

DRAFT OF PHA SPEECH

Frank Beard

My name is Frank Beard, and I'd like to take three minutes to share something that I'm *very* passionate about.

I work for GasBuddy as an Analyst and Evangelist for Convenience Store Trends—which is a fancy way of saying that I promote the positive things happening in the convenience store industry. One of these trends—and the one that I'm most excited about—is the increased availability of healthful food choices.

You may not be able to tell by looking at me today, but I used to be overweight and unhealthy. My weight eventually reached more than 240lbs, and I lost 80lbs five years ago while learning to make healthier choices and transitioning to a lifestyle as an active endurance athlete.

Having gone through that experience, however, I became tuned-in to the discussion about what it means to live a healthy life...and I noticed something. Eating out—or eating-on-the-go—is frequently treated as part of the problem—especially with regard to weight gain.

But there's just one problem: that's not true.

What we eat matters more than where we get it, and healthy choices can be made anywhere.

This is important because today, Americans *do* eat on-the-go. The FDA claims that one third of Americans' calories come from outside of the home—*one third*. But if we continue to treat this as part of the problem rather than a potential part of the solution, then I believe we're doing a disservice to many of the people we're trying to help.

That's why I decided to change the conversation.

Last year, I created a diet experiment called “30 Days of Gas Station Food”—which is exactly what it sounds like. For one month, I ate exclusively at convenience stores. I traveled across 9 states, visited more than 200 stores, tracked every calorie, and documented the entire experience.

My goal was to prove that eating out really *can* be healthy. In the end, I felt great. That's because convenient choices *can* be healthy choices. I even toned up by losing an additional six pounds.

I've since become very passionate about convenience stores—traveling to more than 1,000 stores in 24 states, speaking to companies and organizations around the country, and I even joined the team at GasBuddy...to help promote this trend and others.

But this journey has taught me two things.

First, convenience stores really *do* sell healthful food—and increasingly so. Fruit, vegetables, healthy snacks, healthy made-to-order options. After going for a run this morning, I stopped by a local 7-Eleven to purchase a banana and some mixed nuts. I also learned I can walk into stores like Ricker's in Indianapolis, for example, and purchase a bowl of grilled chicken, avocado, beans, and rice—the sort of meal that I make at home for myself.

And finally—and perhaps most relevant for today—is that the convenience store industry is working *hard* to make healthful food available. It's a constant topic of conversation, and many leading companies have even formed partnerships with the Partnership for a Healthier America.

And on that note, I'd like to take a moment and introduce our next speaker.

Rahim Budhwani is the Chairman of NACS—the National Association of Convenience Stores. NACS is the retail trade association which represents the more than 154,000 convenience stores across the United States. Mr. Budhwani is also the CEO of 6040, LLC. Headquartered in Hoover, Alabama, 6040 manages multiple convenience stores and has been a leading innovator in many areas including foodservice.

With that said, I want to thank you for listening, and it's my honor to turn the floor over to Mr. Budhwani. Thank you.