What’s HOT

- gluten-free cuisine
- healthy KIDS’ MEALS
- natural ingredients
- new cuts of meat
- hyper-local sourcing
- locally sourced MEATS AND SEAFOOD
- non-traditional fish
- artisan ICE cream
- locally grown produce

2015 Culinary Forecast

Page 16 - Valentino’s 57 years of success
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.

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- Payment Processing
- Gift & Loyalty
- Payroll Solutions

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Health care reform remains the area of greatest concern for our members.

Executive directors report

On November 19, 2014 we attended the Council of State Restaurant Association’s Government Affairs Conference. The three day agenda included presentations and panel discussions about all the major political issues affecting our industry and ways in which state associations can be more effective in dealing with them. The National Restaurant Association has reorganized staff and assigned clear lines of responsibility that will make it easier to coordinate with and support state associations.

The results of the 2014 election and political outlook resulting from it were discussed. The consensus is that the new Congress will be somewhat more business friendly. We are not expecting a major reversal of regulations previously passed but there is an opportunity to make changes to reduce the adverse impact of laws such as the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

In our Federal Issues section we continue to remind you of the ACA requirements as they take effect in 2014 and 2015 because any changes we support will not be passed until the 2015 congressional session. It will likely be 2016 before they can be applied. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has finally issued menu labeling guidance and this is covered in more detail in our Federal Issues section. The National Restaurant Association’s website has more comprehensive compliance information that we encourage you to review.

The National Restaurant Association has worked with federal agencies to provide some flexibility for employers in ACA regulations, but only Congress can make changes to the law. There is bipartisan support in Congress for modifying the ACA and we expect that appropriate legislation will be introduced in 2015 to address the following issues:

• Bring the ACA’s definition of “full-time” in line with typical workplace standards.
• Simplify and streamline the employer reporting requirements.
• Use a consistent definition of “seasonal employment” across the law.
• Raise the threshold that determines which businesses are treated as “large” under the ACA.
• Eliminate the ACA’s auto-enroll mandate that requires some companies to automatically enroll full-time employees in a company health plan.

The NRA offers solutions to help restaurateurs navigate the ACA’s requirements:

• The NRA’s Health Care Knowledge
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.

Reasonable care is taken to ensure that Nebraska Hospitality News articles and other information on the web site are up-to-date and accurate as possible, as of the time of publication, but no responsibility can be taken by Nebraska Hospitality News Magazine for any errors or omissions contained herein. Furthermore, responsibility for any losses, damages or distress resulting from adherence to any information made available through this website is not the responsibility of NRA. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of NRA.
Sometimes you just can’t win for losing

February 1 marks the date that new rates go into effect for Workers’ Compensation in Nebraska. The National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) has released the new loss cost rates to be applied per $100 of payroll. Here are the loss cost rates for the three most typical restaurant classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Code</th>
<th>2014 Loss Cost</th>
<th>2015 Loss Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9082 (Restaurant s Not Otherwise Classified)</td>
<td>$1.31</td>
<td>$1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9083 (Restaurants Fast Food)</td>
<td>$1.24</td>
<td>$1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8810 (Clerical Not Otherwise Classified)</td>
<td>$.18</td>
<td>$.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Insurance to write Workers’ Compensation Insurance

43 companies filed higher multipliers in the period from 8/1/13 to 3/1/14 (the latest data available from the Department of Insurance) while 8 companies filed lower multipliers in that same time period. These multipliers are added to the loss cost rates indicated above and allow each insurance company to include its costs of overhead and profit.

February 1 also marks the date for the next scheduled increase in the split point calculation. The split point caps the amount of any claim used in the formula for an employer’s individual experience modifier. The split point for 2015 goes up to $15,000 plus an adjustment for claim inflation bringing the estimated amount to $17,000-$17,500. Employers experiencing larger, more severe claims, will be hit harder this year than they were last by this change. Additionally, your claims’ data follows you for three years so a severe claim this year will affect your experience modifier calculation for three years.

Let’s work through one example to see what impact all of these changes might have on an employer.

Restaurant XYZ is a fast food restaurant. Its work comp Class Code is 9083. It is insured by ABC Insurance Co. ABC Insurance Co. filed a new multiplier with the Nebraska Department of Insurance for 2015 of a 1.50 up from a 1.45 in 2014. Restaurant XYZ had a $40,000 work comp claim in 2013. XYZ’s experience modifier in 2014 was a 1.00 and will increase to a 1.10 in 2015 due to the large claim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Loss Cost</th>
<th>Payroll</th>
<th>ABC Co. Multiplier</th>
<th>XYZ X Mod</th>
<th>XYZ Premium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$1.24</td>
<td>$300,000/$100</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$1.12</td>
<td>$300,000/$100</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workers’ compensation in Nebraska is designed to provide certain benefits to employees who sustain injury by accident or occupational disease arising out of and in the course of their employment, and who are not willfully negligent at the time of the injury.
OSHAl issues new recordkeeping and reporting requirements

Effective Jan. 1, 2015, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will require employers to report any work-related employee fatality within eight hours and inpatient hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye within 24 hours.

