



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Yesway Redefines Convenience Store Marketing**

*Fast Growing Chain Welcomes Industry Veterans to its Senior Management Team*

**(Des Moines, IA) – June 20, 2018** – [Yesway](#), the fast growing and innovative convenience store chain, welcomes Derek Gaskins as Senior Vice President of Merchandising and Procurement and Jeff Keune as Senior Vice President of Food Service and Innovation to its senior management team. With the addition of these two industry experts, collaboratively assuming and elevating the traditional Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) role, Yesway aims to redefine convenience store marketing as it continues to drive customer service excellence.

“We have spent the past seven years studying industry best practices and given the challenges with and changes to convenience store retailing, we believe that a new approach to convenience store marketing is needed to compete effectively in today’s increasingly competitive market,” stated Thomas Nicholas Trkla, Yesway’s Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. “We hired Derek and Jeff because of their tremendous experience, creativity, and track record of successful inventive marketing. The traditional CMO role has changed markedly over the past several decades with tremendous advances in technology, changing consumer behaviors, and the changing nature of how convenience stores serve the communities in which they operate. We believe that greater, more focused attention should be given to the three primary pillars of marketing - strong brand management, creative and attractive food service, and relevant and customer-focused merchandising – and that each of these pillars merits dedicated management attention and deliberate implementation.”

With this new structure, both Jeff Keune and Derek Gaskins, along with Darrin Samaha, Yesway’s head of Brand Management, Tony Sparks, Vice President of Merchandising, and Frank White, Director of Food Service, will have the increased freedom and flexibility to ideate, innovate, and execute in their respective roles as the firm continues to grow and improve its brand. “I am confident that with their collective years of experience and depth and breadth of industry knowledge, they, working with the rest of our exceptional management team, will continue to improve our operations and performance, and help us become the exceptional convenience store retailer we aspire to be,” added Mr. Trkla.

As Senior Vice President of Merchandising and Procurement, Derek Gaskins brings a wealth of experience and industry knowledge to this newly created role. In addition to directing all merchandising and procurement efforts, he is responsible for developing relationships with Yesway's vendors as well as working with Jeff Keune and Darrin Samaha to further cultivate the growth and stewardship of the Yesway brand. He most recently served as Chief Customer Officer for Rutter's Farm Stores & Dairy. Prior to Rutter's, Mr. Gaskins served as Senior Vice President in Marketing & Merchandising with Mid-Atlantic Convenience Stores and as Vice President of Marketing with NACS - The Association for Convenience & Fuel Retailing. Mr. Gaskins holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Iowa and an MBA in Finance, Marketing, and Real Estate from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

In his role as Senior Vice President of Food Service and Innovation, Jeff Keune is responsible for expanding Yesway's food service and dispensed beverage offerings. He oversees strategic research and planning to ensure Yesway continues to be a leader in identifying consumer insights and culinary trends, which will create a pipeline of new, innovative, and high ROI products to bring to the market. He also leads and directs the company's food quality and safety areas. Mr. Keune brings to Yesway a vast array of knowledge from his extensive background in brand management, marketing strategy, and product development for retail, restaurant, and consumer packaged goods. Mr. Keune was most recently the Principal Consultant and Partner for the TruthPoint Consulting Group. Prior to TruthPoint Consulting, Mr. Keune was the Chief Marketing Officer for Thornton's Inc., Senior Vice President of Marketing at Bob Evans Restaurants, and a Vice President of Marketing for Wendy's International. Mr. Keune holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northwestern University and an MBA from Vanderbilt University.

Rounding out Yesway's marketing leadership team is Darrin Samaha, Vice President and Brand Manager, who will continue to lead the charge with respect to the creation, growth, and cultivation of the Yesway brand across all channels. He is responsible for the launch and management of the award winning Yesway Rewards customer loyalty program, development of digital and social media marketing strategies, direction of the company's media relations efforts, and the creation and execution of its targeted advertising campaigns. Prior to joining Yesway, Mr. Samaha was Chief Creative Officer and founder of Blue Coda where he created and built Blue Coda's corporate brand and vision and led the firm's creative teams. Mr. Samaha is a graduate of Tufts University and was recently accepted into the Executive MBA Program at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

"We are thrilled to have both Derek and Jeff join our senior management team," said Mr. Trkla. "I look forward to working closely with them and everyone on our senior marketing team as we continue to strengthen our brand and improve and grow our food service and product offerings."

**Editor Note:** To arrange interviews with Yesway executives, please contact Erin Vadala of Warner Communications at [erin@warnerpr.com](mailto:erin@warnerpr.com) or 978-468-3076. High-resolution images and graphics are available on request.

**About Yesway** – *BW Gas & Convenience, d/b/a Yesway, is headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa. Yesway recently debuted at #7 on the Convenience Store News "2018 Top 20 Growth Chains" list and was named a "2017 Chain to Watch" by Convenience Store Decisions. Yesway's fast growing portfolio currently consists of 116 stores located in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas, Yesway plans to acquire, improve, and rebrand 500 convenience stores in selected*

*regions of the United States over the next several years. For more information on Yesway, please visit the company's website at [www.yesway.com](http://www.yesway.com)*

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