• YEAR END REPORT
• HEALTH CARE TIMELINE
• WHAT'S HOT IN 2012 - MENU TRENDS
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The Nebraska Restaurant Association has exclusively endorsed Heartland Payment Systems®, one of the nation’s largest payments processors, for credit card processing, gift marketing, payroll services, tip management and check management. Heartland is also endorsed by the National Restaurant Association, 40+ state restaurant associations and the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

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As we approach the end of fiscal year 2011 it appears that the economic recession which has been affecting our Nebraska economy for about three years now is over, although growth remains slow. State sales tax revenues are increasing and the National Restaurant Association economic reports indicate growth in all segments of the hospitality industry and an increase in gross sales of 3.6% for the year.

The results vary depending on geography and type of restaurant operation and there are exceptions, but I expect that many of our members are experiencing some improvement in sales year over year.

The 2011 Taste of Nebraska Reception and Awards Dinner was a great social success. Attendance exceeded last year, the menu was excellent, our guest speaker Clayton Anderson was entertaining and informative, and we had a number of outstanding nominations for the awards. Sponsorships and Silent Auction receipts were on par with previous years. The move from the Cornhusker Hotel to the Strategic Air and Space Museum provided a new and impressive venue for the event but we did accrue some significant unplanned expenses that reduced net revenue and required some budget adjustments.

Our annual Golf Classic at Hillcrest Country Club was also an enjoyable and profitable event.

For three years, sponsorships for the Hospitality Education Foundation have been below historic levels. The Nebraska Restaurant Association has contributed funds from our cash reserve to cover the shortfall so that the Foundation could continue supporting the ProStart® program and provide scholarships.

In 2010 and 2011 the Foundation introduced an Omaha Golf Outing event which was a successful fundraiser so we will continue this as an annual event. In 2011, a lottery was initiated which was modestly successful but shows promise so we will hold another lottery in 2012 in conjunction with the State ProStart Competition.

The National Restaurant Association also provided significant, one time, grant support for the Foundation in 2011.

These new revenue sources combined have enabled the Foundation to finally show a net surplus for 2011 and they will be able to pay back part of the debt owed the Nebraska Restaurant Association. In 2012 we will need to find additional sponsors to replace the National Restaurant Association grants.

The mission of the Nebraska Restaurant Association is to “Represent, Educate and Promote the Hospitality Industry.” The purpose of this report is to share with you some ways we have worked to accomplish our mission in 2011.

Education
The education part of our mission is fulfilled by the Hospitality Education Foundation. Beth Haas continues to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the support provided to the ProStart Program. ServSafe Level 4 training throughout the state has maintained the positive growth trend established in 2007. This is the direct result of coordinated scheduling of classes with the University of Nebraska Extension Service and aggressive marketing of the program by the Association.

We have excellent training and education programs available. Our goal is to make these programs accessible to many more employees throughout the state and to continue to maintain the highest standards of instruction as we expand.

Marketing
One of our priorities is to be more proactive and aggressive in promoting the hospitality industry, Nebraska restaurants and our Association. Brandy Nielson has worked diligently to update our website and improve the quality of our publications and programs benefiting our members.

Programs
The Nebraska Restaurant Association continues to endorse Broadcast Music Inc (BMI) to provide music licensing for commercial purposes. Nebraska Restaurant Association members receive a 10% discount for services and additional discounts for timely payment of fees. BMI offers assistance in meeting legal requirement in regard to music licensing.

For More Information visit our WEBSITE at www.nebraska-dining.org!
Farmers Insurance Group

Business Insurance
Contact: Ken Richards
402.420.5355

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

E-Marketing Solutions
Contact: Joe Gabriel
703.836.3421 x 230

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.

Jackson Lewis LLP

Legal Services
Contact: Chad Richter
402.391.1991

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

Heartland Payment Systems

Credit Card / Payroll Processing
Contact: Michael McCarville
402.551.9832

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

Online Dining Guide
402.403.1176

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.

Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI)

Music Licensing
Contact: Cleve Murphy
615.401.2877

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.
6 Tips For Dealing With Online User Reviews

Chances are your restaurant operation is engaged in the online space – or is considering doing so – and has a presence on a social media site such as Facebook or Twitter. It’s hard to ignore the potential of these very affordable marketing opportunities. But don’t forget that these kinds of sites are very conversational, thus “social.” And sometimes people will have kind things to say about your restaurant. And sometimes not.

Here are six tips for dealing with online user reviews.

1. Don’t ignore online user reviews. They’re here to stay. So if you are involved with them, be proactive. Check the reviews, good and bad.

2. Share both positive feedback as well as legitimate critiques with staff and management to boost employee morale and make improvements to your food, service and/or operation.

3. Choose to respond to positive and/or negative reviews, but when responding to negative reviews, respond privately rather than publicly. This helps prevent an online “battle” where you’re the center of attention.

4. One idea is to invite negative reviewers back in for a complimentary visit if it was their first experience at the restaurant. Or offer them a discount to come back. Then, follow up with them after the fact.

5. Contact Yelp.com or the user review company if you believe you have been the victim of spam, fraud or unfairly attacked by a disgruntled employee. Sometimes reviews will be posted by users who aren’t registered as having been even near the city where the restaurant they attacked is located.

