



MATHEW NORRIS
PUBLIC POLICY COUNSEL

Still Rockin', Even After All These Years

I was recently able to see one of my favorite bands in person for the first time, catching the Eagles in Indianapolis on their Long Goodbye Final Tour. Or, at least, their latest final tour. As expected, it was a tremendous show and left me checking their remaining tour dates to see if I could perhaps see them live one more time.

For nearly three hours, the group played one hit after another and gave everyone the impression that, despite the majority of them being in their 70s, they could keep doing this for years to come. Perhaps they were inspired by their opening act, Steve Miller, who can still shred on the guitar despite being 80! I guess it helps when you learned at the feet of your godfather, Les Paul.

Beyond simply enjoying their music over the course of the evening, I was left with a sense of awe as to how a band like the Eagles could persevere over the course of five decades and still maintain their popularity. Despite band members coming and going, a 14-year-long breakup and the untimely death of founding member Glenn Frey in 2016, the group has managed to not just endure but continue to thrive at this stage in their careers.

I think their success can be owed to keeping their focus on what's important — the music — and being able to adapt to whatever curveballs came their way. When Glenn passed, the Eagles brought in country star Vince Gill to cover many of Glenn's songs. The band also features Glenn's son, Deacon, who is a dead ringer for his father, circa 1976, in looks and in voice.

The survival and success of the Eagles reminds me in many ways of the survival and success of our industry. For decades, the petroleum and convenience industry has

persevered by focusing on what's important — the customers — and being able to adapt to changing market forces, outside influences and other unknowns. And in many cases, your businesses also involve the second, or even third, generation leading into the future.

Many of those challenges, or opportunities, are dictated by your state legislature and other elected officials, which makes your engagement with these policymakers paramount. Take the time to get to know your local, state and federal officials, and educate them on your business, your industry and your concerns. You'd be surprised at how impactful a short conversation on the phone or over coffee can be.

As you read this, the Indiana General Assembly will be in the midst of their 2024 "short" legislative session. All signs point to this being a relatively quiet legislative session for our industry, which makes for a great time for those introductory or reintroductions. And despite those minimal expectations, we'll still educate lawmakers on the concerns we have regarding iLottery or a cigarette tax increase. And we'll continue to look for opportunities to modernize our alcoholic beverage laws by repealing the antiquated cold beer prohibition.

Until next time, lighten up while you still can. Don't even try to understand. Just find a place to make your stand — and take it easy. 💡