Second Quarter 2011
The Voice of Nebraska Hospitality

Taste of Nebraska 2011

• TASTE OF NEBRASKA
  MONDAY, APRIL 18TH AT
  STRATEGIC AIR & SPACE MUSEUM

• 2011 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

• DO YOU GROUPON?

Featured Guest: Clayton Anderson

Nebraska Restaurant Association
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Legislative News

From the Desk of Jim Partington

During the first quarter of 2011 we have been involved in several activities to advance the interests of the hospitality industry. Beth Haas has been coordinating the State ProStart® Competition to select the teams which will represent Nebraska at the National ProStart Competition in Kansas City on April 29 - 31, 2011. Beth has also initiated a Lottery to raise funds for the Hospitality Education Foundation. This has the potential to establish a long term consistent base of financial support for the ProStart Program and to increase foundation scholarship opportunities.

Brandy Nielson and Beth are working with the “Taste of Nebraska” Planning Committee to produce our annual awards dinner in a different and impressive venue at the Strategic Air and Space Museum. The change of location along with our keynote speaker, NASA Astronaut, Clayton Anderson, supported by an excellent menu and program will make this year’s “Taste of Nebraska” a truly memorable event.

In addition to new membership recruitment, Brandy has been busy maintaining and updating our new website www.nebraska-dining.org. If you have not seen it, I encourage you to check it out. Our new site is full of great information and tools to keep all of our Nebraska Restaurant Association members up to date on the restaurant industry. We also have our very own Facebook page. I encourage each of you to “Like” the Nebraska Restaurant Association Fan Page on Facebook!

Beth and Brandy represented the Nebraska Restaurant Association at the Cash-Wa Distributing Food Show on March 29-30, 2011 in Kearney, Nebraska. Food Shows are a great opportunity for Beth and Brandy to network with other restaurateurs and Allied members across the state.

Jim Otto and I coordinate with the National Restaurant Association on federal legislative issues and Jim has been very effective in representing us during this session of the Nebraska Legislature. I’ll be attending the National Restaurant Association Public Affairs Conference on April 13, 2011 and meeting with members of the Nebraska Congressional Delegation to discuss our position on federal issues in more detail.

A summary of this year’s activities is provided in the following legislative review.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Food Safety
Food safety was a top priority for the restaurant industry in 2010 and on December 21, 2010 President Obama signed the first major reform of food safety laws since the 1930s. This legislation provides the Food and Drug Administration authority to order recalls of tainted products and adds 2,000 federal inspectors to its workforce.

The Employee Free Choice Act and Paycheck Fairness Act
These issues, both hostile to business, did not pass this session and with the Republican majority in the House of Representatives are not likely to do any better in the 2011 session.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform
This is a strategic issue which is necessary to support future economic growth and an adequate labor pool. We will continue to work for legislation that provides for control of our international borders, legal entry procedure for immigrants in adequate numbers to meet labor requirements, fraud proof identification for documented immigrants that employers can rely on, and establishes a process that will convert the estimated twelve million undocumented immigrants to legal status.

Interchange Fees
We worked hard in support of the Durbin Amendment to the financial reform package. Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson’s vote in favor was a key to getting it passed in the United States Senate. On December 16, 2010, the Federal Reserve released proposed regulations to implement the Durbin Amendment. Under the proposal, debit card swipe fees would be capped at no more than 12 cents per transaction rather than the current fee structure that can be as high as 2 percent of the purchase price. That means

Continued on Page 6
The Nebraska Restaurant Association offers Farmers Insurance Group as its endorsed insurance provider for 2011. We are confident that Farmers Insurance Group will provide more comprehensive opportunities for our members.

Fishbowl has proven that targeted email marketing will generate more sales and increase guest frequency. Through a partnership with the Nebraska Restaurant Association and the National Restaurant Association, Fishbowl provides savings to current members.

Specializing in employment and labor laws, Jackson Lewis offers members a significant discount for legal services.

Heartland Payment Systems offers a full line of payment acceptance and payroll processing options designed specifically for association members. Local representation. Flexible, one-stop solution.

Nebraska.Statepaper.com is the premiere online dining guide of the Nebraska Restaurant Association. In addition to a free listing, members of the Nebraska Restaurant Association may receive additional discounts with enhanced listings and websites.

Nebraska Restaurant Association members can save up to 20% thru BMI. BMI collects license fees on behalf of songwriters, composers and music publishers and distributes them as royalties to those members whose works have been performed.
Celebrity Steaks!

Omaha Steaks is pleased to announce that the company will be featured on the new season of NBC’s reality series, The Celebrity Apprentice, airing each Sunday evening from March 6 to May 22 at 8 p.m. CST. Being promoted as “Crazy Good,” this fourth season of the show features a cast of 16 celebrities who battle it out for their favorite charities and ultimately compete to become the next Celebrity Apprentice.