6. If you are listed on Yelp or other platforms, take advantage of the services they offer, such as tracking hits, and advertising solutions.

11th Year of Feeding Dreams and Building Futures

When the ProStart® program started in Nebraska ten years ago only seven schools participated. Today, we have 46 schools registered to compete in the regional competition with dreams of advancing on to State.

The State competition will be held March 17th at the University of Nebraska East Campus Union in Lincoln.

What ProStart is.
ProStart is the career-building program for high school students who are interested in culinary arts and restaurant and foodservice management. Throughout an exciting two-year period, they study in the classroom, participate in mentored work experiences, and test their skills in local and national competitions. Most importantly, ProStart students grow into the leaders our industry needs.

Why ProStart matters.
From 2009 to 2019, the number of jobs in the restaurant and foodservice industry is projected to increase by 1.8 million. That includes 11% growth in management positions. But ProStart is answering the challenge. It’s already working for approximately 80,000 student participants in more than 1,650 schools, across 47 states, territories and districts.

Who ProStart benefits.
ProStart is an excellent career starter for high school students, an exciting teaching opportunity for educators, a truly rewarding experience for ProStart Coordinators, a chance to share practical knowledge for mentors, and a smart investment in the future for ProStart partners.

We need your help!
We need sponsors, judges, and other volunteers at the upcoming ProStart competitions. Contact Beth Haas to support your industry’s future!
beth_haas@nebraska-dining.org or 402.488.3999 ext. 1
Email marketing is a powerful way for restaurants of all sizes to target communications to their guests. Fishbowl Marketing, the leader in permission-based email marketing for the restaurant industry, has proven that such targeted marketing will increase a restaurant’s sales and customer loyalty. Through our partnership with Fishbowl and the National Restaurant Association, their email marketing solution for independent and small chain restaurants is now available to our members at special member pricing.

Our endorsed provider, Heartland Payments Systems, continues to provide excellent service to our members and actively supports our association.

We continue to participate, in partnership with Three Eagles Communication, and Douglas Theaters, in the “Lunch and a Flick,” program. Members are offered the opportunity to promote their business with a donation of a lunch-for-two as a promotional give away on KFOR 1240 AM. This exclusive member program aligns with our membership promotion goals and we look forward to expanding this program into other areas of the state.

We have partnered with Nebraska.Statepaper.com for our new online dining guide. Nebraska.Statepaper.com provide an online list of NRA members at no cost, accessible on our website, and offers a discount for members for advanced listing services. In addition, we are continuously supplied a list of current clients for membership recruitment purposes.

**Goals**

We are always looking for ways to expand existing service and develop more effective ways of delivering these services and our primary focus for 2012 will be to:

- Effectively represent your interests to the Nebraska Unicameral and the Nebraska Congressional Delegation.
- Continue to expand food and alcohol safety training and consulting programs.
- Aggressively promote the hospitality industry, individual restaurants and the association.
- Recruit new members.
- Maintain more frequent and effective contact with existing members throughout the state.

**Legislation**

The Association, with the excellent support of Jim Otto, our chief lobbyist, was very effective in representing your interests during the 2011 Legislative Session. The following summary provides a review of the issues rising in the session which convened in January 2011, as well as some federal issues we have been involved with. We will continue to work with the Legislative Committee to develop a sound strategic approach to best represent your long term interests in dealing with these issues.

**STATE ISSUES**

**Dram Shop**

“Dram Shop” refers to legislation that holds sellers/servers of alcohol liable for damage, injury, or death as a result of selling or serving an intoxicated person. Nebraska is one of the few remaining “non dram shop” states. Senator Carlson introduced dram shop legislation in the 2011 session. We aggressively opposed the legislation and the Judiciary committee did not advance it to the floor of the legislature. We will continue to work to keep the bill from advancing in the 2012 session.

**Mandatory Training for Servers and Sellers of Alcohol**

Senator Lathrop is very interested in making it mandatory that servers and sellers of alcohol be properly trained. We are working with his staff and have suggested provisions that we may be able to support in this area. These provisions include:

- Training programs be approved by the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.
- A “train the trainer” approach be adopted requiring managers be trained and providing resources for them to train their respective staffs.
- State approved training programs would preempt city training.
- The training programs would be accessible on-line and affordable.
- Training should be valid for three years and transferable from employer to employer.

**Immigration**

We do not believe that the “Arizona style” legislation introduced by Senator Charlie Janssen of Fremont will advance out of committee. Senator Coash introduced legislation that would require
Year End Report (continued)

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employers to use the E-Verify system. In light of recent supportive U.S. Supreme Court action, that legislation will probably get more support in the 2012 session. We will work to ensure it is not overly burdensome on restaurants.

Sales Tax
Nebraska restaurants collect and remit sales tax and receive practically nothing for this service. The cost to restaurants is significant – especially on credit card sales as the transaction fee is charged on the sales tax portion too. We are working on legislation to address this issue.

