		318,528	263,774
Government and professional services -			
including compliance inspections		174,215	184,540
Research and information expenditures	_	4,878,454	4,728,137
Total Expenditures		5,371,197	5,176,451
Excess of Expenditures over Revenues		(212,594)	(208,465)
NET POSITION - Beginning of year	-	1,284,575	1,493,039
NET POSITION - End of year	\$_	1,071,981 \$	1,284,574

MUSHROOM COUNCIL STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

For The Year Ended December 31, 2018

(With Comparative Information for December 31, 2017)

		2018	2017
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			
Excess of expenditures over revenues	\$	(212,594) \$	(208,465)
Adjustments to reconcile net income to net cash provided by operating activities:			
Depreciation expense		2,013	2,387
Loss (gain) on disposal of capital assets			951
(Increase) decrease in:			
Accounts receivable		(86,967)	40,675
Allowance for uncollectible receivables		69,186	
Bad debt		55,278	-
Prepaid expenses		(2,665)	(50)
Increase (decrease) in:			
Accounts payable		(41,739)	131,283
Accrued wages and payroll taxes		2,245	3,052
Net Cash Used by Operating Activities		(215,243)	(30,167)
NET CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:			
Cash paid for acquisition of capital assets		H1	-
Net Cash Used by Financing Activities	<u></u>	-	
Net Decrease in Cash		(215,243)	(30,167)
CASH - beginning of year	_	1,411,157	1,441,324
CASH - end of year	s _	1,195,914 \$	1,411,157



Council Members

YEAR	REGION	COUNCIL MEMBER	POSITION
	1	Michael Stephanr	Treasurer
	1	Curtis Jurgensmeyer	
	2	Bob Besix	
	2	Joe Caldwell	
2018	2	Sonya Beltran	Secretary
	2	Gale Ferranto	Chair
	3	Robert Murphy	Vice Chair
	3	Fred Fitz, Jr.	
	4	Jane Rhyno	
	1	Pat Jurgensmeyer	Chair
	1	Michael Stephan	
	2	Bob Besix	
	2	Dave Carroll	
2017	2	Sonya Beltran	
	2	Gale Ferranto	Vice Chair
	3	Robert Murphy	Treasurer
	3	Fred Fitz, Jr.	
	4	Elizabeth O'Neil Meuregh	Secretary

YEAR	REGION	COUNCIL MEMBER	POSITION
2016	1 1 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 3	Pat Jurgensmeyer Michael Stephan Bob Besix Dave Carroll Sonya Beltran Gale Ferranto Robert Murphy Fred Fitz, Jr. Elizabeth O'Neil Meuregh	Chair Vice Chair Treasurer Secretary
2015	2 1 4 1 2 2 2 2 3 3	Tony D'Amico Pat Jurgensmeyer Elizabeth O'Neil Meuregh Michael Stephan Dave Carroll Jim Angelucci Gale Ferranto Robert Murphy	Chair Vice Chair Secretary Treasurer
2014	2 2 1 4 3 2 2 1 3	Tony D'Amico Dave Carroll Pat Jurgensmeyer Elizabeth O'Neil Roberto Ramirez Jim Angelucci Gale Ferranto Charles Bosi Robert Murphy	Chair Vice Chair Secretary Treasurer
2013	3 2 1 2 1 4 3 2 2	Joe Caldwell Tony D'Amico Fletcher Street Dave Carroll Pat Jurgensmeyer Elizabeth O'Neil Roberto Ramirez Jim Angelucci Gale Ferranto	Vice Chair Chair Treasurer Secretary
2012	2 2 3 3 2 1 2 1 4	Jim Angelucci Jim Howard Roberto Ramirez Joe Caldwell Tony D'Amico Fletcher Street Dave Carroll Pat Jurgensmeyer Elizabeth O'Neil	Chair Treasurer Vice Chair Secretary
2011	2 2 1 2 4 3 3 2 1	Greg Sagan Jim Angelucci Greg McLain Jim Howard Hank Vander Pol Roberto Ramirez Joe Caldwell Tony D'Amico Fletcher Street	Secretary Chair Treasurer Vice Chair

