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NJFC to Highlight Technology's Role in Asset Protection at Mid-Atlantic Loss Prevention Conference

New Jersey Attorney General Matt Platkin will be awarded at the annual conference

TRENTON – October 8, 2025 – The New Jersey Food Council (NJFC) will once again partner with the New Jersey Retail Merchants Association (NJRMA), the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association (PFMA) and the Delaware Food Industry Council (DFIC) to address the most pressing security issues in the food industry at the 2025 Mid-Atlantic Loss Prevention Conference and Expo in late October.

The conference at Forsgate Country Club in Monroe will spotlight Ubiquitous Technological Surveillance (UTS), which is the pervasive collection of data through everyday gadgets such as smartphones and tablets, and artificial intelligence's impact on asset security. Also, it serves as an opportunity to honor members in law enforcement and loss prevention who made a significant impact in the last year.

"This event is the appropriate venue to recognize New Jersey Attorney General Matt Platkin for his steadfast and influential leadership for the passage of the new Organized Retail Crime Law," said NJFC President & CEO Linda Doherty. "It is the ideal opportunity for leaders in the loss

prevention community to discuss the challenges and opportunities arising from the constantly changing technology landscape.”

She noted the conference will feature security experts from such organizations as the FBI, the U.S. Secret Service and FIFA, which organizes worldwide soccer events.

“These discussions help us develop new strategies to safeguard our businesses and communities, leveraging new technologies” Doherty added. “Consistent collaboration ensures a safer future for the retail food industry in the mid-Atlantic region and stronger protections for retailers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.”

The event will feature remarks from two leaders in the security industry:

- Carlos Garcia, founder of TheUTSGuy.com, is a globally recognized cybersecurity and surveillance expert with nearly two decades of public service in the U.S. intelligence community. He has briefed and trained leaders at the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Special Operations Command. Garcia has earned the FBI Director’s Award for Excellence for innovations in workforce training and technical development. He is widely regarded as a leading authority on Ubiquitous Technical Surveillance and the convergence of AI and surveillance technology.
- Supervisory Special Agent Jeff Hunter has more than 25 years of law enforcement and criminal investigative experience and oversees private sector engagement and strategic partnerships for the FBI’s Philadelphia Division. He was previously assigned to complex cyber intrusion matters, focusing on the investigation, targeting and capture of ransomware actors and affiliates operating outside the United States.

The upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup, set to include matches at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford and Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, will also take center stage at the conference, with a detailed panel discussion on security preparations for the globally attended, summer event.

The panel includes experts with deep insights into the security side of the upcoming tournament:

- Jessica Rodriguez is a Supervisory Social Science Research Specialist with the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, where she conducts research on threat assessment and cases of targeted violence. She has spent more than 10 years studying targeted violence and terrorism, and is a recipient of the 2022 Department of Homeland Security Secretary’s Award for Innovation.

- Stacy Irving has served as the Senior Advisor, Homeland Security Programs and Strategic Partnerships, for the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center (DVIC) and the Philadelphia Police Department's Office of Intelligence and Analysis since 2015. She has developed a wide range of strategic engagement and information-sharing initiatives that open lines of communication between the fusion center, law enforcement and the business and faith-based communities on matters of crime and terrorism.
- Max Escate is an Intelligence Specialist for FIFA World Cup 2026, responsible for coordinating with local, state and federal law enforcement partners. He is an experienced intelligence analyst with a strong background in homeland security, threat assessments, and real-time information sharing at both regional and national levels. Prior to joining FIFA 2026, Escate supported multi-agency investigations and major event security in Southeast Florida by producing data-driven intelligence products and facilitating inter-agency collaboration.

During the conference there will be a luncheon award ceremony honoring two law enforcement individuals and one law enforcement unit whose work serves as a blueprint for effective public/private partnerships and the building of relationships throughout the retail community.

The recipients:

- Attorney General Matt Platkin, New Jersey's chief law enforcement officer, has focused on combating violent crime and implementing innovative public safety strategies. Under his leadership, the Attorney General's Office has supported the development and implementation of the state's new Organized Retail Crime (ORC) law. His office continues to collaborate with NJFC and our members on efforts to combat retail crime statewide. Through his leadership and his office's partnership, he has strengthened public safety and helped protect the NJ food industry and our customers.
- Sgt. Steven DeAngelis is the New Jersey State Police Emergency Management Private Sector Liaison. He has been an invaluable partner to NJFC and its members. In addition to conducting physical security, vulnerability, and threat assessments across critical infrastructure, events, and facilities, Sgt. DeAngelis has gone above and beyond to support the private-public partnership. He regularly shares timely updates on critical events, giving members necessary lead time to prepare and protect operations. He also hosted NJFC for a Loss Prevention Committee Meeting at the Regional Operations Intelligence Center (ROIC), providing a unique behind-the-scenes tour, and continues to collaborate with NJFC on infrastructure protection initiatives.
- Sgt. Ryan Tighe of the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office has demonstrated exceptional professionalism and partnership with NJFC members. He played a pivotal role

in investigating a multi-retailer EBT fraud scheme that affected several NJFC members across Central and Northern New Jersey between May and June 2025. Sgt Tighe also went above his investigative duties to take the extra step of engaging directly with affected customers to ensure their concerns were addressed. Thanks to his diligent collaboration, over \$27,000 in fraudulent EBT purchases were documented and turned over, ultimately leading to the apprehension of 10 individuals. His commitment to public-private partnership and proactive communication has significantly enhanced fraud prevention and prosecution efforts for NJ.

- The newly-formed Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General Organized Retail Crime Unit addresses large-scale retail theft in the state. It investigates organized theft rings that often operate across PA and state boundaries. The unit works with multiple partners to bring prosecutions, recover stolen goods (nearly \$2 million in its first year) and send a deterrent message that retail theft is not a minor crime.

The ceremony will also include the presentation of Loss Prevention Professional Awards, given to those who have made significant contributions to protect and promote retail security issues.

The honorees:

- The 2025 New Jersey Food Council Mid-Atlantic Loss Prevention Award will go to Brian Sasso, District Asset Protection Manager at Kings Super Markets and Balducci's within the Albertsons Mid-Atlantic Division. This year, he uncovered a vendor fraud scheme spanning nine locations and evolving into a six-figure case. The case was built through Sasso's meticulous video analysis and document review, ultimately bringing the subject to justice. Sasso has been a proud member of the NJFC since 1996 and has regularly contributed to this conference's planning committee.
- The 2025 Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association Mid-Atlantic Loss Prevention Award will go to Dave Fones, Investigations Manager for the Mid-Atlantic/Pennsylvania at Ahold Delhaize. Fones helps the retail giant fight against organized retail crimes and financial crimes. Prior to his current role, he served in the Carlisle Police Department in Pennsylvania for more than 30 years.

Learn more about the conference and secure your spot [here](#).

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