Employers will be required to submit these reports to OSHA by telephone at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), by calling or visiting the nearest area office during normal business hours or through a website that is currently under development.

This new requirement came as part of a new final rule that also updates the list of employers that are partially exempt from OSHA’s recordkeeping requirements. As a result, many employers that are not currently required to maintain injury and illness records will lose their exempt status and will be expected to create and maintain in their establishments OSHA Forms 300, 300A and 301. OSHA will provide compliance assistance by reaching out and making training available to affected employers.

Current Requirements

Presently, OSHA requires employers to report work-related fatalities and inpatient hospitalizations of three or more employees within eight hours of the event. The new rule maintains the requirement to report fatalities within eight hours, but requires reporting hospitalizations (regardless of how many employees are hospitalized), amputations and any loss of an eye within 24 hours.

In addition, OSHA currently allows certain employers to be partially exempt from its recordkeeping and reporting requirements. Qualifying employers are partially exempt because reporting requirements still apply, even though they are not required to maintain work-related injury and illness records.

Employers qualify for a partial exemption if they:

• have fewer than 10 employees (unless otherwise directed by OSHA or the Bureau of Labor Statistics); or
• their establishments are classified as being part of a partially exempt industry.

Under the new final rule, the qualifications for partially exempt employers remain the same, but the list of partially exempt industries has been updated.

The Final Rule

The final rule will enable OSHA to conduct more accurate, timely investigations of the hazards that lead to serious injuries and illnesses in the workplace. The rule will also make OSHA’s reporting requirements more consistent with other federal and state agency requirements.

States with OSHA-approved state plans are required to notify OSHA within 60 days on whether they intend to adopt a standard or regulation that is identical or at least as effective as the new rule. State plans then have up to six months to adopt the new standard.

Quick Facts:

• Employers can notify OSHA of reportable events by phone, calling or visiting a local office or through a website
• OSHA has also revised its list of partially exempt industries
State plans that adopt recordkeeping requirements that differ from federal requirements must identify and post on their website the differences between the federal and state requirements or submit the differences to OSHA with information on how the public can obtain this information. While state plans are merely encouraged to comply with the new rule by Jan. 1, 2015, their compliance is required by Jan. 1, 2016.

**Revised Reporting Requirement**
The final rule sets new time requirements for notifying OSHA of reportable events (fatality, inpatient hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye). A fatality must be reported whether it occurs immediately or if it occurs within 30 days of when the work-related incident took place. An inpatient hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye is a reportable event only if it takes place within 24 hours of the incident.

OSHA defines an inpatient hospitalization as “a formal admission to the inpatient service of a hospital or clinic for care or treatment.” Hospitalizations for observation or diagnostic testing are not reportable events. An amputation is the traumatic loss of a limb or other external body part. Amputations can be full or partial, and they can happen with or without bone. Amputations do not include avulsions, enucleations, deglovings, scalpings, severed ears or broken (or chipped) teeth. Employers are not required to notify OSHA of a reportable event if the event is the result of a motor vehicle accident on a public street or highway, unless the accident took place in a construction work zone. However, unless partially exempt, employers will need to keep a record of the incident. The same is true for incidents that occur on commercial or public transportation systems.

The reporting clock does not begin until the employer or its agents learn about the reportable event. OSHA offers the following illustration:

If an employee suffers a work-related injury at 9:00 a.m. and dies from that injury at 10:00 a.m., and the employer or the employer’s agent(s) learn of the fatality (the reportable event) at 10:00 a.m., then the employer would be required to report the fatality (the reportable event) to OSHA within eight hours of the fatality (the reportable event) – i.e., 6:00 p.m.

A complete report under the final rule must include:

- The employer’s name
- The location of the reportable event
- The time of the reportable event
- The type of reportable event (fatality, hospitalization, amputation, loss of an eye)
- The number of employees affected by a reportable event
- The names of all employees affected by a reportable event
- The employer’s contact person and his or her phone number
- A brief description of the work-related incident

**Revised List of Partially Exempt Industries**
To create its list of partially exempt industries, OSHA uses data from a three-year sampling period. Industries with a Days Away, Restricted and Transfer (DART) rate lower than 75 percent of the average DART for the sampling period are allowed a partial exemption.
Executive directors report

Contact your State Senator and express your opposition.

Make a Difference
Contact your senator or their staff and let them know how important this issue is to our industry.

Senator Ben Sasse
Phone: 202.224.4224

Senator Fischer:
Lincoln: 402.441.4600
Omaha: 402.391.3411

Center offers summaries, FAQs, checklists and more on how the law affects restaurants.