For those of you who watch The Celebrity Apprentice, you know that the cast is divided into two teams. Each week, a different company presents a challenging task to each team and the teams are later judged on how successfully they execute the assignment. In early November, Omaha Steaks family owners Bruce and Todd Simon flew to New York to meet with Donald Trump and work with the producers from the show to present the Omaha Steaks challenge. Bruce and Todd later judged the performance of each team and made recommendations to Donald Trump on which team should win. The two-hour Omaha Steaks episode airs on Sunday, April 17.

“We were honored to participate in the upcoming season of The Celebrity Apprentice,” said Todd. “Bruce and I admired both teams for their creativity, business savvy and the genuine commitment the celebrities demonstrated toward supporting their various charities. We think it’s going to be a great season and terrific exposure for Omaha Steaks.”

Be sure to watch this season of the Celebrity Apprentice and don’t miss the Omaha Steaks episode on April 17. Visit the Omaha Steaks blog, www.steakbytes.com throughout the season for updates from the show. They will be hosting a Celebrity Apprentice Sweepstakes on their website, where the winner receives a trip for two to New York to watch the live finale of the show.

This season of The Celebrity Apprentice is going to be “Crazy Good.” Don’t miss it!

Show Your Nebraska Restaurant Association Pride Winner!

Kelly Knudson and Randy Alby – daVinci’s

Randy Alby and Kelly Knudson, daVinci’s, Lincoln are the 2011 first quarter winners of the “Show Your Pride” campaign that was started in 2010. Here is what they have to say about why they renew their Nebraska Restaurant Association membership year after year.

“daVinci’s has been a proud member of the Nebraska Restaurant Association for over 25 years. We feel that our membership in the state association gives us a voice in the Nebraska Legislature on issues pertaining to our industry. The Nebraska Restaurant Association has played an integral role in the growth of the restaurant industry across Nebraska. The endorsed provider discounts, including Heartland Payment Systems, Broadcast Music, Inc., and the ServSafe discount we obtain thru our membership are unmatched and pay for our membership time and time again. Thank you to the hard working staff at the Nebraska Restaurant Association!”

Restaurants by the Numbers

- **$1.7 Billion** Restaurant-industry sales on a typical day in 2011.
- **47%** Percent of adults who said they would be likely to patronize a mobile truck parked near their home or office if it was offered by a fullservice restaurant.
- **47%** Percent of adults who said they would be likely to place an order using a mobile phone application if it was offered by a quickservice restaurant.
- **71%** Percent of adults who said they are trying to eat healthier now at restaurants than they did two years ago.
- **$2,619** Average household expenditure for food away from home in 2009.
- **$79,623** Sales per full-time-equivalent non-supervisory employee at eating-and-drinking places in 2009.
- **74%** Percent of adults who agree that going out to a restaurant with family and/or friends gives them an opportunity to socialize and is a better way for them to make use of their leisure time rather than cooking and cleaning up.
- **69%** Percent of adults who said they are more likely to visit a restaurant that offers food items.
- **57%** Percent of adults who said they are more likely to visit a restaurant that offers food that was grown or raised in an organic or environmentally-friendly way.
- **52%** Percent of adults who said they are likely to make a restaurant choice based on how much a restaurant supports charitable activities and the local community.
Continued from Page 3

a restaurant would pay his or her bank a maximum of 12 cents to process a $100 transaction rather than a maximum of $2.00.

Depreciation
We are supporting the permanent reduction of the depreciation schedule for restaurant buildings to 15 years to promote economic growth for the industry and nation.

Health Care
Health care legislation did pass both the Senate and the House and was signed by the President. The National Restaurant Association with the support of most state associations, including Nebraska, supported the effort to repeal this legislation. The National Association continues to work to influence the regulations which will implement the law. It’s a complex law and more detailed information is available on their website; www.restaurants.org.

STATE ISSUES

The 2011 session of the Nebraska Unicameral is now more than half over. The Nebraska Legislature operates on a two year cycle. Any bills introduced in the 2011 session and not acted on can still be considered in the 2012 session.

Budget-Budget-Budget
Presently the predicted two year shortfall for the state budget is in excess of 900 million dollars. Addressing this future shortfall will require much time and intense soul searching as each agency and program falls under the scrutiny of the budget knife. It will also doom nearly any new legislation that costs the state money. The Nebraska constitution requires a balanced budget so this is a predicted “shortfall” and not a “deficit” as a “deficit” infers that money will be borrowed to cover it. Our balanced budget process requires that spending be cut, revenues raised, or a combination of both so that a “deficit” never occurs.

Toys with Children’s Meals
Senator Avery introduced legislation that would have made it illegal to include a toy with a children’s meal unless the meal met some strict dietary standards. Commonly called the “Happy Meal Bill”, it brought on significant media attention. We worked hard to stop the legislation. It was killed in the Agriculture Committee by a unanimous vote.

Immigration
State Senator Charlie Janssen of Fremont introduced an immigration bill similar to Arizona. Arizona’s bill requires police to verify a person’s immigration status if there’s “reasonable” suspicion the person is in the U.S. illegally. The Judiciary Committee did not advance the bill to the floor of the legislature. They chose instead to initiate an interim study on the issue.