Out-of-State ID Cards
A Nebraska driver’s license, a Nebraska ID card, an out of state driver’s license, and a passport are legal forms of identification to prove age for the purchase of alcohol in Nebraska. Out-of-state ID cards are not. This is a concern for our members near the Nebraska border. We are considering alternatives to address this issue.

Child Obesity
We anticipate that Senator Avery will introduce legislation addressing child obesity. We are hopeful that it will not be another “toys in childrens’ meals” bill and is something we can support as we share many of his concerns on the subject.

Occupation Taxes
In 2010, the cities of Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, and Norfolk 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 supported legislation to put control on future city occupation taxes and were successful in limiting some occupation taxes in the future but not as successful as we hoped. Stay tuned as the Nebraska Supreme Court will soon take a stand on this issue.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Health care reform has emerged as the issue of the year and we continue to work with the National Restaurant Association and our congressional delegation in an effort to modify some of the aspects of the legislation that could adversely affect our industry. The employer obligations included in the legislation passed by Congress in 2010 represent a very significant challenge and burden for restaurateurs.

The new health care law (a combination of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, PL 111-148), and the Health and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, (PL 111-152) contains a wide range of provisions that will be implemented over the next several years, with the most significant changes taking effect in 2014.

The National Restaurant Association has established a Healthcare Knowledge Center that provides a detailed, current analysis of the legislation, answers specific questions and provides options for compliance. This is the most accurate and up-to-date information available to assist you in complying with this complex legislation, and I strongly encourage you to use that excellent membership benefit. It can be found at www.restaurant.org.

Interchange Fees
We worked hard in support of the Durbin Amendment to the financial reform package. Nebraska Senator Ben Nelsen’s vote in favor was a key to getting it passed in the United States Senate. However, Senator Ben Nelsen later nearly reversed his position and came out in favor of delaying implementation to study the issue further. In our opinion, delay really meant derail and we worked hard to keep the original Durbin Amendment intact and implemented as scheduled. The result was a successful defense from an aggressive attempt by the banks to undo critical debit swipe fee reforms. In the end, the effort produced a win on behalf of the broad merchant community – a win that will save restaurants, merchants, and consumers money and bring competition to a market where there previously was none. Debit card swipe fees are now capped at no more than 12 cents per transaction rather than the previous fee structure that was as high as 2 percent of the purchase price. This means a restaurant will pay a swipe fee to the bank of a maximum of 12 cents to process a $100 debit card transaction. Previously this fee could have been as high as $2.00.
Get to Know the Nebraska Restaurant Association
2012 President Denis Hall, Owner, Fernando’s Café & Cantina

Tell us about your family.
My wife, Bonnie and I have 4 children - Cathie, Heather, Chris and Jeremy.

What do you see as one of the biggest turning points in your life?
The biggest turning point in my life would have to be the day I met my lovely wife.

What are you most proud of?
I am most proud of my family and my hard-working and dedicated employees.

What are your favorite things to do on a day off?
I enjoy sports, reading, and music.

What is the most unique or interesting thing about you that most people probably don’t know?
I’m not really bald. It’s just make-up.

How did you get started in the restaurant business?
My first job was washing pans working in a Bohemian Bakery in Omaha.

What groups or organizations are you involved with?
St. Joan of Arc Church, Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and the Rotary Club just to name a few.

What is a talent you have that you don’t use in your daily work life?
I play the guitar.

What is your favorite movie?
My favorite movie is The Shawshank Redemption.

What is your favorite restaurant?
Fernando’s Café and Cantina, of course.

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STRATEGIC AIR & SPACE MUSEUM

Chili BOMB
It’s cold outside, but it’s chili in here!

Strap in for a full throttle day of tongue-twisting chili tasting and an extremely rare look inside several of our bombers and bomber training accessories.

You be the judge!
Join some local chili masters as they compete for the title of chili masterchef.

Date: Saturday, January 28
Time: 11:00am - 3pm

Check our web site for further updates: www.strategicaidandspace.com
Best Practices in an I-9 Audit After the Notice of Inspection

By Amy Peck, Attorney, Jackson-Lewis LLP

The hottest topic in town is I-9 Audits. They are coming fast and furious, especially in the hospitality, agriculture, manufacturing, and production industries. Many employers who are served with an I-9 Audit are unprepared and may believe that this is a simple administrative matter. To the contrary, substantial civil fines (up to $1100 per I-9!) and potential criminal liability could attach. Employers should take the process seriously and understand it.

The first step in an I-9 Audit is the service of a Notice of Inspection (NOI) on the employer by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Once served, it is critical to act immediately and secure a team of experienced compliance experts to guide you through the I-9 inspection process. We recommend taking the following steps upon receiving a NOI:

