Nebraska’s Restaura-preneurs.

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Nebraska’s restaura-preneurs.
Beating the Odds.

How do Nebraska Restaurant Association’s most successful restaura-preneurs survive and thrive?

Runza® Restaurants - A Real Affection for the Business – and 65 Years of Success

In 1949, when Sally Everett invested $500 to open a restaurant with her brother, Alex Brening, that sold “Runzas” — the word Sally coined to describe her mom’s sandwiches - she probably didn’t imagine that the single restaurant would grow into a successful franchise operation that would still be going strong 65 years later with 80 stores in four states. Good with people and a hard worker with a “can do” attitude, Sally was one of the first in a long list of Nebraska’s successful restaura-preneurs. She managed her business for 15 years before turning over operations to her son, Don, in 1964.

According to Dawn Amend, Purchasing Director for Runza and Don’s daughter, Don inherited his Mom’s “can do” attitude and was the architect for the company’s expansion. That growth has been slow and controlled and within a certain radius so that the stores receive the necessary support they need to be successful. A second location was opened in 1966. By 1983, there were 20 Runza locations, 40 by 1987 and 80 by 2008. Expansion was easier in the earlier years because there were fewer competitors and land was less expensive and Don was strategic - in growing the company he focused on people, quality, and cost management.

Don valued his employees, taking time to find the job that fit them best, making sure they got the training needed to do the job well and rewarding them for a job well done. When Don Sr. turned operations over to his children, Don Jr. (President), Dawn (Purchasing) and Renee (HR and Accounting), in the late 90’s, he was turning it over to staff that were representative of the people he looked for to manage the restaurants — typically hired from within with the hands-on experience that gives them a good understanding of the intricacies of the business. All three Everetts started “at the bottom”, cutting onions for onion rings and then moving on to learn other tasks from their Dad — who taught all the same tasks to his other employees - from mopping to washing to making a “2-minute” burger.

Don’s legacy of training and careful selection of managers continues at “Runza University”, a week long training program for franchisees and managers, typically people who started with Runza when they were 16. They take the National Restaurant Association’s ServSafe® program and receive training in, among other topics, negotiating, product quality, and cost management.

There is a strong focus on people. The company philosophy is that every person is a potential customer…or employee. Runza builds the strong relationships that “grow business” such as negotiating a ten year contract with University of Nebraska Athletics. The importance of giving back is emphasized in the jobs provided and the significant contributions that each store makes in the communities they serve.

Like most restaurants, product quality has been stressed throughout the company’s 65 years. Don, Sr. took pride in what he served and told employees that quality was most important. The company pays more for ingredients if it improves quality; goes cheap when appropriate and only if it doesn’t sacrifice quality. Runza recognizes that customer

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Nebraska’s restaurateurs play an important role in the economic growth and stability of Nebraska. In 2013, restaurants employed 88,500 Nebraskans and accounted for $2.4 billion in sales (and corresponding tax revenues) — and for every dollar spent in Nebraska restaurants, another $.70 in sales was generated for the state’s economy.¹

¹National Restaurant Association
I attended the National Restaurant Association Public Affairs Conference in Washington, DC on April 29th and 30th and met with members of our Nebraska Congressional Delegation. The Affordable Care Act, minimum wage legislation and immigration reform were the major focus of our discussions. Each of our Congressmen voted in favor of H.R. 2575, “Save Americas Workers Act” which passed the House with bi-partisan support and changes the ACA definition of full employment from thirty hours per week to forty hours. This is a very significant change for our members and I expressed our appreciation for their support. A similar bill, S. 1188, has been introduced in the Senate and we need to encourage our two Senators to support this when it comes up for a vote.

Additional changes are needed to the ACA to make employer reporting requirements less onerous, change the definition of small business and remove the auto enrollment mandate. As a practical matter, the Affordable Care Act will be with us for at least four more years since repealing it requires a Republican Senate, House and President. We will continue to support the National Restaurant Association as they advocate for legislation to effect these changes so important to our industry.

For continuing updates on the law, visit the NRA’s Health Care Headquarters. Other issues discussed include the minimum wage increase, which was opposed by all of our congressional delegation, and did not pass in the Senate or House of Representatives, and immigration reform which passed the Senate and is awaiting action in the House of Representatives.

State Legislative Issues

Issues we opposed that did not pass
• LB794 – Require daily remittance of sales and use taxes on credit and debit card transactions. The existing monthly remittance of sales and use taxes on cash sales would continue.
• LB880 - Require notice of debit and preauthorization hold amounts as prescribed and provide for a violation to be a deceptive trade practice (tip authorizations on credit and debit cards).
New Century Agency
Business Insurance
Contact: George & Arlene Thietje
888.424.3800
New Century Agency was founded in 1993 by George & Arlene Thietje. New Century specializes in restaurant insurance and currently writes over 500 restaurants throughout the Midwest.

