



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Phillips & King Joins Forces with the National Association of Tobacco Outlets, Inc. (NATO)**

Announcing a new partnership to educate and activate independent tobacco retailers across the country.

(March 2017) Phillips & King, the leading distributor of specialty tobacco products and accessories in the United States, has signed a historic agreement partnering with the National Association of Tobacco Outlets, Inc. (NATO) to help their customers address legislative issues affecting the tobacco industry. NATO is a trade association that was created to further business interests of all tobacco retailers through education, information, and activation. It takes a proactive approach to inform members about pending legislation and regulations, and advises elected local, state, and national officials about the impacts of proposed legislation. Through the newly-formed partnership, all current Phillips & King licensed tobacco customers will be automatically enrolled as affiliate-level members of the NATO organization.

With their affiliate memberships, the Phillips & King retailers will receive information and assets to help them actively participate in issues that directly affect their livelihood. These include:

- Alerts about tobacco-related legislative activities on local, state, and national levels
- Call-to-action instructions for business owners when a local issue is pending
- Local field staff to educate them on relevant topics
- Pre-drafted communications to customize and send to legislators

“This partnership with Phillips & King represents a major endeavor against restrictive local tobacco ordinances and state legislation across the country that threaten tens of thousands of family-owned businesses nationwide,” says Tom Briant, Executive Director of NATO. “By leveraging Phillips & King’s

retail customer reach with NATO legislative efforts, we will work together to protect the right of retailers to sell legal tobacco products.”

In business since 1906, Phillips & King has an extensive customer roster, servicing all types of smoke shops- including discount tobacco outlets, tobacconists, convenience stores, liquor stores, and vapor retailers. The agreement with NATO is a landmark moment, bringing together retailers in all tobacco-related categories, and providing them with tools to collectively make a positive impact for the industry as a whole.

As part of the arrangement, Tom Briant will be a returning speaker at the Tobacco Plus Expo (TPE), an annual tradeshow held by the Tobacco Media Group, (owned by parent company Kretek International, Inc., who also owns Phillips & King). The event includes a conference circuit that Mr. Briant will participate in, which provides a prime opportunity to reach a large amount of retailers with the latest legislative information and resources for support.

For 2017, all current Phillips & King customers will be automatically enrolled as affiliate-level NATO members, with their registration fees covered for the calendar year, and renewals each year the customer remains active. Membership information will be sent to Phillips & King customers via email, and each customer will also begin to receive regular NATO *News* bulletins with up-to-date information on local, state, and federal tobacco issues.

“We have been serving the tobacconist business for over 110 years,” says Sergio Montolfo, General Manager of Phillips & King. “There has never been a more important time for the tobacco retailer to get involved and take an active part in fighting the anti-tobacco legislation affecting all of our businesses. Phillips & King is known for offering quality products and exceptional customer service. We are pleased to also now provide our customers with information and a louder voice that enables them to make a positive difference for the industry.”

For more information about the Phillips & King and NATO partnership, please visit [www.phillipsandking.com](http://www.phillipsandking.com).

### **About Phillips & King International**

Phillips & King International is the leading distributor of specialty tobacco, vapor, and alternative smoking products and accessories in the United States. Since 1906, the family-owned company has built a strong reputation by focusing on independent brick-and-mortar shops, priding itself on offering top products and the best service to their customers. Their highly experienced sales staff works with thousands of shops in all 50 states, US Virgin Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and globally to US military bases. The company distributes over 21,000 SKUs, warehoused in a 150,000 sq. ft. semi-automated facility. In addition, they have a portfolio of proprietary brands including Ventura Vapor, Greenhouse, EZ Cig, FasFil, and more. Phillips & King also distributes the Price Cutter, a monthly buying guide that outlines best-selling products, deals, and information for the tobacco and tobacco-related industry. For more information, please visit [phillipsandking.com](http://phillipsandking.com).

### **About NATO**

Now in its 16th year, the National Association of Tobacco Outlets, Inc. (NATO) is a national trade association organized to strengthen the business interests of all tobacco retailers on a collaborative and individual basis. Headquartered in Minneapolis, it assists its members throughout the country to respond to and stay atop the pulse of tobacco-related legislation on the local, state and federal levels. To learn more about NATO, please visit the website: [www.natocentral.org](http://www.natocentral.org).