• Notify management and executive teams immediately. In most cases, I-9 government investigations should be handled centrally. Every minute counts because the law requires original I-9’s to be produced in just three business days. Extensions may be granted in certain circumstances but cannot be guaranteed. Are you ready to produce the original I-9’s in this time frame?
• Retain experienced immigration counsel immediately. You should inquire as to the specific background the attorney has in defending companies in DHS investigations and request references. Counsel can advise you about whether remediation should be done prior to turning over the I-9’s, as well as reviewing other legal issues such as whether the NOI was properly served, whether the request is statutorily supportable, and other similar issues.
• Gather I-9’s and supporting documentation. Compare active and terminated employee lists with payroll records to ensure you have an I-9 for every employee. Identify any active employees who do not have an I-9 on file. Alphabetize original I-9’s and copies of supporting documents and review to identify issues of concern.
• Make corrections, where appropriate and with the consent of DHS, under the supervision of experienced immigration counsel. Remember that corrections can be made to Form I-9’s but depending on the nature of the error, an employer must make some I-9 corrections (Section 2), while the employee must make other corrections (Section 1). In some circumstances, companies may create more liability if erroneous changes are made without experienced guidance. In correcting the forms, be sure to abide by all anti-discrimination provisions and treat employees consistently to ensure that existing employees are not arbitrarily required to provide new or updated I-9 information or document copies.
• Prior to submitting forms to DHS, make color copies for the company to reference during the subsequent DHS investigation that will follow the NOI. Counsel will also want a copy of the I-9’s.
• Confirm the “chain of custody” for the company’s documents by having the DHS agent acknowledge, in writing, the exact number of original I-9’s that have been relinquished.
• If the company has multiple locations, assess liability at those other sites. It is not uncommon for DHS to start in one location and expand the audit!

Once you have responded to the NOI, the review of your records begins and what happens now is largely out of your control. The government will make a determination if the company should be fined, warned, or if criminal charges should be brought. This is scary stuff.

The best practice is to conduct a proactive compliance audit. The main reasons a proactive audit makes business sense is that remediation done pre-government audit puts the employer in a position to argue that no civil fine is warranted because the employer has exercised good faith. We have assisted many clients in internal audits, and then defended the government audit which resulted in no fine for this very reason! Keep in mind that self-audits are rarely effective, as it is not a good idea to have the person who completes the form judge them.

Government I-9 audits are stressful and DHS is very proud of the large fines that it is assessing. We are living in an era of enforcement with employers feeling the brunt of it. Wise employers will take every precaution available.
Healthcare Reform Timeline

2010

Health Care Reform Becomes Law

Small Business Tax Credit
Certain small businesses that provide health benefits to their employees are eligible for health care tax credits of up to 50 percent of the cost of providing coverage, determined by the size of their workforce, their wages and the employer contribution toward health benefits. The credit, which starts at a maximum of 35 percent and increases to 50 percent after 2014, is targeted specifically to help businesses and organizations that employ moderate- and low-income workers. Employers must pay at least 50 percent of the premium for less than 25 full-time-equivalent employees with wages under $50,000 to be eligible to use the tax credit.

Grandfathered Plans
Grandfathered plans are those health care plans that were in place as of March 23, 2010, and to which few changes are made. Grandfathered plans are not subject to the full requirements of the law, but employers cannot change much of the structure of the plans.

Dependent (Adult Child) Coverage
Plans that provide coverage for dependents are required to extend the coverage to age 26, regardless of participants’ eligibility for other insurance coverage, effective Sept. 23, 2010. Plans must provide coverage to all eligible dependents, including those who are not enrolled in school, not dependents on their parents’ tax returns, and those who are married.

2011

Small Business Wellness Grants
The law makes available about $200 million in grants from 2011 to 2015 to employers with 100 employees or less who work 25 or more hours a week. The grants are designed to fund new comprehensive health promotion programs for small employers.

2013

W-2 Reporting
The Internal Revenue Service will require employers who file 250 or more W-2 forms per year to report the total cost of employer-provided medical benefits on employee W-2 forms, beginning with the 2012 tax year. The value of the health benefits is reportable on the W-2, but it is not taxable.

Notification to Employees
As of March 1, 2013, employers must inform all current employees and any new hires after this date about the existence of the exchange in their state and how employees can access it. Guidance will be issued about how and what must be provided.

FICA Tax Increases
Beginning in 2012, taxpayers with incomes over $200,000 (single) or $250,000 (married filing jointly) will pay increased taxes on the Medicare Contribution Tax and the Medicare Hospitalization Insurance tax.

Flexible Spending Accounts Limited
Beginning in 2013, contributions to Flexible Spending Accounts can be no more than $2,500.

2014

Employer Mandate
Employers with 50 or more full-time-equivalents (FTEs) must offer “minimum essential coverage” to all employees who average 30 or more hours a week in a given month, or potentially be liable for penalties. How calculations are made, how often, and how penalties will be assessed, is the subject of current regulatory action by the Department of Treasury.

Automatic Enrollment
Employers with 200 or more full-time employees must automatically enroll their employees into one of the plans the employer offers. This is subject to two regulatory actions by the Treasury and Labor Departments.

90-Day Waiting Period
All group health plans are allowed up to a 90-day waiting period before offering coverage. Grandfathered plans are also subject to this requirement. The Department of Treasury is considering how to implement this provision.
Individual Mandate
The law requires most individuals to obtain basic health insurance coverage, through their employer, state exchanges or elsewhere, or face an annual penalty.