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.

**NRA ENDORSED PROVIDERS**

**Officers**
BRIAN MAGEE, President
Upstream Brewing Company, Omaha
bmagee@upstreambrewing.com

LINDA DENNIS, 1st Vice President
Runza Restaurants, Lincoln
ldennis@runzanaational.com

NICOLE JESSE, 3rd Vice President
LaCasa Pizzaria, Omaha
njesse@cox.net

ED SABATKA, Secretary-Treasurer
Uncle Ed’s Steakhouse, Grand Island
esabatka@unccdsteakhouse.com

**Staff**
JIM PARTINGTON
Executive Director
jpartington@nebraska-dining.org

BRANDY NIELSON
Membership and Marketing Coordinator
bnielson@nebraska-dining.org

RITA REIMAN
Accountant
countryviewbookkeeping@gmail.com

JIM OTTO
Government Relations
nebrailfed@hotmail.com

Hospitality Education Foundation (HEF)
1610 South 70th Street, Suite 101
Lincoln, NE 68506
402.488.3999 Fax 402.488.4014
nehef1@yahoo.com

National Restaurant Association
1200 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
800.424.5156
Fax 202.331.2429
www.restaurant.org

National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation
312.715.1010
Toll Free 800.765.2122

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A lease contract comes in many forms. At first blush you might think that a lease is a lease. Look again. As a restaurateur the cost of outfitting your premises can be substantially more complicated than the typical bookstore or boutique and may have different implications for coverage under an insurance policy.

Consider the following:
As a tenant what is your responsibility for maintenance, repairs, or replacements under the lease?

Furniture, fixtures, stock in trade, content. Everybody knows to insure these.

But what about:
  a. Mechanical system
  b. Lighting, plumbing, wall coverings, ceilings, floors, elevators, electrical panels, ventilation systems?
  c. Plate glass
  d. Building damage due to a break-in
  e. Improvements from a prior tenant that are reused by the new tenant, e.g. flooring, wall covering, acoustical tile, toilet fixtures, etc.

Triple net leases are the method-of-choice for many landlords and require you to pay the real estate taxes, the building insurance and maintenance on the property in addition to a pro-rata share of costs associated with the repair and maintenance of any common area. You are also required to carry an insurance policy of your own for the items for which you are responsible. But even within the structure of all of this looms many grey areas. Let’s look at some of these other areas.

• Are you required to repair or replace the items mentioned above under all circumstances or is the landlord obligated under the lease to cover some of them in the event of fire or other casualty? A case in point, a hail storm damages the rooftop air conditioning system—are you responsible for repair or replacement or is the landlord?

• Have you added sufficient value to your insurance policy to cover all of these items should there be a covered cause of loss and especially if you did not install the items originally—e.g. mechanical system components, plumbing, flooring. If you have a coinsurance requirement on your insurance policy—80%, 90%, 100%—do you know how you will be affected if it’s your responsibility to replace the HVAC system, but you didn’t add sufficient value to your policy to cover it? If you only have contents coverage on your policy, where will you get coverage for the mechanical system?

• Do you have an insurable interest under the conditions of your insurance policy for items you did not purchase or install?

• Have you agreed to indemnify and hold harmless the landlord, the landlord’s mortgagor, the landlord’s property management company? Are you required to provide a waiver of subrogation to these entities on any of your policies? Does your insurance agent know all of these requirements?

One cannot read only the section of the lease labeled “Insurance” and understand what is required of you. Many other sections have insurance implications such as the definition of “Premises”, the section on “Heating, Ventilating & Cooling”, the “Landlord’s Covenants”, “Maintenance” “Surrender of Premises”.
New model COBRA notices should be used by employers

The Department of Labor has published a new model general COBRA notice and a new model election COBRA notice. The new model notices reflect that coverage is available in the public health insurance exchanges, i.e., the “Marketplace,” and include information on special enrollment rights in the Marketplace. The new notices may be obtained on the Department of Labor website.

Employers should utilize the new revised model notices on the Department of Labor website to ensure good faith compliance with applicable requirements. Employers should also consider amending other materials addressing the company health plan and COBRA, such as employee handbooks, company policy manuals and summary plan descriptions to maximize employee understanding of the Marketplace alternatives.

Although enrollment in Marketplace coverage must generally occur during an open enrollment period, there is a special enrollment period for health plans in the Marketplace available to persons eligible for COBRA when:

(1) such persons initially are eligible for COBRA due to a loss of other minimum essential coverage; and

(2) such persons’ COBRA coverage is exhausted.