• The NRA’s Notification Tool helps employers meet the ACA’s requirement to notify employees about government-run exchanges. www.notify.restaurant.org
• The NRA Health Care HQ’s Employer Marketplace helps restaurateurs and their employees shop for ACA-compliant health plans. www.restaurant.org/Healthcare

State Issues

The 2015 session of the Nebraska Unicameral convened on January 7, 2015. There will be 90 session days with adjournment scheduled for June 5, 2015. This is the first session in the two year cycle. The body of 49 senators is significantly different as there are 18 new senators. With the influx of so many new faces and new ideas, there will no doubt be new issues introduced.

Mandatory Training for Servers and Sellers of Alcohol

This issue is directly related to the “Dram Shop” issue. States that have “Dram Shop” laws in place hold 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. There have been several attempts in past legislative sessions to make Nebraska a “Dram Shop” state. We have consistently and successfully opposed these past attempts. However, Senator Krist is very concerned about the issue. Short of proposing a Dram Shop bill, he has been pushing, and is continuing to push, mandatory training for all servers and sellers of alcohol. While this would require more effort on the part of servers and sellers, it is much preferred over Dram Shop. We are working with Senator Krist to craft a workable training plan. We support training with the following provisions:

• 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 would be valid for three years and transferable from employer to employer.

Sales Tax Collection Fees

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. To understand how blatantly unfair the situation is, consider this: for every dollar of sales tax collected on a credit card sale, the restaurant only receives approximately 98 cents because of the credit card swipe fee. However, the restaurant still remits one dollar to the state. Depending on sales volume this can amount to hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars. To
address this, Senator Schumacher is introducing legislation which would significantly increase sales tax collection fees retained by collectors and remitters of sales tax. Similar legislation was advanced by the revenue committee but we ran out of time to get it considered by the entire body. We are optimistic about the possibility for success on this issue in the 2015-16 session.

Federal Issues

The ACA’s employer mandate begins to take effect in 2015. The mandate subjects “applicable large employers” to possible penalties if they don’t offer health plans to full-time employees and their dependents. Penalties will be phased in.

• Penalties start in 2015 for employers with 100 or more full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees who fail to offer health care coverage to “substantially all” full-time employees and their dependents. (“Substantially all” means the employer offers coverage to at least 70 percent of full-time employees in 2015. In 2016, this ramps up. Applicable large employers must make coverage offers to at least 95 percent of full-time employees to avoid possible penalties.)

• Penalties start in 2016 for employers with 50 to 99 full-time-equivalent employees. The transition relief for these employers through 2015 applies as long as they meet certain conditions, including not cutting back employees’ hours or positions in 2015 to keep the business under the 100-FTE employee threshold.

Employers with more than one business entity may need to consider all their employees as one group to determine if they meet the 100 or 50 FTE employee thresholds. Consult your tax adviser for details.

To measure the size of their workforce, employers can use transition-relief provisions in the ACA regulations and look at any consecutive six-month period in 2014 to see if they meet the 100-FTE employee threshold that triggers “applicable large employer” status for 2015. (Note: If your business intends to use the ACA’s “seasonal worker exception” to qualify for an exemption from large-employer status for 2015, you must look at employment over all 12 months of 2014.)

Employers with more than 200 full-time employees are required to automatically enroll all full-time employees in their lowest-cost coverage option within 90 days unless the employee specifically opts out of coverage. The “Auto-Enroll Repeal Act,” would eliminate the mandate, which the NRA opposes because it duplicates another of the law’s requirements for large employers to provide coverage, creates additional administrative burdens for restaurants, and could force employees to pay for coverage they neither need nor want if they inadvertently fail to opt out of the employer’s plan.

Along with eliminating the auto-enroll requirement, the NRA’s health care advocacy has focused on changing the law’s definition of “full-time” from 30 hours to a length more in line with common business practices, addressing the complexity of the employer reporting requirements, and simplifying the formula the law uses to determine which companies are “large” employers.

Menu Labeling

Now that the FDA’s final regulations on menu labeling have been released, it’s time to start planning to make sure your restaurant meets the requirements.

The menu-labeling regulations, which are part of the 2010 health care law, will require restaurants with 20 or more locations operating under the same name to include calorie counts on menus, menu boards and drive-thru displays and provide other nutrition information to customers on request. The regulations are voluntary for smaller restaurants.

The NRA has launched Restaurant.org/MenuLabeling as a go-to resource for the latest news and information on the regulations. For general information regarding the law, contact the Nebraska Restaurant Association office at 402.488.3999.
It’s a new year, new changes, new regulations, etc. The short answer to this question is yes, it is within compliance to offer a cash discount. There are no laws against offering a discount for forms of payment other than credit cards. That being said, most retailers have swipe fees built into their cost of goods since in retail and restaurant environments, credit and debit transactions are on average, 70%-90% of their sales.