State Health Insurance Exchanges
Each state must establish an American Health Benefit Exchange by Jan. 1, 2014, to provide affordable health care options to individuals and small group employers. If they choose not to, the Department of Health and Human Services will set up and operate one in that state. The exchanges are envisioned as marketplaces that will offer individual and small group plans that are administered by private insurance companies. It is anticipated that restaurateurs will have a great deal of interaction with the exchanges in their states, even if they do not purchase coverage through the exchange.

2016

Tax Credit Sunset
The tax credit for small employers ceases.

2012 Taste of Nebraska
Monday, April 23rd, 2012

“Diamonds on Ice”
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

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

2017

State Exchanges
In 2014-2016, only individuals and small group employers are eligible to participate in the state exchanges; beginning in 2017, states may elect to allow large group plans to be sold on the exchange as well. States may also form regional exchanges.

2018

Cadillac Plans
Beginning in 2018, the law imposes a new 40 percent excise tax on the value of coverage that exceeds certain dollar thresholds. For 2018, the dollar thresholds for the excise tax are $10,200 for individual coverage and $27,500 for family coverage.

Additional and more complete and current information regarding health care legislation is available on the National Restaurant Association website: www.restaurant.org.
Chef Survey: What’s Hot in 2012

The National Restaurant Association’s “What’s Hot in 2012” survey of nearly 1,800 professional chefs – members of the American Culinary Federation (ACF) – reveals that children’s nutrition and local sourcing will be the hottest trends on restaurant menus this coming year. The chefs also identified smartphone apps and tablet computers as the top technology trends. In addition, 6 out of 10 chefs said they would consider a food truck as an entrepreneurial business venture.

The top 10 menu trends for next year will be:
1. Locally sourced meats and seafood
2. Locally grown produce
3. Healthful kids’ meals
4. Hyper-local items
5. Sustainability as a culinary theme
6. Children’s nutrition as a culinary theme
7. Gluten-free/food allergy-conscious items
8. Locally produced wine and beer
9. Sustainable seafood
10. Whole grain items in kids’ meals

“The top menu trends we’re seeing in our What’s Hot in 2012 survey reflect the macro-trends we have seen grow over the last several years,” said Joy Dubost, Ph.D, R.D., director of Nutrition & Healthy Living for the National Restaurant Association. “Nutrition – especially when it comes to children – is becoming a major focus for the nation’s nearly one million restaurants, in tune with consumers’ increasing interest in healthful eating.”

“Local sourcing of everything – from meat and fish, to produce, to alcoholic beverages – is another big trend for 2012. Local farms and food producers have become an important source of ingredients for chefs and restaurateurs wishing to support the members of their business community and highlight seasonal ingredients on menus,” Dubost added.

“The American Culinary Federation has a long history of working with families to ensure that children receive adequate nutrition, so we are delighted that chefs have chosen to include healthful kids meals in the top 10 menu trends for 2012,” said Michael Ty, CEC, AAC, ACF national president. “We are also pleased to see an emphasis on local sourcing across major ingredient categories, including produce, a vital component of children’s diets.”

Also included in the survey were questions about technology trends, food trucks, fruit and vegetables on menus, and restaurant gardens.

About one-quarter of the chefs (26 percent) ranked smartphone apps as the hottest technology trend in restaurants in 2012, and another quarter (25 percent) said tablet computers (i.e. iPads for menus and wine lists) will be the top technology trend. Sixteen percent said social media would be the top trend, and the same percentage said mobile/wireless/pay-at-the-table payment options, while 4 percent said QR codes.

When asked how to best follow the USDA’s latest dietary guidelines of increasing fruits and vegetables in Americans’ diet, 55 percent said offering a wider variety of vegetable/fruit side dishes on menus, 19 percent said using more produce in existing recipes, and 16 percent said following MyPlate’s visual guideline of making fruits and vegetables half the plate.

When asked whether the tableservice restaurant where they work has a garden, one-third said that it does, one in five said they don’t have space for a garden, and nearly half said they don’t have a garden and rely on suppliers for all their produce needs.

The Association surveyed 1,791 American Culinary Federation member chefs in October-November 2011, asking them to rate 223 individual food items, beverages, cuisines and culinary themes as a “hot trend,” “yesterday’s news,” or “perennial favorite” on restaurant menus in 2012.

These and many other restaurant industry trends will be showcased at the 2012 National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show, to be held at its new dates May 5-8 at Chicago’s McCormick Place. Exhibiting companies from across the United States and around the world will cater to tens of thousands of industry professionals, and top chefs and trend-watchers will share their expertise in culinary demonstrations and education sessions. For more information, visit www.restaurant.org/show.

For complete What’s Hot in 2012 survey results, video and downloadable images, visit www.restaurant.org/fooldtrends.
How Healthy Is Your Restaurant?

Today’s consumers are making healthier choices in just about every corner of their lives. Arguably, one of the most sensitive corners concerns food, perhaps because it is so fundamental to our existence and, therefore, something we all must think about daily. I do believe that the majority of consumers are truly interested and committed to making quality food choices that are personally and globally beneficial but also satisfying to their tastes. As restaurateurs, we are expected to accommodate these preferences.

So, how healthy is your restaurant? Start by considering your food. At its most basic level, good human nutrition depends on both the quality and quantity of nutrients. It’s a simple statement, but as the saying goes, “It’s easier said than done.” For your restaurant’s success, you as an operator need to be committed to serving food with ingredients of the utmost quality, combing each entrée for its nutritional quality.

