



Automatic MERCHANDISER

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2007 Readers' Choice Products of the Year

The 14th annual readers' choice contest produced some surprises as readers once again select the best selling, most profitable and most requested products.

WINNERS



- 1 Cookie Famous Amos® Chocolate chip cookie
- 2 Candy M&M's® peanut
- 3 Salty Snack Planters® Peanuts
- 4 Pastry Big Texas Cinnamon Roll
- 5 Food White Castle Cheeseburger
- 6 Beverage Mountain Dew
- 7 New Product Salsitas Spicy salsa chips

History was made this year in the Automatic Merchandiser Magazine Readers' Choice awards. As of this year, the contest, now in its 14th year, no longer has an undefeated winner in any of the contested categories. This year, Masterfoods USA's M&M's® Peanut grabbed the top spot in the candy category, ending Snickers® Bar's reign as the undefeated champion in this category. Snickers® Bar was the only product to hold that honor.

Snickers® Bar not only held the title as the contest's only undefeated product, but also the all-time highest vote winner.

M&M's® Peanut has come close to unseating Snicker's® Bar in previous competitions, and has often been the runner up winner in the candy category.

M&M's® Peanut has long been neck and neck with Snickers® Bar for the top spot in the candy/snack segment, according to the Vendscape data reported by Management Science Associates Inc. The Vendscape data is based on machine-level reports from more than 50,000 vending machines nationwide.

The most recent Vendscape report lists M&M's® Peanut holding the top share of the candy/snack segment at 3.96 percent, followed by Snicker's® Bar at 3.69 percent.

The Readers Choice awards are based on votes faxed, mailed or e-mailed to Automatic Merchandiser from readers. Readers are asked to vote for their best selling, most profitable and most requested products.

The competition continues to field more nominations each year. In the past four years, most nominations were made via e-mail than were physically mailed or faxed. Automatic Merchandiser attached mail-in and fax-in ballots to its January issue. Readers were also able to cast ballots on the magazine's Website.

M&M's® Peanut was not the only product to unseat a long time winner this year. In the beverage category, which has long been monopolized by Coca-Cola Classic and Pepsi-Cola, Mountain Dew emerged to win top honors for the second time in the contest's history. Mountain Dew first grabbed top honors in 1999.

Mountain Dew's success underscores the challenge that the traditional cola giants have been experiencing in recent years.

Beverage industry observers have noted that Mountain Dew tends to perform better in convenience channels than other retail outlets. In 1998, Mountain Dew's 20-ounce bottle led beverage sales in the convenience store industry, both in volume and units sold.

Overall, Mountain Dew has been gaining market share in both the convenience store channel and all retail outlets.

According to ACNielsen take-home data, in 2006 Mountain Dew was the only one of the top three beverage products to grow its market share and its sales volume. Mountain Dew held 14.4 percent of the market share in convenience stores, right behind Pepsi -Cola at 15.2 percent and Coca-Cola Classic at 15.4 percent.

The Beverage Marketing Corp., a beverage research organization, confirmed a similar trend for total retail sales. While running third place to the two market leaders, Mountain Dew gained 1.2 percentage points while second place Pepsi-Cola lost 3.1 percentage points and first place Coca-Cola Classic lost 2.5 percentage points.

Coca-Cola Classic, last year's Automatic Merchandiser Reader's Choice winner, was this year's runner up in the beverage category.

Planters® Peanuts was the only first time winner this year, aside from the new product category, grabbing top honors in the salted snack competition. Planters® Peanuts shared runner-up honors with Frito-Lay Nacho Cheese Doritos last year, when Kar Nuts Sweet 'N Salty won the category.

The success of another nut snack in the salted snack segment reflects rising consumer interest in products associated with wellness and nutrition.

Frito-Lay Nacho Cheese Doritos was runner up in the salted snack category for the second straight year.

White Castle Cheeseburger reclaimed top honors in the food segment, marking the third time it has achieved this distinction. White Castle Cheeseburger also won the category's top spot in 1997 and in 2000.

Runner up in the food segment for the second straight year was Pierre Foods Big AZ Beef Charbroil With Cheese.

Famous Amos® Chocolate Chip Cookies returned as the winner in the cookie segment for the third straight year. Famous Amos® has won top cookie honors every year except for 2004, when it was unseated by Masterfoods USA's Cookies&.

Cloverhill Big Texas Cinnamon Bun was the only other return winner this year, grabbing top honors in the pastry category for the third straight year. The runner up in this category once again was Mrs. Freshley's Jumbo Honey Bun.

The winner in the new product category was Snak King's El Sabroso Salsitas Salsa Chip. The runner up was Masterfoods USA's M&M's® Dark Chocolate.

Winners

- 1 Cookie Famous Amos® Chocolate chip cookie
- 2 Candy M&m's® peanut
- 3 Salty Snack Planters® Peanuts
- 4 Pastry Big Texas Cinnamon Roll
- 5 Food White Castle Cheeseburger
- 6 Beverage Mountain Dew
- 7 New Product Salsitas Spicy salsa chips

Runners-up

- 1 Cookie Mini Chips Ahoy
- 2 Candy SNICKERS® Bar
- 3 Salted Snack Nacho Cheese Doritos
- 4 Pastry Mrs. Freshley's Jumbo Honey Bun
- 5 Food BIG AZ Beef Charbroil with Cheese
- 6 Beverage Coca-Cola® Classic
- 7 New Product M&M's® Dark Chocolate

Winners to be honored at annual breakfast at Nama Expo

The winners will be presented trophies at the Automatic Merchandiser Awards Breakfast at the NAMA Spring Expo in Las Vegas, along with winners of the 2006 People of the Year contest, which were announced in the December 2006 issue.

The Automatic Merchandiser awards breakfast has been held at the Spring Expo every year since the contest was launched in 1994.

The awards breakfast has become one of the most popular events at Spring Expo. Winners are invited to address the gathering and use it as an opportunity to thank their customers and colleagues.