Employers may want to reach out to affected individuals to make them aware of this special enrollment right.
Many hospitality organizations use interns, especially student interns, during the summer months. While interns often are excited for the opportunity and agree to provide services for no pay, businesses must consider the wage and hour risks of such arrangements. Simply put, an individual’s agreement to work in an unpaid position now does not prevent him or her from seeking alleged unpaid wages later. In addition to being entitled to withheld minimum wage and overtime pay, an intern found to be misclassified could be entitled to other damages, including “lost” employee benefits, meal and rest periods, and penalties.

Unless specific conditions are met, a business usually is expected to provide an intern with at least minimum wage for all hours worked and overtime pay, if applicable. Employers with internship programs must analyze carefully the structure of their programs and the work performed by interns if they want to ensure such positions are unpaid.

The federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) defines an employee broadly as “any individual employed by an employer.” The U.S. Department of Labor, consistent with U.S. Supreme Court precedent, recognizes that the FLSA payment obligations do not apply to individuals who are part of programs that provide training for their own educational benefit if the training meets the following six criteria (see U.S. Department of Labor Fact Sheet #71, available at http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf):

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training that would be given in an educational environment;
- The internship is for the benefit of the intern;
- The intern does not displace a regular employee, but works under close observation of existing staff;
- The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern and, on occasion, the employer’s operations may actually be impeded;
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the completion of the internship; and
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

State departments of labor standards often are similar, but not necessarily identical. Employers considering using interns must review carefully each aspect of the internship program and apply the DOL’s factors and any applicable state factors to the contemplated program.
Executive directors report

- **LB943** - Change the minimum wage rate – incrementally raise the minimum wage to $9 per hour by January 1, 2017.
- **LB947** - Change the minimum wage for persons compensated by way of gratuities – raises tipped employee minimum wage to $3 in July of 2014 and then to 70% of regular minimum wage.
- **LB444** – Mandatory Training for Servers and Sellers of Alcohol. Create a statewide requirement similar to the City of Lincoln’s program. Training programs would have to be approved by the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.
- **LB955** - Adopt the Paid Family Medical Leave Act - must provide up to 6 weeks paid family medical leave.

**Issues we supported that passed**
- **LB474** – Further restrict occupation taxes.
- **LB888** - Provide for changing the hours for sale of alcohol – Extends off sale of alcohol to 2AM to match on sale hours with local approval.
- **LR399** - Recommend the enactment of comprehensive immigration reform

**Issues we supported that did not pass**
- **LB887** - Adopt the Wellness in Nebraska Act – Medicaid expansion.
- **LB991** - Prohibit collection of interchange fees by payment card networks on sales and use taxes.
- **LB333** – Increase Sales Tax Collection Allowance.

Nebraska Restaurants and Retailers annually collect and remit millions more in sales tax than they collect on a net basis.

This is primarily due to the fee charged by credit card companies on the sales tax portion. Two bills were introduced at our request to address this issue. Senator Nordquist introduced LB991 which would prohibit the collection of credit or debit card fees on the sales tax portion. Senator Schumacher introduced LB333 which would increase the overall collection allowance merchants receive for collecting and remitting sales tax.

LB991 was not advanced by the Banking Committee. However, that discussion provided more focus on the unfairness of the situation and helped provide support for LB333. Enactment of the language in LB333 would mean approximately $300 more to your bottom line for every million dollars in taxable sales. 10 million = $3,000. 20 Million = $6,000. You do the math.

For the first time in our over ten years of working on this issue, the text of LB333 was advanced to General File. While there was not enough time remaining in the session to advance it further, this gives us much hope for the 2015 session.

We will need your active support to get this accomplished.

From our perspective this session of the legislature ended well. We expect minimum wage and mandatory training for servers and sellers of alcohol to be back on the agenda in 2015.

**Meeting Our Goals**

Our mission is to represent, educate and promote the restaurant industry and we continue to look at ways to improve our ability to meet mission requirements. Our year end strategic review indicated that we do a reasonably effective job of representing your political interests and we have adapted to staff changes experienced in 2013 by forming strategic
relationships with the University of Nebraska Extension Service to conduct food safety training. Fayrene Hamouz with the Department of Health Sciences is managing our Pro Start Program. We still need to establish more formal agreements but these interim steps allowed us to continue support for the education component of our mission.

We need to focus on improving performance in the following areas:

- Efficiency of internal operations
- Communications with membership
- More aggressive promotion of the industry
- Member benefit package

The first step toward improving both internal operations and communicating with members is to install a modern efficient membership relations management application. We are in the process of installing this now and staff training will take place on June 19, 2014. After we are proficient in using the system we will connect our membership application to our financial management application. When the full system is operational our ability to identify potential members, communicate with existing members, support event planning, conduct analysis of our member database and manage our finances will be significantly improved.