Also, offering cash discounts discourages customers to spend in general. If a customer can run a tab knowing they can pay with a card, they are more likely to order additional drinks, buy up on appetizers, desserts, etc. We all know that higher tickets mean bigger tips, which translates into a happier wait staff. This goes the same for places that do not take cards at all. If I know a restaurant/bar takes cash only, I might visit an ATM one time and will spend only what I take out. I will not go back to an ATM for a second time and incur another $3-$6 in fees. If I was able to run a tab, I will spend much more freely.

Another thing to think about...many sales people utilize company cards to make catering or lunch/dinner purchases for their clients. This would be another deterrent; these customers will go to the restaurants that will freely accept their preferred form of payment out of convenience. In the past, merchants have moved away from accepting American Express and Discover, however, times have changed. Costs of American Express/Discover are much in line with the prices of Visa and MasterCard.

Finally, more and more consumers are paying with their cell phone using applications like Apple Pay, PayPal, Google Wallet, ISIS, etc. Many customers like the convenience of being able to pay and leave when they are ready, rather than wait for a server to get back around to them. This is especially convenient during busy lunch hours.

When thinking about implementing changes like this in your space, be sure to weigh both sides of the coin and reach out to others for their experiences and suggestions.

Cheers to a prosperous new year!

We take great pride in what we have to offer and derive great satisfaction in delivering solutions that bring more money to your table!
New Century Agency & Berkshire Hathaway Guard are pleased to offer these benefits to Nebraska Restaurant Association members.

- Berkshire Hathaway Guard was one of Ward’s 50 Top-Performing P & C Insurance companies in 2012
- Preferred tier pricing
- Safety Dividend Program
- Individual dividends
- A+ Superior carrier
- Flexible billing plans including pay-as-you-go

New Century Agency has served the restaurant industry since 1993

Call us for a quote – 888-424-3800

www.newcenturyinsagency.com

WORK COMP BENEFITS FOR ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Monday, April 20th
Embassy Suites, LaVista
Speaker: Andy Greenberg

For more than 12 years, Andy has been mentoring and training people, both formally and informally. He has become known as a “Life and Business Skills Builder.” He is passionate about people and relationships, and it shows. People are drawn to his natural enthusiasm and find his desire to live life to the fullest is nothing short of inspirational.

Reception
6:00-7:00PM

Dinner, Entertainment and Awards
7:00-9:00PM

Reserve your tickets by contacting Brandy at 402-488-3999 ext. 2 or bnielson@windstream.net
2015 CULINARY FORECAST

Top 20 Food Trends

1. Locally sourced meats and seafood
2. Locally grown produce
3. Environmental sustainability
4. Healthful kids’ meals
5. Natural ingredients/minimally processed food
6. New cuts of meat
7. Hyper-local sourcing
8. Sustainable seafood
9. Food waste reduction/management
10. Farm/estate branded items
11. Non-wheat noodles/pasta
12. Gluten-free cuisine
13. Ancient grains
14. Whole grain items in kids’ meals
15. Non-traditional fish
16. Ethnic-inspired breakfast items
17. Nutrition
18. House-made/artisan ice cream
19. Fruit/vegetable kids’ side items
20. Artisan cheeses

What’s HOT
2015 CULINARY FORECAST

TOP 5 ALCOHOL TRENDS

1. Micro-distilled/artisan spirits
2. Locally produced beer/wine/spirits
3. Onsite barrel-aged drinks
4. Regional signature cocktails
5. Culinary cocktails (e.g. savory, fresh ingredients)

ADDITIONAL TRENDS

What is the hottest technology trend in restaurants for 2015?
Tablet computers (e.g. iPad) for menus, wine lists and ordering 29%
Smartphone/tablet apps for consumers (e.g. ordering, menus, daily deals) 26%
Smartphone/tablet apps for chefs/restaurateurs (e.g. recipes, table management, POS tracking) 22%
Mobile/wireless payment options 21%
Other 2%

Which current culinary trend will be the hottest menu trend 10 years from now?
Environmental sustainability 42%
Local sourcing 22%
Nutrition 13%
Ethnic cuisines and flavors 13%
Gluten-free cuisine 6%
Other 4%

How do you feel about customers taking photos of their restaurant food and posting them on social media while dining?
It’s free advertising and should be encouraged 57%
It’s fine as long as they are discrete 32%
It’s disruptive and should be discouraged 9%
Other 2%
2015 MENU TRENDS to Watch
Based on Analysis of What’s Hot in 2015 Culinary Forecast

- **WASTE NOT, WANT NOT:** Environmental sustainability remains among the hottest menu trends. As with most maturing trends, sub-trends emerge over time; in 2015, food waste reduction and management is at the forefront of restaurant operations. Composting, recycling and donating are all tactics of food waste strategies tying into both sustainability and social responsibility. In addition, food costs are once again on the rise and back on operators’ list of top challenges, spurring restaurants to take a closer look at minimizing waste and surplus as a cost-management tool.