**Quality control**

For example, in my restaurant, the proteins are of the highest quality attainable. My beef comes from the top five to eight percent of the cattle supply. My insistence on this quality ensures I receive highly marbled steak, because the marbling itself is over 50 percent unsaturated fatty acids. The beef also contains 20 to 30 percent stearic acid, which digests primarily as an unsaturated fat and is very healthy, leaving a saturated fat level of 20 to 30 percent. (Note that the outside fat, which is all saturated fat, should be trimmed off and discarded.) The positive unsaturated to saturated fat ratio makes this beef extremely healthy. The added side benefit is that nutrients like protein, minerals and vitamins are inherently highly digestible, making the nutrient profile of my restaurant’s beef very nutritious and healthy. At the same time, the flavor profile is exceptional, so consumer acceptance goes through the roof. So what’s my beef ‘s big advantage over my competitors’ beef? Its superior taste and flavor, excellent nutrition profile, and most of all, the satisfied customers it creates.

**Prep work**

The preparation process is also a key component in serving quality food. Nutrition is of little value if food product preparation is not sanitary and the health risks from bacterial and viral pathogens are not controlled. The National Restaurant Association has an educational program available called ServSafe® Certification that’s available to the entire restaurant industry to help us serve food safely.

Certification is good for three years, so if your certification has lapsed, recertification would be a good thing to investigate as health issues and regulations change over time. If you have never taken the course, it’s available to everyone in the food service industry. This industry tool will help you as an owner or chef to manage your restaurant’s operational environment.

**Cooking considerations**

The final step in having a healthy restaurant is found in the cooking process. Cooked food should taste good, yes, but the nutrient profile should not be destroyed or diminished from its natural state.

An issue of great importance to me is the broiling and grilling of meats. Meats generally contain three important components: protein, fats and varying degrees of carbohydrates. The opportunity for making great tasting meat is in the carmelization process. However, a considerable amount of meat is made unhealthy all in the name of searing or charring. Dark charring from high heat searing isn’t necessarily very healthy, because the very dark or burned proteins are virtually indigestible to the human digestive system.

Now, I know that some chefs will totally disagree with that statement, but I wonder if they know the science of the issue, which is based on HCA's or heterocyclic amines. These are chemical compounds formed from the high heat transformation of the amino acids in the meat proteins and these are considered very unhealthy because they possess slight carcinogens. Even the burned fat smoke is now being considered unhealthy because of its carcinogenic properties. These risks can be controlled, however, by using moderate heats and by not overcooking.

Research these meat issues. Acquaint yourself with these cooking techniques and potential health issues and make an informed and educated decision in your food cooking procedures for your customers. Other cooking considerations are the use of low trans fat products and the use of low salt recipes. Use of fresh herbs and freshly ground spices also contributes to a very flavorful food and one that has a minimum of oxidized ingredients. Use of complex sugars such as maple, honey, and fruit juices instead of refined sugar for sweetening also enhances flavor and increases nutrition density. Respect your customers’ desire for great tasting and healthy food. It will set your restaurant apart from your competition as being proactive and responsible.

Prepared with years of formal education in Animal Science, Chef Ed Sabatka worked as a cattle nutritionist and consultant for over 20 years. He began a smoked meats catering business in 1994 and in 1998 opened Uncle Ed’s Steakhouse in Grand Island, Neb. Chef Sabatka has won numerous prestigious awards for his restaurant and his beef in particular, including 2009 Best Beef Restaurant by the Nebraska Beef Council.
Money On The Table
By Michael McCarville, Restaurant Specialist for Heartland Payment Systems

What has the Durbin Amendment done for you? If you can’t answer this question, you may be leaving money on the Table. Since October 1, 2011, when the Durbin Amendment took effect, every Heartland Payment Systems customer has received ALL of their DURBIN DOLLARS!

The Durbin Amendment was important legislation that reduced the amount you pay for processing debit card transactions. The Durbin Amendment imposes a cap on debit interchange (fees charged by the associations). All intended to be passed through to you the merchant. But, guess what? Not every processor is doing so. Heartland Payment Systems has always and will continue to pass all savings on to our customers.

Get what’s coming to you! We’ll help you better understand what is happening and what you should look for when reading your current statements. If you are a current Heartland customer, we print your Durbin Dollar Savings amount on the first page of your statement. If your current processor doesn’t you may not be receiving this savings at all.

Before Durbin, the average cost per transaction was $.44. After Durbin, the average cap is $.24. This represents a savings of 20 cents per debit transaction. Without exception, Heartland Payment Systems is sending every single dollar mandated in the Durbin legislation back to our merchants, just as intended. In fact, based on our calculations, the average Heartland merchant will see an additional $1,200 annually in Durbin Dollars. What better tool for your business than more Money on the Table?

Heartland Payments Systems offers many other great tools for your business. We offer some of the best payment processing and marketing tools for the restaurant industry including the state-of-the-art Heartland 360 POS. 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 michael.mccarville@e-hps.com or call 402.551.9832 office or 402.699.1502 mobile.