One addition to our member benefit package that we are considering is health insurance. The National Restaurant Association has teamed with United Healthcare to provide members, large and small, with accessible and comprehensive wellness plans, featuring:

- Medical, dental, vision and life insurance
- Access to United Healthcare’s network of healthcare providers and services
- A range of wellness programs for groups and individuals
- A discount card for savings on an array of wellness products and services, including prescriptions, long-term care, behavior health services and infertility treatment
- Easy, online plan management with access to benefits, rates and real-time assistance
- Health management tools, including a medical encyclopedia, disease and condition centers, information on tests and procedures, and a drug guide and interaction checker
- Compliance assurance for employers and employees

Our previous ventures into the health insurance business were not well received by our members but this program, sponsored by the National Restaurant Association, is designed for our industry. I’m working with the National Restaurant Association on contractual issues and will present a proposal to our executive committee in July.

We appreciate your support and welcome comments and recommendations.

Homemade, fresh food.
Money on the table

This is my “Swan Song”, my last writing of “Money On The Table”. Yes, I am officially retired. I can’t believe it arrived so quickly. My 16 years with Heartland Payment Systems and nearly 14 years as a member of the Nebraska Restaurant Association Board of Directors have come to an end.

It’s been a great ride! I have been involved in restaurant promotions for 35 plus years. As Director of Sales, I helped produce the Food Fair in Omaha and the Michigan Taste Fest in Detroit, MI. When Share Our Strength came to Omaha with Taste of the Nation, I volunteered for the cause. When I made the move to Heartland Payment Systems, one of the key factors in my decision was the fact that they made the hospitality industry their primary vertical market. Plain and simple, I love the restaurant biz.

My tenure with the Nebraska Restaurant Association has been very rewarding. I loved working on the many projects from Taste of Nebraska to both the Hospitality Education Foundation and NRA golf outings. The Hospitality Education Foundation will continue to draw my attention. I come from a family of teachers and am proud to have helped in supporting the BEST ProStart® Program in the country. Nebraska has a great reputation in the culinary arts and it all begins with our great educational institutions.

In parting, my advice to all is to pay close attention to security. In the payment industry, we have less than scrupulous companies that will use the ever changing technologies to scare you into making wrong moves that can not only compromise your business, but cost you your hard earned money. Call on your Heartland Relationship Managers for honest evaluations and recommendations when it comes time for necessary changes.

In parting, I want to thank Jim Partington and his entire staff. It’s been great working with all of you. My thanks to the many members I have partnered with on many projects and, most of all, my customers. I appreciated the opportunity to serve your needs throughout the years. Heartland will continue to serve you well.

Heartland Payments Systems offers many great tools for your business. We offer some of the best payment processing and marketing solutions for the restaurant industry. 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.

We take great pride in what we have to offer and derive great satisfaction in delivering solutions that bring more money to your table!
Taste of Nebraska rides again...

La Casa Pizzaria, Omaha, Chances “R” Restaurant, York, and Dean’s Foods/Land O’ Lakes received the Nebraska Restaurant Association Hospitality awards at the association’s annual banquet, Taste of Nebraska. This year’s event was held Monday, April 28th at the Omaha Hilton Downtown.

Winners of the award are selected for the contributions they make to both the hospitality industry and the communities in which they do business. Nicole Jesse of La Casa Pizzaria accepted the 2013 Eastern Nebraska Hospitality Award; Tom Vanous of Chances “R” restaurant received the Greater Nebraska Hospitality Award. Allied Member of the Year was presented to Randy Stoppel of Dean’s Foods/Land O’ Lakes.

The 2013 Nebraska Restaurant Neighbor Awards were also presented during the event which had a “Kentucky Derby” theme. Hillis & Co added the finishing touches to the evening that included a “Derby Hat” parade, top shelf bourbon tasting, and Derby menu. Keynote speaker was Shawn Eichorst, UNL Athletic Director.

HuHot Mongolian Grill, daVinci’s, The Egg & I Restaurants, and Lazlo’s, Inc. earned the 2013 Nebraska Restaurant Neighbor Awards. The National Restaurant Association and founding partner American Express developed the Restaurant Neighbor Award to raise awareness about the restaurant industry’s contributions in local communities across the country and to inspire other restaurant operators and owners to make even greater contributions in their communities.

The Nebraska Restaurant Association would like to thank special guest, Shawn Eichorst, UNL Athletic Director, and the many sponsors and guests that made the 25th Annual Taste of Nebraska another success.
With Heartland, you get the solutions you need to help your business improve and grow. Discover the peace of mind that comes with knowledgeable resources, industry-leading security and clear communication from a company that cares as much about the success of your business as you do.