- **OUR HOUSE:** As the local sourcing trend continues at full speed in 2015, so does the hyper-local sub-trend. Beyond restaurant gardens, hyper-local is extending more fully into house-made, farm-branded and artisan items. From ice cream to cheese, pickles to bacon, lemonade to beer, restaurants are producing their own signature menu items from scratch.

- **IN A PICKLE:** Borrowing terminology from social media, pickles are the Throwback Thursday of food trends. Common preparation methods for millennia, pickling and fermenting are making a comeback big time – but with a modern twist. Restaurants are exploring house-made pickles, ethnic flavors and specialty vinegars, small-batch producers with less traditional vegetable varieties, and fermented flavor profiles in a variety of dishes.

- **GOING (MORE) GLOBAL:** An evolving trend for the past decades, ethnic cuisine continues its inroads into mainstream menus. As American palates become more sophisticated and adventurous, so do restaurant offerings. Micro-trending in this category is fusion cuisines, as well as authentic and regional, underscoring the breadth and depth of flavors being explored. Also, ethnic ingredients, including cheeses, flour and condiments, are increasingly finding their way into non-ethnic dishes. Specific dishes, such as ramen, ethnic street-food and kids’ entrees are also gaining momentum.

- **MINI GOURMET:** Children’s menus are drawing more attention from chefs and restaurant operators. Gone are the days when kids’ menus were nothing but hot dogs and things shaped like cartoon characters and dinosaurs. This is the era of gourmet kids’ dishes adapted from adult menu items with more adventurous flavor profiles than traditional children’s options. Growing in parallel are healthy versions of those gourmet kids’ items, featuring whole grains, vegetables, oven-baked items and entrée salads.

- **SHOOTING MENU STARS:** As some items heat up in the menu trends environment, others are losing steam. The meteoric rise of hybrid desserts (looking at you, croissant-donut) is beginning to take a downward trajectory. And while still among the top trends, the momentum of gluten-free cuisine is slowing down. Similarly, the trendiness of Greek yogurt is decelerating. Only time will tell if these items will become perennial favorites or yesterday’s news.

Restaurant.org/FoodTrends
ProStart® happenings and more

Regionals begin on
February 7 at Southeast Community College
February 20 at Metropolitan Community College
February 25 at Scottsbluff High School

The State ProStart competition is
February 28 at Southeast Community College

Nationals are
April 18-20 in Anaheim, California.

Consider the opportunity of attending one of the ProStart competitions this Spring. Judges are needed for both the culinary and management competitions.

Now is the time to contact Brandy at bnielson@windstream.net or Fayrene at fhamouz1@unl.edu with your or a staff members name.

Let’s work together to help Nebraska ProStart students succeed!
Happy New Year!

We hope to see you all on January 21st at our Annual Board Meeting at the Governor’s Mansion! This is our one Board Meeting that is open for our entire membership to attend! We invite each and every one of you to join us for a complimentary lunch at noon and listen to Governor Ricketts address our members. We will be installing the 2015 Board of Directors and Advisors. Please RSVP to Brandy by January 14th if you plan on attending this meeting.

With the start of a new year we are sad to see four very influential people retire from the Nebraska Restaurant Association Board of Directors. We were so fortunate to have such dedication from each of these individuals from holding director positions, serving on Taste of Nebraska and other committees, and most importantly raising the awareness of the Nebraska Restaurant Association state-wide. Without their voice the hospitality industry in the state of Nebraska would not be where it is today. We wish them all nothing but the best, and sincerely thank them for their service to our industry!

Dean Rasmussen, Grandmothers, 35 years
Jan Moore, Amigos, 15 years
Michael McCarville, Heartland Payment Systems, 14 years
Wayne Boles, Lazlo, Inc., 8 years

Hopefully you are taking advantage of the many benefits your dual membership with the Nebraska Restaurant Association and the National Restaurant Association provides. I would like to take the time to highlight one of the benefits that may take the stress and time consuming task out of weekly scheduling. ZipSchedules is the simple, easy way to create clear, manageable employee schedules for a restaurant. Special Nebraska Restaurant Association pricing is $39.99/month after 45-day free trial. Check out the quick demo online at http://www.zipschedules.com/. I was really impressed at the ease of this program. Bonus is there is a section within the program that allows employees to request time off, and switch shifts with a co-worker.

Thank you for your membership to the Nebraska Restaurant Association – It’s just good business!

We want everyone to know...
The Nebraska Restaurant Association is comprised of Nebraska Restaurateurs, Food Service Professionals, and Allied Members who are committed to excellence and safety in hospitality and food service.