Occupation Taxes
The cities of Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, and Norfolk recently enacted occupation taxes to be collected by restaurants. State law presently requires cities to get legislative approval to increase city sales tax but allows cities to enact and raise city occupation taxes. We are supporting legislation to put control on future city occupation taxes.

Dram Shop
“Dram Shop” legislation holds sellers/servers of alcohol liable for damage, injury, or death as a result of selling or serving an intoxicated person. The term “dram” comes from 18th century businesses in England that sold gin by the spoonful, called a dram. Nebraska is one of the few remaining “non dram shop” states. Each time someone is killed by a drunk driver, the momentum to make Nebraska a dram shop state grows. It especially grows when it is obvious that the seller served or sold to an intoxicated person and unfortunately there are a few who do. There have been numerous bills introduced over the last several legislative sessions to make Nebraska a dram shop state. To date, we have been successful in stopping all of them. Senator Carlson introduced this legislation in the 2011 session. After polling the members of the committee, we are cautiously optimistic that the Judiciary committee will not advance the bill this year.

Interchange Fees
Interchange fees are the charges merchants pay to credit card companies when accepting credit and debit cards for purchases. Some feel the term “swipe fees” is a much better description because the fee occurs when the customer’s credit card is “swiped” through the credit card terminal and the fee is instantly “swiped” from the merchant by the credit card company. These fees have been raised arbitrarily by credit card companies in the past. Our support of the Durbin amendment on the federal level was significant in addressing this concern. We are supporting state legislation to add support to our position.

Workers’ Compensation
There are two legislative bills introduced in the 2011 session to make workers’ compensation fairer to the employer. We are supportive of these efforts.
Texas Roadhouse was a proud supporter of the Nebraska Community Blood Banks during the month of January. Every Monday at noon, Texas Roadhouse delivered their “ Legendary Food” to generous blood donors at Lincoln area blood banks. Donors received a hearty meal from Texas Roadhouse and a free Baby Blossom card to use on their next visit to Texas Roadhouse. Thank you to Texas Roadhouse for your support of a very worthy organization!

The Kansas City-based brewery, Boulevard Brewing Co., introduced a limited-edition Chocolate Ale just in time for Valentine’s Day. Part of the Smokestack Series, Chocolate Ale was created with Kansas City chocolatier and University of Nebraska graduate Christopher Elbow. The Chocolate Ale, made with cocoa nibs from the Dominican Republic was a one-time brew and sold out throughout the greater Kansas City area within a day. You can also find Christopher Elbow’s chocolates at Greta’s Gourmet Butcher Shop, Deli, and Catering in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Omaha Restaurant Association hosted the 67th Annual Dinner on Monday, January 17 at Anthony’s Steakhouse & Lounge in Omaha. John Wade, Restaurants, Inc. was presented with the Restaurateur of the Year Award. The Purveyor of the Year Award was accepted by Chad Hartmann, Sysco-Lincoln. Officers and Directors of the Omaha Restaurant Association were inducted and include: President, Katie O’Connor – O’Connor’s Irish Pub; Vice President, John Wade – Restaurants, Inc.; Secretary, Dan Preusser – Omaha Steaks; Treasurer, Chad Hartmann – Sysco-Lincoln; Immediate Past President, Rich Barmettler - Barmettler Consulting Group.

The Nebraska Beef Council hosted the first annual “Nebraska’s Best Burger” contest sponsored by the farmers and ranchers of Nebraska. The contest ran from February 15-March 31 and members of the public voted for the restaurant, big or small, that serves the best, richest, most mouth-watering burger in Nebraska. The top five nominated burgers will be evaluated by a panel of judges who will determine the overall winner. Remember to check the 3rd quarter issue of the MainCourse to see which restaurant has the right to claim “Nebraska’s Best Burger”!

Do you have newsworthy news? Contact Brandy Nielson with the Nebraska Restaurant Association to be included in the “Hot off the Grill” section of the next issue of Main Course. Recognize employees, announce a new store opening, and let people know how you support the hospitality industry of Nebraska with the Nebraska Restaurant Association!
Do You Groupon?

By Mark Netsch, founder of PerformanceScope.com

Groupon is a deal-of-the-day website that is localized to major markets in the United States and Canada. Launched in November 2008, the first market for Groupon was Chicago, followed soon thereafter by Boston and New York City and Toronto. As of October 2010, Groupon serves more than 150 markets in North America and 100 markets in Europe, Asia and South America. Groupon launched in November 2008. Each day, Groupon features an unbeatable deal on the best stuff to do, see, eat, and buy in your city. By promising businesses a minimum number of customers, customers get discounts they won’t find anywhere else. Restaurants are taking advantage of increasing their customer base by signing up with www.groupon.com.

What to consider before you Groupon?

Over the last couple years, services such as Groupon have sprouted up offering deep discounts to consumers. Such services boast the ability to get thousands of new customers through the door with one daily ad. What operator doesn’t like the sound of an instant expansion to their customer base? But before considering a service like Groupon, it’s important that operators ask themselves if they really are Groupon-ready.

