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Contact: Jon B. Hurst, President
617-523-1900 ext. 12 Office
jhurst@retailersma.org

***RETAILERS ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS ANNOUNCES 2016 “RAMAE”
WINNERS AT 19TH ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY***

Six Outstanding Retailers Recognized

NEWTON, MA – At a luncheon event to be held today at the Boston Newton Marriott, the Retailers Association of Massachusetts (RAM) hosted its 19th annual Retailer’s Association of Massachusetts Awards of Excellence (RAMAEs) ceremony.

“In this rapidly evolving marketplace with technology further empowering consumers, our Main Street businesses must work ever harder to deliver the unique and high quality products and service which set them apart,” said Jon Hurst, President of the Retailers Association of Massachusetts. “We created the RAMAE’s 19 years ago as a way to shine a light on the hidden jewels of the retail industry here in Massachusetts. It is vital to recognize those innovators that are doing it the right way for their customers, and to also use them as beacons for others to follow. Our 2016 winners are leading the way in our industry in these increasingly challenging times,” added Hurst.

This year’s top award, Retailer of the Year, was awarded to Marathon Sports, headquartered in Boston with locations across the state. “We are incredibly honored to be named Massachusetts Retailer of the Year,” said Colin Peddie, owner of Marathon Sports. “Marathon Sports is proud to remain locally owned and operated in a rapidly changing retail landscape, and our commitment to enriching the communities surrounding our stores is and always has been a top priority for us. We look forward to what the future holds for us and will continue to provide our unparalleled customer experience to runners, walkers, and active people across the Bay State.”

Awards were distributed in the following categories: Advertising and Promotion; Creative Concepts; Retail Innovator of the Year; Restaurant of the Year; Retailer of the Year and Retail Hall of Fame.

2016 RAMAE Winners:

Retailer of the Year: Marathon Sports (Boston)

Locally owned and operated since 1975, Marathon Sports is the premiere destination for all things running, walking, and fitness. With 11 locations in eastern and central Massachusetts,

Marathon Sports is an active person's hub, offering a place where individuals can come for *so much more* than just a simple retail interaction. In a changing retail landscape, Marathon Sports provides unparalleled customer service and product expertise to everyone, from the individual just trying to get up and off the couch, to the veteran marathoner. Marathon Sports has steadily grown from a single-location running store to a 16-time "Best of Boston" Running Specialty Shop that has been consistently recognized as one of the top running stores in the country. Marathon Sports takes immense pride in what it does each and every day.

Advertising and Promotion: Cape Cod Coffee (Mashpee)

Cape Cod Coffee was founded in 1970 as a family owned and operated coffee business. Today, Cape Cod Coffee continues the family tradition by providing the finest quality coffees and best personal service. Cape Cod Coffee buys beans from 14+ countries and meticulously roasts its coffee beans to ensure full control over the flavor profile of each type of bean. Cape Cod Coffee provides wholesale coffee to restaurants, resorts, retail stores, hotels/inns, offices and enterprises. It also serves the general public from its coffee roasting facility/retail store in Mashpee, MA. In addition, Cape Cod Coffee has been involved in raising \$1M+ for local charities and actively supports many community events, including the Boston Marathon, Seaside Le Mans, Cranberry Festival, Scallop Fest, Cape Abilities, Paw Palooza, among others.

From the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, which nominated Cape Cod Coffee: "The Cape Cod-based company has doubled its accounts from last year to this year. From attending hundreds of events and meeting with so many businesses, their future has grown. For example they provided coffee to all of the state legislators at MA Tourism Day, provided coffee and donuts at the Boston Marathon, provided a free coffee pod to Cape Cod Chamber members and just recently provided free coffee to the state legislators Tourism, Arts and Cultural development committee at Highfield Hall."

Retail Innovator of the Year: Direct Tire and Auto Service (Watertown)

In its 41 years in business, Direct Tire and Auto Service has learned the importance of building and maintaining trust in the auto repair industry. About 18 months ago the company started using *Get Transparency* to send its clients videos of the inspection process of their vehicle, which its technicians do as part of their multi-point inspection.

The WOW factor has been amazing and it helps clients understand what repair is required and why. The trust factor is now not an issue and clients feel they are able to make an educated decision and be part of that process. The technology allows Direct Tire and Auto Service to communicate with clients either on the phone, by e-mail or texting and it saves everyone a great deal of time and money. Through its own experience, Direct Tire and Auto Service believes the *Get Transparency* product can make a great deal of difference for any number of different types of retail businesses.

Creative Concepts: The Castle (Beverly)

Founded December 2015, The Castle: A Board Game Cafe is the first board game cafe to grace the North Shore. By making coffee, sandwiches, snacks, beer, wine, and a library of over 500 unique board games available to customers, The Castle was created as a place for friends and family to spend an afternoon or evening playing games with each other. The game library is

the pride of the cafe, and staff does everything from personally teaching games to organizing gaming tournaments to introduce as many people as they can to the world of board games.

Restaurant of the Year: One Eleven Chop House (Worcester)

One Eleven Chop House offers elegant dining in a setting that resembles a classic New York or Chicago style steakhouse. Designed by renowned restaurant architect Peter Niemitz, the decor is sophisticated and timeless. The rich wood paneling, open kitchen, exposed wine rooms, white-coated wait staff and oversized, antique art-nouveau posters combine to inform diners that they have stepped into a truly incredible steakhouse.

At One Eleven, all cuts of meat are either certified prime grade or hand select choice. Guests can choose a traditional steak, cooked just right, such as a 12 ounce filet mignon, a 16 ounce boneless rib-eye steak, or a 20 ounce sirloin. For those feeling more adventurous, choices include "surf and turf," featuring a petite filet and scallop-stuffed super jumbo shrimp or the Wagyu flat-iron steak or the 40 ounce Wagyu Ribeye for two, veal chop, lamb shank or lamb chops. Top-quality, locally-sourced seafood is also offered, including thick-cut swordfish steaks, native Atlantic salmon, scallops and haddock.

Wine is an important part of the One Eleven dining experience. Its wine line is extensive and well-regarded, having earned *Wine Spectator's* prestigious "Award of Excellence" every year since 2001.

Retail Hall of Fame: Pemberton Farms (Cambridge)

From the time he opened his fruit and vegetable shop in 1930, Granddad Tofic Saidnaway packed every order with only premium-quality fruit. And, he gave his customers far better service than they were used to receiving.

Today, more than 86 years and soon to be four generations later, Pemberton Farms still maintains Granddad's unmatched levels of product quality and customer service. Granddad's fruit and vegetable shop has evolved into today's Pemberton Marketplace – a unique combination of specialty grocery store, full liquor, prepared foods, garden center and premium gift business. Currently located just up the street from the original store, Pemberton Marketplace proudly serves the local community and maintains the standards of quality and service from generations past.

Even though the business has old-fashioned values about quality and service, it embraces progress and is mindful of the future. Pemberton Farms is excited to offer natural, organic and locally sourced products as well as foods that help customers with special diets – gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, nut-free – and provides an array of products for people who are concerned about our planet – organic, sustainable, GMO-free, fair trade.

Whether you stop in for some groceries, a bottle of wine or new plants for your garden, Pemberton Farms is there to help and is proud to be a friend and neighbor in the community.

About RAM

The Retailers Association of Massachusetts is a statewide trade association of 4,000 retailers and restaurants of all types and sizes. The retail sector in Massachusetts employs 600,000 residents, or 17% of all jobs, and has total sales of over \$100 billion annually.

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