Help us spread the word!
- Display your current membership sticker on your front door
- Add the NRA membership logo to your website, FB page, or menu
- Like us on Facebook (and tell your friends to like us, too!)
- And let your employees know you’re a proud member of the NRA (and why!)

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Brandy Nielson
Membership & Marketing Director
In 1957, sales at Val and Zena Weiler’s Campus Fruit Market were declining. UNL East Campus students were regulars at the 33rd and Holdrege store, but there were a lot of new big box supermarkets going up in Lincoln.

The market was changing. Val Weiler knew it was time to find something else if they were going to survive.

Pizza was growing in popularity in the United States after World War II Veterans, tired of K-rations, discovered it in Italy. In response, pizza parlors like Shakeys - that was founded in 1954 - were opening on the East and West Coasts. Weiler noted the trend.

So one day in 1957, Weiler made a pizza from a recipe that has been in his wife’s family for years. He asked a friend, Gary Cleckner, to sample it and “said he was interested in what we thought. After sampling the wonderful pizzas, we purchased a large hamburger pizza that same evening”.

And Valentino’s was born.

The Weilers operated the popular restaurant for 15 years, expanding not only the menu but adding space to accommodate its growing customer base. Valentino’s staff would make pizzas in full view of customers, who would stand outside and watch through the windows while they waited in line for an hour or more to get inside and eat.

In the meantime, young Tony Messineo made a decision to return to Lincoln after studying at a Catholic Seminary. He took a job as the general manager of another Lincoln landmark – Tony and Luigi’s - owned by his uncle Tony Alesio.

When Val and Zena’s daughter Martha got married, they asked Messineo and his staff to coordinate the reception and dinner. The couple was impressed by the way the event was handled.

Messineo and cousin Mike Alesio officially purchased Valentino’s in January, 1972.

“We stayed and learned in the trenches. Quality of pizza, maintenance, cleaning, how to please our customers. We started to develop the culture that is the gold standard that we live by. In those days you did everything and could really use your creative abilities. We worked long hours, and we loved it. Loved interacting with our customers. There’s nothing like it.”

In 1974, after careful consideration, Messineo and Alesio decided to add a second location, taking their pizzas “across town”. They chose a 70th Street and Van Dorn location at a time when there was “nothing out there”. The night they opened, cars were backed up one half mile - all the way to South Street. Two Police officers were called to control the traffic. After two years, both stores were so overwhelmingly successful, the partners decided to franchise their business.

Today, with 57 years of business behind it, Valentino’s is listed at #56 in the 2014 Pizza Today’s 100 Top Pizza Companies, with 32 stores and annual sales of $41,000,000.

Members of the Messineo and Alesio families have played major roles in the growth of the business. Before they took on corporate responsibilities, the kids worked in the stores. Now,
Anthony is in marketing and serves as liaison with UNL. Michael is in charge of purchasing and Debbie and Mike’s Alesio’s son and brother work there. Cousin Mike Alesio is the President of the Amazing Pizza Machine and, according to Messineo, doesn’t get the credit he deserves for the success of Valenino’s.

Despite growing competition, Valenino’s remains a staple in the “Pizza Hall of Fame” as well as in the hearts of Nebraska fans nationwide. Pizzas are mailed to alumni events throughout the year, and bar owners in cities like Chicago and San Ramon California order them in on game days to attract Nebraska transplants. The official pizza of the Huskers, about 22,000 slices of Valenino’s pizza are sold at Memorial Stadium on game days. In a recent survey, 32% of those surveyed said Valenino’s pizza was their favorite thing to eat at a Husker sporting event.

Messineo credits their success to a number of factors. “We learned early to never sacrifice the quality of product and to have consistent performance. Any restaurant can be exceptional on one visit; the great ones are those with consistent good quality and service. We can’t leave anything to chance. We have to have good communication, constant reminding and constant reinforcement. We know our niche and that we can’t compete with national marketing.”

Employee Ron Dawson was impressed with Val’s commitment to its community. The restaurant chain is known as much for its generosity as it is for its pizza. “Sometimes, it’s 100 percent compensation,” Dawson said. “I wonder how I get a paycheck because we give so much stuff away.”

An integral part of Valenino’s corporate philosophy is the commitment they make to the community and to the industry. Make-a-Wish, Cedars Youth Services, Community Health Charities of Nebraska and the Boy Scouts are among the many organizations that have benefited from food or cash donations. Tony Messineo has been a member of a number of community and charitable boards, as well as serving as President of the Nebraska Restaurant Association.

Valenino’s is a long time member of the association, joining when Messineo recognized the value and importance of the Association to its members. Not only was it representing the best interests of its members to both state and federal legislators through its lobbying efforts, but it was actively promoting its membership and providing benefits and programs that would reduce member operating costs. According to Messineo “we are only as strong as the members we have”.