YEAR	REGION	COUNCIL MEMBER	POSITION
2010	2 2 1 2 4 3	Greg Sagan Jim Angelucci Greg McLain Jim Howard Hank Vander Pol Roberto Ramirez	Chair Secretary
	3 2 1	Joe Caldwell Kathleen Lafferty Fletcher Street	Vice Chair Treasurer
2009	2 1 1 2 4 3	Greg Sagan Virgil Jurgensmeyer Greg McLain Paul Frederic Hank Vander Pol Robert Crouch	Chair Secretary
	3 2 1	Joe Caldwell Kathleen Lafferty Fletcher Street	Vice Chair Treasurer
	2 1 1 2	Carla Blackwell-McKinney Virgil Jurgensmeyer Greg McLain Paul Frederic	Chair Vice Chair
2008	5 3 3 2 1	Hank Vander Pol Robert Crouch Joe Caldwell Kathleen Lafferty Fletcher Street	Secretary Treasurer
2007	2 4 4 2 3 1 2 5	Carla Blackwell-McKinney Curtis Jurgensmeyer Greg McLain Lynn James Angelucci Charlee Kelly Lynn Mortensen Paul Frederic Hank Vander Pol Robert Crouch	Vice Chair Chair Treasurer Secretary
2006	2 4 4 2 3 1 2 5	Carla Blackwell-McKinney Curtis Jurgensmeyer Greg McLain James Angelucci Charlee Kelly Lynn Mortensen Michael Pratola Hank Vander Pol	Vice Chair Chair Treasurer
	3 2 4 4	Robert Crouch Carla Blackwell-McKinney Curtis Jurgensmeyer Darrell McLain	Secretary Treasurer Vice Chair
2005	2 3 1 2 5 3	James Angelucci Charlee Kelly Vacant Michael Pratola Murray O'Neil Robert Crouch	Chair Secretary

YEAR	REGION	COUNCIL MEMBER	POSITION
	2	Carla Blackwell-McKinney	Treasurer
	4	Curtis Jurgensmeyer	Secretary
	4	Darrell McLain	
	2	James Angelucci	Chair
2004	3	John Davids	Vice Chair
	1	Lisa Hemker	
	2	Michael Pratola	
	5	Murray O'Neil	
	3	Robert Crouch	
	3	Carl Fields	Vice Chair
	2	Carla Blackwell-McKinney	Treasurer
	4	Curtis Jurgensmeyer	Secretary
	2	Dan Lucovich	
2003	4	Darrell McLain	
	2	James Angelucci	Chair
	3	John Davids	
	5	Murray O'Neil	
	1	Wilhelm Meya	
	3	Carl Fields	
	2	Chris Alonzo	
	2	Dan Lucovich	Vice Chair
	4	Darrell McLain	Treasurer
2002	1	Greg Sagan	
	2	James Angelucci	
	3	John Davids	Chair
	3	Robert Crouch	
	1	Wilhelm Meya	
	2	Charles Brosius	Chair
	3	Carl Fields	
	2	Chris Alonzo	Secretary
	2	Dan Lucovich	
2001	4	Darrell McLain	Treasurer
	1	Greg Sagan	
	3	John Davids	Vice Chair
	3	Robert Crouch	
	1	Wilhelm Meya	
	2	Charles Brosius	Chair
	2	Chris Alonzo	Secretary
	3	Clark Smith	
	4	Darrell McLain	
2000	2	James Angelucci	
	3	John Davids	Vice Chair
	3	Shah Kazemi	Treasurer
	1	Greg Sagan	
	1	Vacant	

YEAR	REGION	COUNCIL MEMBER	POSITION
1999	2 2 1 2 1 3 3 4	Charles Brosius Edward Leo Jack Reitnauer James Angelucci James Howard John Davids Shah Kazemi Virgil Jurgensmeyer	Chair Vice Chair Secretary
1998	3 3 2 1 2 1 2 3 4 3	William Street, Sr. Douglas Tanner Edward Leo Jack Reitnauer James Angelucci James Howard Roger Claypoole Shah Kazemi Virgil Jurgensmeyer William Street, Sr.	Treasurer Chair Vice Chair Secretary Treasurer
1997	3 2 2 1 2 3 4 1 3	Douglas Tanner Edward Leo James Angelucci Robert Miller Roger Claypoole Shah Kazemi Virgil Jurgensmeyer Wilhelm Meya William Street, Sr.	Vice Chair Chair Secretary Treasurer
1996	3 2 2 3 1 2 3 4 1	Douglas Tanner James Angelucci James Ciarrochi John Haltom Robert Miller Roger Claypoole Shah Kazemi Virgil Jurgensmeyer Wilhelm Meya	Secretary Vice Chair Treasurer Chair
1995	3 2 2 2 2 3 1 3 4	Douglas Tanner Edward Leo James Angelucci James Ciarrocchi John Haltom Robert Miller Shah Kazemi Virgil Jurgensmeyer Wilhelm Meya	Secretary Treasurer Chair Vice Chair
1994	3 2 2 3 2 1 4 1 3	Douglas Tanner Edward Leo James Ciarrocchi John Haltom Michael Pia Robert Miller Virgil Jurgensmeyer Wilhelm Meya William Street, Sr.	Secretary Treasurer Chair Vice Chair

YEAR	REGION	COUNCIL MEMBER	POSITION
	3	Douglas Tanner	
	2	Edward Leo	Secretary
	2	James Ciarrocchi	
	3	John Haltom	Treasurer
1993	2	Michael Pia	
	1	Robert Miller	Chair
	4	Virgil Jurgensmeyer	Vice Chair
	1	Wilhelm Meya	
	3	William Street, Sr.	



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