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Jeff & Dianna Johnson
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Elkhorn, NE 68022
402-660-2682
djohnson@miltekusa.com
www.miltekusa.com

Mil-tek Central Recycling & Waste Solutions LLC is a local distribution company aimed at reducing costs by providing sustainable waste handling solutions. Handling trash in the restaurant environment has consistently increased in cost and been the source of logistical issues. Mil-tek has brought a range of small, air powered compactors and cardboard balers to the market, aimed at the restaurant sector to provide financial, logistical and backdoor management improvements. By using Mil-tek Solutions an average restaurant’s savings can easily run $300 - $500/monthly. Restaurants are cleaner and more hygienic for customers and staff. And restaurant staff is happy to “recycle” and work in a “greener” environment.

By implementing these types of operational solutions, restaurants are able to achieve greater profits, motivate and improve productivity in their employees and do a great thing for our planet. www.miltekusa.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
Find updates online at www.nebraska-dining.org

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O’Neill, NE 68763
970-266-5121
mmiles@huronproduce.com
www.huronproduce.com

Our 24-acre, hydroponic greenhouse in O’Neill, NE produces approximately 370,000 pounds of tomatoes per week. The passion we have for growing sets us apart from other tomato growers, and our quality standards produce exceptional tasting tomatoes. Locally grown and ripened, picked and packed right here in Nebraska for Nebraskans… It doesn’t get any fresher than that! Ask your tomato supplier for “Suntastic” brand tomatoes today!

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Commercial Investment Services
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212 North Dewey
North Platte, NE 69101
308-532-1332
info@cisnorthplatee.com

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ProStart® happenings and more

**Milford Team Great Ambassadors for Nebraska ProStart**

Are there only two of you? Where are your teammates? How will two of you prepare a three course meal in 2 hours? These were the frequently asked questions posed to Ashley Navratil and Mitchell Roth, the Nebraska ProStart team, at the National ProStart Invitational in Minneapolis, May 3 - 5. Although the Management Competition was won by Texas and the Culinary Competition was won by Guam, Ashley and Mitchell were great ambassadors for Nebraska ProStart. Congratulations and job well done are certainly appropriate for Ashley, Mitchell and their Milford High ProStart teacher, Cheryl Meyer Thompson. Special thanks to Gary Thompson, Cheryl’s husband, who was the van driver and dedicated cheerleader for the Minneapolis adventure!!

**Scottsbluff Teacher Participates in Educator of Excellence Program**

Suzanne Myers, Scottsbluff High ProStart Teacher and the Nebraska ProStart Teacher of the Year, participated in the Educator of Excellence program sponsored by the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation. As a first time restaurant show attendee, she reports being overwhelmed by the size and scope of the show and the industry. She is now anxious to get back to school in August to try out many new ideas in her classroom.

**ProStart Teacher Forum June 25 and June 26 in Lincoln**

Professional development for our ProStart teachers is an important initiative for NRAEF.

The 2014 ProStart Teacher Forum focuses on entrepreneurship, marketing and culinary trends. On June 25, ProStart teachers will hear young Lincoln entrepreneurs and share their experiences planning and marketing their restaurant concepts. On June 26, the ProStart teachers will be the guests of Lincoln Sysco Marketing and Culinary teams, and learn about what’s new in culinary. Sincere appreciation is extended to all who have volunteered their time and expertise in supporting the ProStart Teacher Forum.

**Nebraska ProStart Students Receive Scholarships**

Two Nebraska ProStart students, Mitchell Roth, Milford High, and Wyatt Kosalka, Plattsmouth High, are the recipients of $2000 scholarships which are awarded annually through the support of the National Restaurant Association, the Nebraska Restaurant Association and the Omaha Restaurant Association. In the fall, Mitchell will enroll in the Culinary Arts Program at Southeast Community College and Wyatt will attend The Institute for the Culinary Arts, Metropolitan Community College.
Hockenbergs is a single source for your design, supply and equipment needs. We stock a wide range of products including equipment, smallwares, disposables and janitorial products. We also offer design services, custom stainless, millwork, custom refrigeration as well as full opening packages.

SAVE THE DATE!

2014
NRA Fall Golf Outing

Monday, September 22, 2014
at Hillcrest Country Club,
9401 E. O Street,
Lincoln, NE

Join us for the 20th Annual Nebraska Restaurant Association Golf Classic

Space is limited, so reserve your four-some or become a sponsor by emailing Brandy today.
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We have some new technology here at the Nebraska Restaurant Association that we are excited to share with you! In June, we installed our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. We chose Vtiger—a web based CRM that we will be able to log in to from any computer and from anywhere. Jim and I have been working to get familiar with it and so far it seems pretty fantastic!