For most people, the number one thing that brings them back to a business is customer service. Take customer service out of the equation and it’s just another coffee shop, high-end restaurant or bakery café. As operators, our job is cultivating customer loyalty – driving a new customer base and bringing current customers back more frequently. Will a Groupon promotion expand your customer base? Maybe.

I recently took advantage of a Groupon offer for a new neighborhood wine bar. Unfortunately, my excitement was short-lived. The server did not know what wines were included in the happy hour specials. A member of our party ordered a drink that was delivered to our table incorrectly. A vegetarian in our party took the server’s suggestion to order an entrée without the chicken; the entree arrived with chicken. To top off the experience, our server did not once ask if our meal was to our liking. In the end, the service reflected poorly upon the establishment and was counterproductive to using a Groupon to drive new customers.

“Successful restaurant marketing -- those tactics that actually increase guest counts and line up first-time guests -- may actually ruin your business and your brand,” said William H. Bender, founder of W.H. Bender & Associates. “Restaurants must be what we call guest-ready: Ready to wow each and every guest that walks through the door. Unless the restaurant is guest-ready to deliver on all marketing promises you will undermine your mission.”

Groupon and similar services are indeed a good way to bring in new customers. But before you Groupon ask yourself if you and your team are ready. Here are a few questions to consider:

1. Are you ready for a new crop of potential customers to try your restaurant for the very first time?
2. Are the goals of the promotion communicated to your staff?
3. Will there be a large response and will we be ready for the additional business?
4. What is the strategy for social media impact?

Over the last couple of years, I have heard many restaurants blame the slow economy for a significant drop in their business. While some restaurants have shut their doors, at the same time, others have thrived and even expanded. Operators in-tune with their strengths and weaknesses are always successful, regardless of economic conditions. For those operators, Groupon may translate into new long-term customers and a profitable business.

Look at your business from a guest’s perspective before considering services such as Groupon. Make sure your staff is ready to execute your points of differentiation with every guest. If you’re a fast casual concept serving gourmet salads, prepare your staff to speak with guests about what makes them unique. If you own a wine bar, help your staff understand that knowing what wines are part of the happy hour special is an expected part of their work. Redeeming 3,000 Groupons at 50 percent off is not the objective, converting those trials to loyal customers is.

Mark Netsch is the founder of PerformanceScope, an organizational performance consulting firm that measures customer satisfaction and increases customer loyalty for restaurants. For more information, call 866.941.9005 or visit www.PerformanceScope.com.

In Memoriam

It is with deep sadness that we note the passing of Gladys E. (Lutz) Hall, longtime Lincoln resident and restaurateur. Gladys was involved with several successful local restaurants, most notably Cotner Terrace and later, Mrs. Lutz’s Hole in the Wall. Alongside her mother, Mary Lutz, her brother, Richard, and other close family members, she set the standard for high quality cooking and customer service that continues to be admired and followed today. The Mary Lutz Trophy, named for Gladys’s mother, has been awarded to the Restaurateur of the Year since 1962. Gladys was a warm and generous woman. She will be greatly missed and lovingly remembered.

She is survived by her children and grandchildren. A private service has been held.
Join us for the 2nd Annual Nebraska Restaurant Association Hospitality Education Foundation (HEF) golf outing on Monday, June 20th, 2011, at The Players Club at Deer Creek in Omaha. Proceeds help support the Nebraska Restaurant Association ProStart program.

Event Schedule
10:00 am Registration
11:00 am Shotgun Start
4:00 pm Burgers, Brats and Awards

Format
18-hole, four-player scramble. The field is limited to the first 144 players. Mulligans will be available the day of the event at registration.

Entry
Individual entry is $125 and includes a round of golf at one of Omaha’s PREMIER 27-hole private clubs, golf cart, boxed lunch, contests, prizes & more! Please be sure to join us after for burgers & brats at the awards presentation!

Sponsorships Now Available
For more information contact: Brandy Nielson
bnielson@nebraska-dining.org | 402.488.3999 | 800.770.8006

SAVE THE DATE!

2011 Taste of Nebraska
Monday, April 18th, 2011
NEW LOCATION!!!
Strategic Air and Space Museum
Ashland, NE

6:00 PM Reception
7:00 PM Dinner, Awards, and Entertainment
Tickets: $60.00 single ticket or $550.00 Table of 10

Reserve a room at Mahoney State Park for only $65.75!

Invited Guest: Clayton Anderson
NASA Astronaut from Ashland, Nebraska
Anderson was a member of the Expedition 15 crew and spent 152 days onboard the International Space Station. He launched to the station aboard Shuttle Atlantis as Mission Specialist 5 for the STS-117 mission on June 8, 2007, and remained onboard as a member of the Expedition 16 crew before returning to earth aboard Discovery on mission STS-120 on November 7, 2007.