With a lot of “lessons learned” behind him, Messineo offers this advice to budding restaurateurs.

1). Make sure you’re properly capitalized. Those initial years are very difficult.
2). Make sure your concept is viable and something that will garner the attention of the customer. Do some simple research and find your market niche.
3). Make sure you’re willing to make the time commitment necessary to start the restaurant. You – and your spouse – have to be willing to make the commitment.

“I had my wife Carmen’s support - we’re still married after 51 years - and that made all the difference. You have to be a macro thinker, see where you want to go and put in the hours to get there. And you have to work. You have to work hard.”

After 57 years of success, it’s clear hard work pays off.
On November 4, 2014, Nebraska voters approved a ballot measure raising the state’s minimum wage from $7.25 to $9.00 per hour by January 1, 2016. The initiative passed by a 62% to 38% margin. Nebraska’s statutory minimum wage is currently $7.25. The initiative means that the state minimum wage will increase to $8.00 per hour on January 1, 2015, then $9.00 per hour on January 1, 2016. Since enacting the Wage and Hour Act in 1967, giving the state the authority to establish a minimum wage, the state’s minimum wage has never been higher than the federal minimum wage until now. Employers should financially plan ahead to effectuate these mandatory increases.

The grassroots initiative follows the early 2014 Nebraska Unicameral’s impasse on similar legislation, Legislative Bill 943 (LB943), designed to incrementally increase the state’s hourly minimum wage to $9.00 by January 1, 2017. After the impasse, proponents of an increased minimum wage took to the streets to qualify an initiative for the November ballot. Supporters were required to collect valid signatures totaling a minimum of 7% of registered voters by July 4, 2014. The state senator who introduced LB943 launched a supporting campaign organization known as Nebraskans for Better Wages. Proponents of the initiative submitted 134,899 signatures to the secretary of state’s office on July 3, 2014, well exceeding the required number of 80,386 valid signatures. There was no real organized opposition.

To the extent you would like more information on the law or obligations as an employer, feel free to contact your local Omaha Jackson Lewis office.
Get to know the Nebraska Restaurant Association 2015 President
Linda Dennis – Runza® Restaurants

Tell us about your family.
I have three children. Zach age 32, Keeley age 27 & Nathaniel age 23. And I can’t forget my dogs, Mia and Chanel.

Describe your position with Runza Restaurants.
I’m the Operations Director and I oversee our eight Area Field Representatives. I’m also on the Board of Operations. Our job is to ensure that stores operate to their potential.

What do you see as one of the biggest turning points in your life?
I would say a couple of different things. The first one was filling out an application and getting my first job at Runza for an administrative assistant. Had I not started at Runza, my life would have gone a completely different direction. The other turning point is when I got divorced in my late 30’s. I was responsible for raising three children on my own and that taught me a lot about myself. I am a much stronger and capable person and I can do anything if I set my mind to it! I know my past experiences helped shape me into the person I am today.

What are you most proud of?
I am most proud of the fact that I raised three children by myself. It was busy, but also rewarding, to see them learn, grow and become successful adults! There was a lot of fun that went along with the stressful and trying times of raising children!

What is the most unique or interesting thing about you that most people probably don’t know?
Back in high school I bought a motorcycle and even took a class on motorcycle safety. I also am a true animal lover and I’ve had many, many pets throughout my lifetime! I’ve had birds, dogs, cats, an iguana, and I even raised fish and hamsters! There’s still one animal on my wish list - I’d love to own a horse someday!

How did you get started in the restaurant business?
I started as a carhop with the intention of it being a “high school/college” job but the high school job turned into a lifelong career! You hear the saying that the restaurant business is “addictive”. Well, that was definitely true for me! It’s easy to become immersed in your work when you love what you do! Runza is a family business, and I was fortunate enough to experience their family friendly philosophy which gave me the flexibility to raise my young family. There was only one Runza Restaurant when I started so I had the opportunity to begin at the bottom and learn every aspect of the business. As the business grew, I grew with it.

With what groups or organizations are you involved?
American Cancer Society-Relay for Life, Meals on Wheels, LIBA, and I serve on the Health Department Food Advisory Committee.

What is your favorite movie?
The Wizard of Oz

If you could have dinner with one person from the past or present, who would it be?
My father. He passed away over 23 years ago and I would love to tell him about my children. I would love for him to see how my life turned out. He believed in hard work and could see the good in people. I know he would be very proud of me and my accomplishments.
It was mid-January – and it was a particularly cold winter evening in Iowa. I was a seasoned waitress and working one of my regular Saturday evening shifts at an upscale tapas restaurant in Des Moines. The owner, my boss, was a well-to-do businessman in Des Moines, and his restaurant was a “hot spot” for people who enjoyed the upscale and sophisticated environment. The restaurant was known for its extensive wine list – one on which we were coached religiously, and I found this to be one of the hardest parts of this part-time job.