As always, one of our top priorities is membership development and growth. The CRM will allow us to better track and follow up with leads and opportunities. Communication with our current membership is of utmost importance. We split our prospects and current membership into districts. We are pinpointing key people in the districts who are or could be instrumental in helping us grow membership, as well as raise overall awareness of the Nebraska Restaurant Association.

I thought I would take the time in this section to provide information on two membership benefits available to you through your dual membership in the National and Nebraska Restaurant Associations.

**North American LED**

Through an exclusive agreement with the National Restaurant Association, North American LED has set up a program to help restaurants save money in three ways:

1. We offer high quality LEDs at special prices—lower than the big box stores or your local electrical contractor can provide.
2. Our high-efficiency LED bulbs will significantly reduce your electric bill.
3. LED bulbs last much longer, eliminating expensive bulb replacement routines and reducing maintenance costs.

North American also has a savings calculator that restaurant operators can use to not only calculate annual energy-cost savings, but an estimated state rebate amount and three-year outlook analysis as well.

Please contact Rebecca Fuhrman to learn about special NRA Member pricing. You can email her at rfuhrman@northamericanled.com or call (262) 409-2174.

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Mopro packs a full array of essentials into one package including a stunning new HTML5 website, your own custom video and photography, secure web hosting, a mobile site that looks great on any smartphone or tablet, complete Facebook integration with e-commerce, social media presence, expert one-on-one technical service and more. MoPro has worked with more than 125 major brands and Fortune 500 companies.

Visit www.restaurant.org to take full advantage of all of the benefits your membership provides.

It’s just good business!
An Omaha chef recently attended the 2014 Pork Summit at the Greystone Campus of the Culinary Institute of America. Stokes Grill and Bar Chef John Ursick won the April 4 through 6 trip to St. Helena, Calif., after judges declared his pork dish the top entry during the 2013 Nebraska Taste of Elegance competition.

The summit, which is sponsored by the National Pork Board, brings together winners of state and regional Taste of Elegance competitions. The weekend features demonstrations by guest chefs, educational instruction about pork, the chance to work in the institute’s world-famous teaching kitchens and networking opportunities with other chefs and key industry players.

“To be exposed to world class, legendary and Michelin starred chefs all in the same weekend was a wonderful learning experience and has

John Ursick Gains Fresh Perspective for Use of Pork in Omaha’s Culinary Scene
given me a lifetime of memories,” said Ursick, who prepared pork cheek, rustic pork liver pate with raspberry, caramel and field greens to win the trip to the Pork Summit. “I took away a fresh perspective on utilizing the entire pig and a fresh take on ways to bring exciting dishes to our guests at Stokes.”

Ursick said summit participants revisited classic dishes such as a sausage and egg sandwich, pork scallopine, and green chile and potato stew that were re-envisioned using nontraditional cuts of pork.

“What a coup to have an individual of Chef Ursick’s caliber represent Nebraska at the Pork Summit,” said Jan Miller, Nebraska Pork Producers Association President. “We are anxious to witness his experience and anticipate its impact on the Omaha culinary community.”

The Nebraska Taste of Elegance competition is sponsored by the Nebraska Pork Producers Association and is held in conjunction with Pinot, Pigs & Poets, a local fundraising event for nonprofit Completely KIDS. The Taste of Elegance competition was added to the Pinot, Pigs & Poets event lineup in 2013 as a result of the support of the Nebraska Pork Producers Association in years prior.

The Pinot, Pigs & Poets committee and the Nebraska Pork Producers Association have similar goals in bringing pork to the forefront and highlighting Omaha’s fine culinary work. The joint efforts inspire the area’s most creative and well-known chefs to showcase pork, strengthen their preferences for pork, promote more frequent dining at participating restaurants, and increase consumer awareness and demand for pork.

“There are many chefs in Omaha using the whole hog in exciting ways, and I hope that I can contribute to the inventive environment that is coursing through Omaha,” Ursick said. “Omaha has an incredible culinary scene and I’m lucky, humbled and honored to be a part of it.”

Chef Jason Hughes, of Happy Hollow Club, will attend the 2015 Pork Summit at the Greystone Campus of the Culinary Institute of America in St. Helena, Calif., for his winning dish: Heads or Tails (braised cheek and pig tail croquette). For more information about Pinot, Pigs, & Poets, visit pinotandpigs.org.
Nebraska’s restaurateurs often provide the “first job” training for young Nebraskans – the training that leads to developing “Nebraska’s nice”!2

In 1994, in spite of some people telling them they were crazy, Mumgard and Kitten opened a second location at 27th and Cornhusker. That area was not developed or “upscale” at the time, but the co-owners took a look at the city’s development plan and decided they wanted to be in on the ground floor of that expansion. It was a huge success.