Contact Brandy to reserve your table at 402.488.3999 ext. 2 or bnielson@nebraska-dining.org

SPONSORS NEEDED!
Call the Nebraska Restaurant Association for more information at 402.488.3999 or email dineout@nebraska-dining.org

Don’t miss the awards presentation for Restaurateur of the Year, Allied Member of the Year and Lodger of the Year!

Reserve your table today!
Finally there is a website right at your fingertips with a list all of possible options when it comes to dining and bars. Each restaurant and bar has a complete profile that will even show daily food and drink specials. Want a night out to shoot some pool? We have a list of all locations that offer pool, keno, darts, foosball, and shuffleboard. When you register on the site, coupons for your favorite establishments will also be available. You won’t want to miss out on these exclusive deals!

Be able to promote your business in our business listing directory for as little as a DOLLAR a day! Or get even more exposure by utilizing our banner ad places throughout TheLincolnScene.com.

When choosing what to do on any given night, check out the Event Calendar. You will find a complete listing of kids eat free, karaoke, bands, comedy, bar games, and special activities. Also included are the job fairs at local colleges so that you don’t miss out on opportunities.

We have a complete guide to the Huskers under the Sports Section. You will find schedules of all sports, places to buy your Husker gear, and current news articles. Also featured is a guide to game day parking, hotels, and shuttle services. Take advantage of buying or selling tickets on the classifieds section. Under the sports category you can also find golfing, bowling, laser tag, paint ball, and roller skating locations. The Lincoln Stars season is about to begin. Check out their schedule and make sure you get to a game this season!

There are plenty of miscellaneous sections you have to check out as well. You will be able to find shopping locations, see current movies as well as purchase tickets in advance, find local art theatres, and vote on polls. Make sure you are well informed with direct news feeds from your favorite publications such as the Journal Star, 10/11, and Channel 7.

When registered on the site, you will be able to write reviews and rate the local restaurants and bars. You will have access to coupons to Lincoln’s finest businesses. Also available is an e-newsletter that will keep you even more informed about what’s happening in Lincoln.

We encourage you to give us your feedback.

If you are a Restaurant or Bar owner please contact us at info@thelincolnscene.com for your complete FREE listing of your venue.

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**Chili Bomb Competition**

**January 29, 2011**

The Strategic Air and Space Museum in Ashland, Nebraska hosted the 1st Annual Chili Bomb Competition on Saturday, January 29th. Eleven teams prepped and cooked from scratch their own personal version of Nebraska’s Best Chili and the right to earn the title of “Chili Masterchef”.

The eleven teams that competed included: daVinci’s, Fremont High School, BJ Haas, Omaha Central High School, Plattsmouth High School, Runza Restaurants, Sysco-Lincoln, Upstream Brewing Company, Valentino’s, ConAgra Foods, and Mike Kirstein.

By 3:00 PM the votes were counted and the People’s Choice was awarded to the Valentino’s team. First place was awarded to Runza Restaurants, second place was awarded to daVinci’s, and third place was awarded to Upstream Brewing Company.

Thank you to all of our Nebraska Restaurant Association members and our Nebraska ProStart® schools who competed.

The Strategic Air & Space Museum will play host to the Annual Taste of Nebraska for the first time on Monday, April 18th. Over 600 guests will dine beneath the wings of some of the most striking aircraft enjoying exquisite fare prepared by Upstream Brewing Company Catering.

Tickets are still available for this event and can be purchased by calling the Nebraska Restaurant Association office at 402.488.3999. Tickets are $60.00 each or reserve a table of 10 for $550.00.

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**ProStart®: Feeding Dreams and Building Futures**

Nebraska’s brightest culinary and hospitality management high school stars shined bright as they vied for the state team culinary and management titles and the opportunity to represent Nebraska at the National ProStart® Invitational in Overland Park, Kansas. The state competition, held on the University of Nebraska’s East Campus on Saturday, March 12, displayed the hospitality industry’s up-and-coming talent in the largest private sector industry in the state. The hospitality industry is truly the cornerstone of Nebraska’s jobs and careers and this is a celebration of the bright future for the state as well as other hospitality businesses.

**Nebraska ProStart® State Competition Winners**

The winner of the Culinary Competition is Roncalli Catholic High School (Omaha), instructed by Ms. Cathy Leak and mentored by Kimbler Harrold from the Magnolia Hotel. Team members include: Abby Goetz, Kylie Tetzlaff, Nyasia Esterly – Torres and Matt Soltys.

The winner of the Management Competition is Papillion LaVista South High School, instructed by Ms. Louise Dornbusch and mentored by Heather Douskey from Metropolitan Community College. Team members include: Ashley Dernovish, Sydney Sumodi, and Bethany Weaver.