Test Yourself on Food Safety

1. How many times a day should a food service employee wash their hands?
   A. 6 times
   B. 4 times
   C. As needed
   D. 8 times

2. Customers have the right to expect ___________ food.
   A. Safe
   B. Organic
   C. Nutritious
   D. Clean

3. All of the following practices can help prevent time and temperature abuse except ______________.
   A. Store milk at 41°F or below
   B. Holding chicken noodle soup at 120°F
   C. Reheating chili to 165°F for fifteen seconds within two hours
   D. Holding the ingredients for tuna salad at 41°F or below

4. As part of hand washing, food handlers must vigorously scrub their hands and arms for?
   A. 30 - 35 seconds
   B. 5 - 7 seconds
   C. 25 - 30 seconds
   D. 10 - 15 seconds

5. Which of the following is the MOST important rule of food safety?
   A. Wash hands often
   B. Consult a sanitarian twice a year
   C. Wear gloves at all times
   D. Do not smoke near food

6. Food held in refrigerated storage should be maintained
   A. Within 42°F to 60°F
   B. At 41°F or below
   C. Within 50°F and 55°F
   D. Above 60°F

7. If hand sanitizers and disposable gloves are used they
   A. Will eliminate all hazards to food safety
   B. Should be applied after hand washing
   C. Should be applied before hand washing
   D. Can be used in place of hand washing

8. Cut melons should be stored at what internal temperature?
   A. 41°F or lower
   B. 45°F or lower
   C. 50°F or lower
   D. 48°F or lower

Find answers on page 17
Runza Restaurants raised over $32,000 to purchase books for children in their annual fundraiser, “Great Books for Great Kids” which promotes the importance of reading and literacy. In the nine year history of the fundraiser, over $240,000 has been donated. Runza Restaurants was recognized by the National Restaurant Association in 2005 for the “Great Books for Great Kids” initiative and was awarded the Restaurant Good Neighbor Award in the large business category. Thank you to Runza® Restaurants for being a long time supporter of reading.

Pasta Amore donated $1 from every lunch served during the entire month of October 2011 to “Hope and Healing for South Sudan”. The money donated helped to take life-saving medical care to one of the world’s poorest nations. Every $10 donated paid for one mile of the 9,000-mile journey to save the life of a man, woman or child in need of medical care. Other restaurants that participated were Jams, Brix, Vivace, M’s Pub and Hiro/Hiro 88.

Lincoln resident Jared Beckmann, General Manager of Olive Garden Lincoln, has been presented with Darden Restaurants’ top honor — the Joe R. Lee Diamond Club Award. Now in its 14th year, the award is presented annually to general managers throughout North America. This is the second time Beckmann has received this recognition. Congratulations, Jared!

Nebraska Restaurant Association members in Hall, Hamilton, Howard, and Merrick counties in Nebraska participated in the fourth annual Dine United. Participating NRA members include Applebee’s, Arby’s, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Runza, Sonic Drive-In, Uncle Ed’s Steakhouse and Whiskey Creek Restaurant. Thank you for donating a portion of your sales that will help the hungry and homeless in Nebraska.

In honor of Veteran’s Day, Applebee’s Neighborhood Grill & Bar launched its Thank You Movement, an on-going initiative to collect millions of thank you notes for U.S. Veterans and Active Duty military. The Movement aimed to create an overwhelming display of thank you messages for our nation’s military on the website www.thankyoumovement.com. In addition, Applebee’s continued their tradition by serving free meals to any veteran on Veteran’s Day. Congratulations to Applebee’s!

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!

IN MEMORIAM
Clifton J. DeFreece, age 91, of Columbus died on September 21 at the Norfolk Veterans Home. Cliff and his wife, Cecile F. Kershaw, worked side-by-side in restaurants from 1951 to 1984, including Kings/DeFreeces in Columbus. He was a member and past president of the Nebraska Restaurant Association and was named Nebraska Restaurateur of the Year in 1978. Our condolences are sent to the family and friends of Clifton DeFreece.

Kids LiveWell recognizes the importance of giving parents and children more healthful options and information so they can make choices that are right for their families.

To qualify for Kids LiveWell, restaurants must offer full children’s meals that include an entrée, side and beverage for no more than 600 calories. Meals must consist of nutrient-rich food, including two servings of fruit, vegetables, whole grain, lean protein and/or low-fat dairy. They also must limit sodium, fat and sugar.

Participating restaurants must offer at least one other side dish that follows similar criteria. They also must provide nutrition information about the meal and promote the items so they are easily identifiable.

Learn more about Kids LiveWell and how restaurants can get involved at restaurant.org/kidslivewell.
Dual Membership and What It Means To You

Question: What does “DUAL MEMBERSHIP” mean?

Answer: Your membership with the Nebraska Restaurant Association entitles you to the membership benefits with the National Restaurant Association as well.

The National Restaurant Association and the Nebraska Restaurant Association create value for members by concentrating activity in five key areas.

Advocacy & Representation
Building and sustaining positive public opinion and a favorable political environment.