In 1999, Brewsky’s added their third, and most successful store, at 70th and Van Dorn. In 2001, when Mumgard’s wife got a promotion and the family moved to Omaha, it only seemed natural to test their vision in the Omaha market where they weren’t really known. They opened a new bar on 153rd. At the time, there was no competition and a “ton of houses” at the location on 153rd. A second Brewsky’s was opened on Park Avenue in Omaha in 2006. When the economy dipped, the owners quit looking at expansion, deciding to take care that what they have stays profitable.

Kitten says that their brand is somewhat evolving, but they’ve been successful because they stick to what they do well. They are a sports bar so they’re not going to offer Sushi, or vegetarian food. “When people go to Brewsky’s,” Kitten says, “they come to watch the game, and want a burger and a beer.” When Brewsky’s ventures out and offers entertainment options like “Blazing Pianos”, they stick to those things that complement what they already do.

Brewsky’s is selective in hiring. Kitten says they have put people in the wrong positions, so he’s learned to look at personality and attitude in applicants; you can teach people how to count change but you can’t teach the interactive “hospitality personality” which attracts and keeps customers. He’s proud of his current and former employees, many of whom have shaped their entrepreneurial skills at Brewsky’s.

When offering advice to people who are thinking about opening a restaurant/bar, Kitten says it’s hard work. You have to have a desire to serve people, and then offer them good service, and a good product at a fair price. Kitten says many people go into the business without knowing where their concept fits in the marketplace, or how much it costs to do business and they end up undercapitalized. Many don’t understand how regulatory and legislative initiatives can affect profitability. Kitten recommends membership in the Nebraska Restaurant Association to help protect the interests of restaurateurs and help shape the face and voice of the industry. Kitten says the Association’s efforts regarding unemployment classifications saved them a considerable amount of money, and the organization has been successful in protecting his interests in other areas such as dram shop, gift cards, storm water, etc.

Kitten says that although the economy is coming back, there are a number of issues that could/will affect Nebraska’s restaurateurs. Staffing is an issue in Lincoln with all the new restaurants. The Affordable Care Act is up in the air; minimum wage petitions are being signed, food labeling may be required, and restaurants struggle with the public desires for farm to table food. Food inflation continues with beef prices at historic highs.

In spite of all that, Kitten is optimistic. Lifestyles have changed; both mom and dad working so people are eating out more. Kitten is glad to be doing business in Nebraska where people prefer local business to national chains. And with almost 25 years in business, and six successful locations, Brewsky’s is beating the odds.

According to one study, 27% of new restaurants fail during the first year; 50% will fail after 3 years, and 60% will go south after five years. At the end of 10 years, 70% will be out of business.³

³Cornell and Michigan State University
Looking for a few good restaurateurs

With character, desire and discipline, veterans have what it takes to succeed as restaurateurs. Understanding them will help you attract these potentially model employees.

About 250,000 veterans work in the restaurant industry, according to National Restaurant Association statistics. That figure could swell as more restaurants seek to hire veterans, and more veterans return from abroad. As of 2011, the United States has about 21.5 million military veterans, according to the Census Bureau.

Many restaurant operators recognize veterans’ applicable skills, as well as their professional fit.

“The military culture is similar to ours,” says Lyle Forcum, executive director, asset protection, Panda Restaurant Group. “They both are driven by goal-oriented achievers who leverage hard work, continuous learning and focus to create great operations and new opportunities for their teams and for themselves.”

A marine for 21 years, Forcum has recruited veterans from all branches of service and recognizes their potential benefits for restaurants.

Veterans generally are talented in planning and risk, stress and resource management – skills developed in basic training. Those who engage in “war gaming” during military service also learn to predict and counter opponents through simple and systematic procedures. Applied to restaurants, such strategic foresight can have powerful application in creating menus, setting prices, and opening and marketing a franchise.

“We’re often looking for general managers who can run a million-dollar-plus business,” Forcum says. “These candidates must handle their own labor scheduling, profit and loss financial statements, food-safety procedures and supply-chain management. From corporal to colonel, veterans bring us the leadership and work ethic we need to fill these positions.”

Hiring challenges

Veterans don’t always market themselves as such, according to a November 2012 CareerBuilder study that identified common barriers between employers and veterans. Although 45 percent of employers say they focus more on applications submitted by veterans, 30 percent state that it’s not always clear they’re looking at a veteran’s application.

Some employers worry about a vet’s ability to adapt to a civilian environment. The prevalence and publicity about post-traumatic stress disorder has added an often-unsubstantiated stigma that could hinder a vet’s employment prospects.

“A communication gap needs to be closed between restaurant and military cultures,” Forcum says. “Some myths need to be dispelled. For instance, not all service men and women have PTSD.”