**Thank you to our incredible sponsors!** This competition could not exist without your support.

- Pepsi
- Sysco – Lincoln
- Lincoln Poultry
- Ken Glendenning Photography
- Nebraska Pork Producers
- Nebraska Beef Council
- International Culinary Schools at the Art Institute
- Johnson and Wales
- Central Community College
- Southeast Community College
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Applebee’s
- daVinci’s
- Grandmother’s
- Skeeter Barnes
- Valentino’s
Nebraska ProStart Competition Winners

2011 Nebraska ProStart® Teacher of the Year
Cathy Leak, Roncalli Catholic High School, Omaha

2011 Nebraska ProStart® Mentor of the Year
Brandon McCarthy, Omaha-Hilton

Individual awards were also presented in the following areas:

Individual Knife Skill awards
1st  Brady Potratz – Lincoln East
2nd  Amanda Ewerth – Lincoln East
3rd  Kelsey Carlson – Lincoln Northeast

Tapas Plating awards
1st  Ashley Navratil – Milford
2nd  Tyler Svoboda – Lincoln Southwest
3rd  Steffen Schutt – Plattsmouth

Vegetable Carving
1st  Brady Shaw – Milford

Fruit Carving awards
1st  Chase Blohn – Lincoln East
2nd  Kelsey Carlson – Lincoln East
3rd  Victoria Hinrichs – Lincoln East

Cake/Cupcake Decorating awards
1st  Makayla Roth – Milford
2nd  Careley Kleffner – Lincoln Northeast
3rd  Caroline Horn – Lincoln Northeast

Scratch Dessert Plating awards
1st  Jordyn Labadue – Lincoln Southwest
2nd  Catherine Burns – Lincoln High
3rd  Abbey Wisell – Lincoln Northeast

Purchased Dessert Plating awards
1st  Carolyn Horn – Lincoln Northeast
2nd  Andrea Conteas – Kearney
3rd  Kenyon Koenigh – Lincoln East

Team awards:
Best of Beef Award
1st  Kearney
2nd  Milford Incredible Edibles
3rd  Norris

Best of Pork Award
1st  Milford Hot Tamales
2nd  Papillion La Vista High

Best Food Safety and Sanitation
1st  Roncalli
2nd  Omaha North
3rd  Milford Incredible Edibles

Best Team Starter
1st  Omaha Career Center Los Polentas’
2nd  Kearney
3rd  Papillion La Vista High

Best Team Dessert
1st  Omaha Career Center Four Chefs
2nd  Roncalli
3rd  Omaha Career Center Shivas

Best Knife Skills
1st  Plattsmouth Blue Devils on Fire
2nd  Plattsmouth Smoke’n Hot
3rd  Omaha Career Center Four Chefs

Professionalism
1st  Plattsmouth Blue Devil’s on Fire
2nd  Roncalli
3rd  Plattsmouth Smoke’n Hot

Management Award
1st  Papillion La Vista South

Culinary Team Award
1st  Roncalli
2nd  Omaha Career Center Los Polentas’
3rd  Omaha Career Center Shivas’

MainCourse • Second Quarter 2011  13
It has been a tough three years for the restaurant industry, with cutbacks in consumer spending and rising operating costs, but 2011 will be noticeably better in many aspects, according to the National Restaurant Association.

Restaurant industry sales are expected to reach a record $604 billion and post positive growth in 2011 after a three-year period of negative real sales growth. The Association’s 2011 Restaurant Industry Forecast projects an industry sales increase of 3.6 percent over 2010 sales, which equals 1.1 percent in real (inflation-adjusted) terms.

The 2011 Restaurant Industry Forecast identifies opportunities to build business, attract and retain customers, and control costs, and is a free resource to state restaurant association members. It details macro-trends – economic, workforce and operational – that affect the industry as a whole, as well as by industry segment. The report also provides national, regional and state sales and employment data.

In addition, the Forecast includes information on consumers’ mindsets, expectations and habits. For example, social media savvy consumers are more active in the restaurant community. These individuals dine out more frequently than the general public: 92 percent eat a meal at a sit-down restaurant at least once a month (compared with 84 percent of all adults) and 87 percent purchase a meal or snack quickservice restaurant or carry-out place at least once a month (versus 83 percent of all adults).

The economic downturn has created a substantial pent-up demand for restaurant services – more than two out of five consumers say they are not dining out or using takeout as often as they would like – which positions the restaurant industry for growth in 2011.

The nation’s 960,000 restaurants will continue to be strong contributors to the recovery of the nation’s economy, with industry sales representing 4 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product and employees comprising nearly 10 percent of the U.S. workforce. Its total economic impact exceeds $1.7 trillion, as every dollar spent in restaurants generates $2.05 spent in the overall economy. Restaurants are the nation’s second-largest private sector employer with 12.8 million employees.

Restaurant Industry Sales

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1970–2011</th>
<th>Food-and-Drink Sales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$119.6</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>$239.3</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>$379.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011*</td>
<td>$604.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Projected

Get your free PDF of the 2011 Restaurant Industry Forecast at www.restaurant.org/forecast. You’ll need your member number to download the report. Questions? Contact Brandy Nielson at 402.488.3999 ext. 2 or bnielson@nebraska-dining.org.