It was getting late in the evening, but because of the regular late-night wine drinkers this restaurant stayed open until the last guest left. Many Saturday evenings I found myself clocking out at 2:00 a.m.

I had one table left at 1:00 a.m. and they were thoroughly enjoying themselves. I had served the table of six several bottles of wine over the course of the evening. They were racking up quite the tab – but I didn't mind and was looking forward to their tip at the end of the evening.

Then I saw one of the men at the table motion me over. In the back of my mind I’m thinking, do they “Really want another bottle of wine? No way!” But I approached the table just as I had time and time again with a smile on my face, eager to serve them.

However, this time was different. The man's speech and mannerisms had suddenly changed. He was loud, a tad on the rude side, and seemed to be poking fun of me. I took his order, red in the face – part embarrassment and part fury, and headed to the back room to compose myself. Memories from my ServSafe® Alcohol course popped into my head, specially the part about me being held responsible if this rude, loud, and inebriated gentleman left the restaurant and then killed someone.

I could be held legally responsible for someone's death or injury.

I tried to convince myself that maybe he is just being rude – he's probably not drunk. Or, maybe he IS drunk? How am I supposed to tell? Maybe he drinks this much all the time and his tolerance is much higher than what I think it is? Who am I – a 23 year old girl with a part-time waitressing job – to tell this prosperous successful businessman that I can't serve him anymore wine? If he's being this rude now – just wait until I cut him off and tell him he can't have any more to drink. I start to panic as these thoughts run thru my head. I know what I have to do – it is my legal responsibility to cut this man off and not serve him any more alcohol. This is not going to go well.

Then I see my boss come out of his office door. I tell him the situation and thankfully he took it upon his shoulders to approach the table and tell them they had had enough to drink. And it went just as I had predicted. The customer was NOT happy and shouted profanities at my boss and then left.

Thankfully everyone got home safe that cold January night. And me, I got a real-life rude awakening of the impact that Dram-Shop can have on a server’s life. If you are a server in a Dram-Shop state you are not only a server – it is also your legal responsibility to spot fake ID’s, spot underage or intoxicated guests, and count and monitor the number of drinks you are serving each of your guests on a busy Saturday night. Not to mention – ensuring that each of your guests make it home safe that night. Should this REALLY be the responsibility of the server? Or is this personal responsibility?
SERVSAFE Calendar

January 21
Annual Meeting
Governor’s Mansion, Lincoln

February 7
ProStart Regional
Southeast Community College, Lincoln

February 25
ProStart Regional
Scottsbluff HS, Scottsbluff

February 27
ICA High School Culinary Invitational
Omaha

February 28
State ProStart Competition
Southeast Community College, Lincoln

April 18-20
National ProStart Invitational
Anaheim, California

April 20
Taste of Nebraska
Embassy Suites, LaVista

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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1701 Windhoek Drive
Lincoln, NE 68512
402-904-5501
bhooks@concordei.com

Patrice & Associates Hospitality Recruiting
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17020 L Street
Omaha, NE 68135
402-896-5627
soppliger@patriceandassociates.com
www.patriceandassociates.com

Webinars are FREE for Members and offer information on a variety of topics.
Visit http://www.restaurant.org/Events-Networking/Events/Webinars for more information on the webinars available.

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

SERVSAFE Instructors

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Columbus Susan Hansen 402.352.3821
Fremont Susan Hansen 402.352.3821
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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 Lanvick 402.987.2140
Scottsbluff Julie Albrecht 402.472.8884, x3717
York Amy Peterson 40.747.2321
As you know, the Food and Drug Administration today issued a final rule to detail the requirements for many chain restaurants to add calorie data to menus, per the 2010 menu-labeling law. It also will require covered restaurants to provide additional nutrition information to guests on request.

The regulations take effect in December 2015, and will cover restaurant companies and similar retail food establishments with 20 or more locations operating under the same name and with substantially the same menu items across their locations. Smaller restaurants can choose to comply voluntarily.

The National Restaurant Association has worked on this law, and regulations, for the past several years. The FDA took many of our concerns into consideration in the final rule, and our statement on the FDA’s rule is provided here.

We stand ready to help our members understand and prepare for the regulations as the compliance deadline approaches.

- Sign up for our webinar for NRA members, “What does the nutrition-labeling law mean for your restaurant?”.
- Get a top-line summary of the law’s main requirements.
- Visit Restaurant.org/MenuLabeling for ongoing resources, including legal analyses, FAQs, links to FDA materials, and other tools.

Questions? Contact Joan McGlockton, jmcglockton@restaurant.org, or Dan Roehl, droehl@restaurant.org.
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