As for veterans, some aren’t sure where to start their job search after they return from active duty. Others might not understand how to transfer their skills to the civilian sector.

Here are six tips to recruit from an army of talent:

• Consider marketing directly to them through resources that pair veterans with new careers. Websites such as HireVets.com and VetFran, for example, allow restaurants to post job openings and search for veteran candidates.

• Review your recruiting efforts. McDonald’s plans to create more than 100,000 career opportunities for veterans over the next three years and enhance existing programs to help vets obtain management positions. The company also is launching a veteran spouse-recruitment program.

• Take advantage of the National Restaurant Association Military Foundation, which supports military hospitality programs. It assists with training and foodservice/hospitality career opportunities — including small-business ownership — for former service members and their spouses.

• Encourage veterans to identify themselves. Add check boxes or fields to application forms so job candidates can easily identify themselves as veterans. Consider creating a separate section that inspires veterans to describe how their military background pertains to the position they’re applying for.

• Interview with intel. During the job interview, draw parallels between a candidate’s military experience and the job responsibilities. Ask the candidate to describe how he or she resolved a stressful or challenging situation while on duty. What were the conditions? What factors presented problems? How did he or she assess, plot and execute to achieve a solution?

• Present candidates with mock scenarios from a frantic restaurant shift and ask them to explain how they would manage multiple problems. This storytelling and role-playing can reveal the veteran’s independence and initiative while linking background and opportunity.
**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Find updates online at www.nebraska-dining.org

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**August 11**
Omaha Restaurant Association Golf Outing
Champions Run, Omaha

**September 12-21**
Omaha Restaurant Week

**September 22**
NRA Fall Golf Outing
Hillcrest Country Club, Lincoln

**October 19**
Omaha Restaurant Association
Hall of Fame Dinner
Metropolitan Community College, Omaha

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**SERVSAFE Calendar**

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**SERVSAFE Instructors**

**Beatrice**  
Julie Albrecht  402.472.8894, x3717

**Columbus**  
Susan Hansen  402.352.3821

**Fremont**  
Susan Hansen  402.352.3821

**Grand Island**  
Cami Wells  308.385.5088

**Hastings**  
Cami Wells  308.385.5088

**Kearney**  
Cami Wells  308.385.5088

**Nebraska City**  
Julie Albrecht  402.472.8894, x3717

**Norfolk**  
Carol Larvick  402.987.2140

**Grand Island**  
Cami Wells  308.385.5088

**Ogallala**  
Cami Wells  308.385.5088

**Omaha**  
Cindy Brison  402.444.7804

**O’Neill**  
Carol Plate  402.387.2213

**Seward**  
Susan Hansen  402.352.3821

**Sioux City**  
Carol Larvick  402.987.2140

**Scottsbluff**  
Julie Albrecht  402.472.8894, x3717

**York**  
Amy Peterson  40.747.2321

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Make sure you bring your NRA Member # with you to receive a discount on your class. ServSafe Classes will be held at daVinci’s, 745 South 11th Street, Lincoln, NE

All classes will start at 8 AM; Exam will begin at 4 PM. Cost $110.00 for NRA members; includes lunch.

**Instructors:**
Julie Albrecht, PhD is an Extension Food Specialist and Professor at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Albrecht has taught ServSafe for over 20 years including training Nebraska Extension Educators to teach ServSafe. She has conducted applied food safety research associated with consumer and foodservice issues.

Georgia Jones, PhD is an Extension Food Specialist and Associate Professor at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Jones worked in the food industry in quality control and production supervision. For the last 12 years, Dr. Jones teaches the Nutrition and Health Sciences food safety class for undergraduates. She works in the area of food literacy with Extension audiences.

To register for a class contact:
**Ann Grasmick, 402.472.768, Email: agrasmick2@unl.edu**
Fayrene Hamouz honored as volunteer of the year

Fayrene Hamouz was recognized at Taste of Nebraska 2014 as the Nebraska Restaurant Association Volunteer of the Year. Fayrene has been an active member of the Hospitality Education Foundation Board for several years and recently volunteered to serve as the ProStart Coordinator for Nebraska. Her experience as an Associate Professor at UNL in the Department of Nutrition and Health Sciences provides a unique and valuable contribution to the ProStart Program.

Fayrene organized and supervised the regional and state ProStart competitions efficiently and effectively and prepared the winning team to compete in the National ProStart Invitational in Minnesota. She is communicating with our Nebraska ProStart educators and working with them to improve and expand the program. Her outstanding leadership and exceptional knowledge of the hospitality industry have earned the respect of ProStart teachers across Nebraska.

We appreciate the enthusiasm, dedication and excellent performance standards she inspires in her students, and we are honored to recognize her as the Volunteer of the Year!
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