Here’s what we do for you:
- We lobby key decision makers so they understand the effects of legislation on your business.
- We notify you of policy developments that affect your business, via National Restaurant Association communications and e-alerts.
- We monitor thousands of legislative and regulatory initiatives in concert with state restaurant associations across the country that affect you.
- We organize and manage grassroots issue advocacy campaigns and NRA-PAC (political action committee) to promote pro-business candidates and legislation.

Research & Insights
Anticipating and preparing for emerging trends that could impact restaurants.

Here’s how we help:
- Access to National Restaurant Association research studies like the annual Restaurant Industry Forecast to help you make informed decisions.
- Discounts on additional topic-specific research such as the Operations Report and TrendMapper to benchmark your business.
- The NRA Knowledge Center – a personalized research service available at no additional charge to members.

Tools & Solutions
Helping grow revenues, increase profitability, and develop employees.

Here’s how we save you time and money:
- Restaurant HealthCare gives you access to individual and group plans plus a wellness discount card.
- ServSafe® – classes, training and teaching safe food-handling practices for managers and frontline employees.
- ServSafe Alcohol® – turnkey responsible alcohol service solutions.
- Members receive significant discounts with best-in-class industry programs, like credit card processing, payroll, e-mail marketing, nutrition analysis and more.
- Advice from legal, research, regulatory, policy and food safety experts, including the new online Legal Problem Solver.

Education & Networking
Providing opportunities to connect and learn from each other.

Here’s how:
- Executive Study Groups showcase the latest trends in each management specialty, while participants share best practices with peers, to keep your business ahead of the curve.
- Exclusive webinars and specialty listservs feature impactful topics and trends – ensuring ongoing education of your staff.
- E-newsletters give you the latest news at your fingertips.
- Free entrance to the National Restaurant Association Show – the industry’s premier forum for products, services and information, plus over 70 free educational sessions.

Responsible Stewardship & More
Providing thought leadership to inspire community involvement and impact.

We help foster responsible stewardship via:
- The Conserve Initiative – helping restaurants “Go Green and Save Green.”
- National Restaurant Association’s Greener Restaurants – the nation’s first and only education and recognition program for the food-service industry.
- The Restaurant Neighbor Award – celebrating the wonderful work members do in their communities.
- Working with Share Our Strength, Food Donation Connection and many more groups that impact communities.

Membership Investment
Maximize your membership by sharing this information with your key staff members and by checking out the membership webinar at www.restaurant.org.

Call Brandy with any membership questions at 402.488.3999, ext. 2 or visit our website!
Calendar of Events
Find updates online at www.nebraska-dining.org

January 15
Omaha Restaurant Association’s Annual Dinner
Anthony’s Steakhouse & Lounge, Omaha
Contact Jennie Warren at 402.493.4739

January 23
Annual Meeting
Governor’s Mansion, Lincoln
Noon-2 P.M.
Contact Brandy Nielson at 402.488.3999 ext. 2

January 28
Chili Bomb Competition
Strategic Air & Space Museum, Ashland
11:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Contact Beth Haas at 402.488.3999 ext. 1 to register

February 29
Region 1 ProStart Competition
Chadron State, Chadron
Contact Beth Haas at 402.488.3999 ext. 1
Volunteer to be a judge!

March 10
Region 3 ProStart Competition
Papillion-La Vista High School
Contact Beth Haas at 402.488.3999 ext. 1
Volunteer to be a judge!

March 17
State ProStart Competition
University of Nebraska East Campus Union, Lincoln
Contact Beth Haas at 402.488.3999 ext. 1
Volunteer to be a judge!

April 17-18
NRA Public Affairs Conference

April 23
Taste of Nebraska
“Diamonds on Ice”
Strategic Air & Space Museum, Ashland

April 27-29
National ProStart Competition
Baltimore, Maryland

Welcome New Members

Restaurant Members

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Michael Hendrickson
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Arlene & George Thietje
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Norfolk, NE 68702
402-371-3800
www.newcenturyinsagency.com

SERVSAFE Calendar

January
10th   Lincoln
25th   Lincoln

February
6th    Lincoln
20th   Lincoln

March
20th   Lincoln

April
3rd    Lincoln
16th   Lincoln

Contact Beth Haas to register 402.488.3999 ext. 1 or beth_haas@nebraska-dining.org
We have fresh ideas for winter menus!

How can we help you?

- Culinary Support
- Recipe Development
- Seasonal Ideas
- Trend Information
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- Menu Engineering
- Menu Design & Printing
- Marketing Ideas
- Staff Training
- Inventory Control
- Kitchen Design
- Supplies & Equipment

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You can change a student’s future...
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The ProStart high school program is a slice above the rest. Designed to attract interested students to the hospitality industry. We need your help. Sponsorships, internships, job shadow sites, volunteers and judges are needed.

Contact Beth Haas
402.488.3999 or email Beth_Haas@Nebraska-Dining.org
Some things are too important to trust to just anybody.

A full-featured POS system, the hub of managing your business, is an important investment. If you’re in the market, here’s a special Micros feature you’ll want to consider. A significant percentage of our POS systems are still in use after 10 years on the job. Day in, day out, you can always count on the quality of our products. And more important, trust our people to make Micros POS work as hard as you do.

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