Restaurant Industry

$604 billion

2011 Sales Projection

- Commercial $550.8
- Eating places $404.5
- Bars and taverns $18.3
- Managed services $42.1
- Lodging place restaurants $28.7
- Retail, vending, recreation, mobile $57.2
- Other $53.4

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Restaurant Small Businesses with a Large Impact on our Nation’s Economy

- Restaurant industry sales are projected to total $604 billion in 2011 and equal 4 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product.
- The overall economic impact of the restaurant industry is expected to exceed $1.7 trillion in 2011.
- Every dollar spent by consumers in restaurants generates an additional $2.05 spent in our nation’s economy.
- The restaurant industry is projected to employ 12.8 million people in 2011, or nearly 10 percent of the U.S. workforce. The restaurant industry is expected to add 1.3 million jobs over the next decade, with employment reaching 14.1 million by 2021. Every additional million dollars in restaurant sales generates an additional 34 jobs for the economy.
- 93% of eating-and-drinking place businesses have fewer than 50 employees. Average unit sales in 2008 were $862,000 at fullservice restaurants and $737,000 at quickservice restaurants.

Restaurant Cornerstone of Career Opportunities and Upward Mobility

- Nearly half of all adults have worked in the restaurant industry at some point during their lives, and more than one out of four adults got their first job experience in a restaurant.
- 50% of restaurant owners said their first job was in the restaurant industry and was an entry-level position. 94% of restaurant employees said the restaurant industry is a good place to get a first job and learn basic working skills.
- 88% of restaurant employees said restaurants often provide the opportunity to start at the bottom and move up to management. 81% of restaurant employees said the restaurant industry is a place where people of all backgrounds and experience can open their own business.
- 46% of restaurant employees said they would like to own a restaurant some day. 57% of first-line supervisors/managers of food preparation and service workers in 2009 were women, 16% were of Hispanic origin and 15% were African-American.
Nebraska Restaurants Recognized for Excellence in Community Service

Three Nebraska restaurants have been selected as state winners of the 2011 Restaurant Neighbor Award and are now in the running for the national award that rewards community service. The Restaurant Neighbor Award was created by the National Restaurant Association to recognize restaurants that exemplify the industry’s philanthropic spirit. The winners are Valentino’s, Liberty Tavern at Omaha-Hilton, and Grandmother’s.

“We are proud to recognize these outstanding winners of the 2011 Restaurant Neighbor Award,” said Jim Partington, Executive Director of the Nebraska Restaurant Association. “America’s restaurants serve their communities every day. Providing nourishment, quality of life, opportunity and enjoyment, restaurants are not only good neighbors but important contributors to our nation’s health and prosperity.”

Valentino’s became a Special Olympics National Games Founder’s Club sponsor in 2010. Valentino’s donated $25,000 as well as provided approximately 8,000 box lunches to the athletes and volunteers over a ten day period.

Liberty Tavern at Omaha-Hilton has demonstrated itself to the community through some of the charity events in which it has participated. They participated in Share Our Strength and the Taste of Omaha to combat hunger in the community. They also donated food and services to Habitat for Humanity and prepared food for over 200 guests for the March of Dimes. Overall they have donated over $8,000.00 of in-kind donations, and over $4,000.00 in cash donations to multiple organizations in 2010.

Grandmother’s Inc., along with Dean Rasmussen, was instrumental in the initial funding of the Project Harmony Golf Tournament which began in 1995. Project Harmony is a nonprofit agency whose mission is to respond to the abuse of children one child at a time. Their collaborative, child-focused approach ensures that children are not further victimized by the systems intended to protect them. Over $2,000,000 has been raised for Project Harmony since its inception in 1995.

The Restaurant Neighbor Award honors charitable contributions in four categories (small business, mid-size business, large business/national chain, and Cornerstone Humanitarian). Each participating state restaurant association selects winners in their respective states that will be in the running for the national award.
Increased worksite enforcement by the government shows no sign of abating. In recent, high-profile cases, ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) have shown that it intends to continue investigating and fining companies with mistakes on their I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification documents. Companies that knowingly hire undocumented workers are being prosecuted. Abercrombie & Fitch recently agreed to a settlement of more than $1,000,000 for numerous I-9 compliance violations for its retail stores in Michigan. In Los Angeles, the owner and top executives of a metal casting company were arrested and charged with federal crimes for their role in encouraging the acquisition of fake Social Security numbers. Recently the owner of two Baltimore area restaurants was sentenced to four months in prison and an additional four months of home detention with electronic monitoring, followed by two additional years of supervised release, for harboring twenty-four unauthorized foreign-national workers.

More employer audits are on the way. In mid-September, 500 “Notices of Inspection” (NOIs) were served to employers in one week and the scope of documentation requested or subpoenaed is expanding. Our office is currently handling six active Notice of Inspection cases, where ICE has requested 13 different immigration and employment documents over a three-year inspection period, including lists of current and terminated employees, copies of quarterly wage and hour reports, tax statements, company hiring policy, and various other corporate documentation. Tens of thousands of dollars are potentially at stake, as ICE has the ability to assess fines ranging from $110 to $1100 per I-9!

