

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Longo's President Deb Craven Named Distinguished Canadian Retailer of the Year by Retail Council of Canada**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TORONTO**, May 12, 2026: Retail Council of Canada (RCC) proudly announces Deb Craven, President, Longo's, as the recipient of the [Distinguished Canadian Retailer of the Year Award](#).

This prestigious award recognizes a retail leader who has demonstrated outstanding business success, innovation, community commitment, and exceptional leadership within their corporation, the retail industry in Canada, and the community at large.

Deb Craven's career spans some of Canada's most respected organizations. Before joining Longo's in 2019 as Chief Financial Officer, she held senior financial leadership roles at Purolator, Nike, and Canadian Tire, developing deep expertise in logistics, retail operations, and brand.

At Longo's, Craven quickly distinguished herself. She moved from CFO to Chief Operating Officer, and in May 2023 became President, the first woman and first non-Longo family member to hold the role. It is a distinction grounded in hard work, intellectual curiosity, and the confidence to speak her mind with strong humility. Under her leadership, Longo's has delivered exceptional growth, from new store openings, a doubling of its distribution centre, the successful transition of Grocery Gateway guests to the Voilà platform, and the continued deepening of its partnership with Empire. Craven has steered all of it while keeping the company's mission firmly at the centre and an unwavering commitment to the teams who make it possible.

"Deb Craven is the kind of leader who makes everyone around her better," said Kim Furlong, President & CEO of Retail Council of Canada. "She brought financial leadership and operational excellence to Longo's at a pivotal moment in the company's history, and she has led it through a period of remarkable growth. Her

commitment to her team, her community, and the customers she serves is exceptional. We are proud to recognize her with this award.”

Craven’s impact extends well beyond the store floor. She has served on the boards of The Learning Partnership, Sagesse, and Kids Help Phone, and is currently a board member of The Grocery Foundation. She was also recognized with a Star Women in Grocery award in 2021.

The Distinguished Canadian Retailer of the Year award will be presented to Deb Craven at Retail Council of Canada’s [Excellence in Retailing Awards Gala](#) on June 2, at the Toronto Congress. Media are invited to attend this prestigious event celebrating Deb Craven and other esteemed award recipients.

The Excellence in Retailing Awards Gala will cap off the first day of [RCCSTORE26](#), Canada’s premier retail conference. Taking place June 2-3, 2026, RCCSTORE26 will feature 75+ expert speakers and draw retail leaders from across North America and beyond.

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### **About the Excellence in Retailing Awards**

The Excellence in Retailing Awards are presented annually by Retail Council of Canada to honour outstanding performance and innovation across the Canadian retail industry. The Distinguished Canadian Retailer of the Year Award recognizes a retail leader that has led their company to outstanding business success and innovation and that has consistently demonstrated community commitment and support. Past recipients include Dr. George Soleas of LCBO, Greg Hicks of Canadian Tire Corporation Ltd., Paul Wood of Giant Tiger and many more. For more information, visit [retailawards.ca](#).

### **About Retail Council of Canada**

Retail is Canada’s largest private-sector employer with over 2.3 million Canadians working in our industry. This sector is a major economic contributor, generating more than \$101 billion annually in wages and employee benefits. In 2025, core retail sales (excluding vehicles and gasoline) exceeded \$532 billion. Retail Council of Canada (RCC) members account for more than two thirds of these core retail sales and 95 per cent of the grocery market. Our membership extends across the country, embracing over 65,000 storefronts in diverse formats such as department, grocery, specialty, discount, independent retailers, online merchants, and quick service restaurants. As the Voice of Retail™ in Canada, RCC, a not-for-profit, industry-funded association, proudly represents retail businesses of all sizes, from small independents to large national chains, in communities nationwide. [retailcouncil.org](#).

### **Contact**

Santo Ligotti, VP Marketing & Membership  
(416) 274-2956  
[sligotti@retailcouncil.org](mailto:sligotti@retailcouncil.org)