Rather than simply dwelling on the compliance failure associated with the ultimate outcome of the case, employers should consider additional issues like business continuity and the down-stream financial effects of an immigration investigation. Companies should be preparing for an investigation by initiating a compliance clean-up, conducting internal audits, and setting up audit protocol. We are seeing a trend for companies putting alternative plans in place for business continuity and pro-active representation in the worst case scenario identified here: ICE officials utilizing additional tools in their disposal to seize assets that might be otherwise utilized to finance the defense against allegations of administrative or criminal violations.

Now is the time to consider contingencies. And for those companies that have not performed any proactive compliance planning-now is the time to consider the cost of not doing so.

As I gaze out the window, I see signs of spring. The snow is gone (fingers crossed) and the sun is shining. I have garden plants growing on the window sill with great expectations of fresh vegetables arriving soon to my dinner table.

At Heartland Payment Systems, we have added something FRESH to complement our growing number of products serving our primary restaurant industry vertical. Introducing Freshtxt, a new multi-faceted program to help restaurateurs better manage their reservations process while adding a great new marketing tool.

Here’s how it works. A restaurant customer calls in, goes online or walks into your restaurant. They make a reservation and submit their cell phone number as a reference number to be called when their table is ready. They can stay in a waiting area, go to the bar or even leave the building and be reached via text message when their table is ready. No base station with vibrating or beeping devices necessary. The Freshtxt system is a virtual product requiring only PC online access. Your customers are carrying their paging devices (their cell phones) when they arrive.

Now, I won’t go into all of the analytical reporting available with Freshtxt. I’ll just say, it will amaze you and provide you with information you can put to work immediately to improve your bottom line.

Now, for the really exciting feature - SMS (Short Message Service) Marketing. Text messaging or “testing” is the common term for sending short messages to mobile phones. Texting is available on 95% of the 285 million plus mobile phones in the United States today. SMS Marketing is available through Freshtxt. The system collects all cell phone numbers entered and allows you to sort and select numbers to receive a short marketing message (i.e. Don’t miss our Early bird Specials from 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM Monday – Thursday ). This is a great new tool to reach your customers with only a few minutes effort on your part. And NO POSTAGE! Just a small monthly fee that averages below $4 per day.

With spring just around the corner, why not plant some seeds that will certainly grow your business. Heartland will not waiver. Heartland’s commitment to meeting the needs of the restaurant industry continues with the addition of Freshtxt. We want to be your partner because we are the best provider of solutions for your business - solutions that will bring more money to your table.

For more information, contact me at or call 402.551.9832 office or 402.699.1502 mobile or michael.mccarville@e-hps.com.
Calendar of Events
Find updates online at www.nebraska-dining.org

April 18th
Taste of Nebraska
Strategic Air & Space Museum, Ashland, NE
Contact Brandy Nielson at 402.488.3999 ext. 2

April 29th-May 1st
National ProStart Competition
Overland Park, KS

May 21st-May 24th
National Restaurant Association Show
Chicago, IL

June 6th
Omaha Restaurant Association’s BBQ and Membership Drive
Omaha, NE

June 7th
Fishbowl Webinar 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM CST
“Navigating Online Marketing for Restaurants”
Contact Brandy Nielson at 402.488.3999 ext. 2

June 20th
Nebraska Restaurant Association HEF Golf Outing
The Players Club at Deer Creek – Omaha
Sponsorships now available!
Contact Brandy Nielson at 402.488.3999 ext. 2

August 29th
Omaha Restaurant Association’s Golf Tournament
Field Club of Omaha
Omaha, NE

Welcome New Members
Restaurant Members

Burger King Corporation
Craig S. Prusher
5505 Blue Lagoon Drive, Miami, FL 33126

Barbara G. Coleman
Professional Party Planning/Fundraising/Caring Hands/The Night Light Group
17069 Douglas Street, Omaha, NE 68118
402.707.0170

Boyz in Da Hood
Tim Perlinger & Marty Stoot
1014 N. Broadwell Ave,
Grand Island, NE 68803

Savour Cuisine
Carrie McKenzie
12631 Burt Street, Omaha, NE 68154

Retailers Advocacy Group, Inc.
Larry Bohlen
PO Box 34
Hartford, IA 50118

SERVSAFE Calendar

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Farner-Bocken Company offers...
- Quality Products
- Full Line Food Service
- Fresh Meat & Produce
- Now Featuring Products

Be sure to ask us about our New Test Kitchen “Try it before you buy it!”

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9229 Mormon Bridge Plaza • Omaha, NE 68152 • 800-274-8692
Email cmpeterson@farner-bocken.com
Or check us out @ www.farner-bocken.com
Rotella’s Bakery Family would like to thank all the restaurants that have helped make our bakery become successful.

NRA Allied Award of the Year Recipient.
Hockenbergs is Nebraska’s leading distributor of foodservice equipment and supplies. We have an extensive inventory for both the front and back of the house, ranging from equipment, smallwares, disposables and janitorial products to Design services, custom stainless and millwork products, refrigeration and full opening packages. Our expert staff includes full service Design Engineers, Equipment Consultants and Smallwares Specialists.