2018 National ProStart Student Invitational

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Serving Those Who Feed the Nation.
Our first major event in the second quarter of 2018 was the annual Taste of Nebraska Awards dinner at Embassy Suites, LaVista on April 16th.

Brandy Nielson’s planning and organization resulted in an excellent event and Jim Otto served as master of ceremonies, moving the program forward with humor, gentle nudging and an occasional direct order.

The ProStart Program continues to advance under the leadership of the HEF Board, Fayrene Hamouz and the dedicated support of Brandy Nielson. The quality continues with teacher forums and in the performance of school teams participating in culinary competitions.

As mentioned in last quarter’s issue, membership development remains our number one priority in 2018 and we will continue working with our Allied and Restaurant Board Members to implement the innovative initiatives they have offered to support this effort. I’m presently serving on a National Restaurant Association committee working to establish procedures by which their new corporate members will encourage franchisee subsidiaries to join state associations. This has the potential to significantly increase our membership base but it will require us to develop marketing and membership development processes and materials more in tune with corporate practices. One major step forward will be our planned update and upgrade of our member data base so that it is compatible with the National Restaurant Association data base.

Immigration, tariffs and trade continue to monopolize most of the political discussion at the national level with limited results and no measurable progress observed. These are critical issues for the hospitality industry and we continue to work with the National Restaurant Association and our congressional delegation to encourage legislation and regulations favoring free markets and economic growth.

Nebraska Legislature - Review of 2018 Session and Forecast for 2019 Session

Review
The 2018 session of the Nebraska Unicameral adjourned on April 18. We monitor numerous bills each session that could have an impact on our membership and determine whether to support, oppose, or take a neutral position. Here are some of
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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.

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Bacon-loving crowd enjoyed a wide variety of bacon treats

The 2018 Star City BaconFest drew its largest crowd on Sunday, April 22nd, with over 600 people enjoying bacon-inspired treats from leading Lincoln-area restaurants. The event was hosted by the Cornhusker Marriot Hotel.

The annual event, sponsored by the Nebraska Pork Producers Association (NPPA) and the Nebraska Restaurant Association (NRA), benefits culinary students in the state and will provide over $8,000 in scholarships through the NRA’s Hospitality Education Foundation.

BaconFest-goers were asked to vote for their favorite treats again this year. First place: Ashland Country Club for its Sweet & Spicy Bacon Bite. Second place: Coop’s Corner for its Bacon Ice Cream and third place went to Venue Restaurant and Lounge for its Pastrami Cured Bacon Arepas.

“Lincoln’s talented chefs outdid themselves this year,” said Brandy Nielson, Membership and Marketing Director with the Nebraska Restaurant Association. “Their bacon creations were definitely outside the box and were enjoyed by everyone. And thanks, too, to Hormel for providing all the bacon used by the chefs.”

Jane Stone, domestic marketing director for the Nebraska Pork Producers Association, agreed. “The Nebraska Pork Producers Association is very excited about the enthusiasm for this year’s event and thrilled with the creativity and quality of the chef’s amazing dishes. Everything was delicious! Our industry loves this event because not only do we get to showcase one of our most popular cuts, bacon, but we hope it also creates a farm-to-table connection for our urban consumers.”


For more information, visit Star City BaconFest at: starcitybaconfest.com
Serving the unique health care needs of small employer members.

UnitedHealthcare works with the National Restaurant Association and the Nebraska Restaurant Association in a strategic alliance, offering exclusive health care pricing and solutions for NRA small employer members.

3 ways NRA small employer members can access UnitedHealthcare’s exclusive offerings:

1. For small businesses with 2-99 employees: New Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust option for fully insured hospitality groups.

2. For small businesses with 51 or more employees: Up to a 5 percent discount on manual medical rates for fully insured groups.

3. For small businesses of all sizes: Up to a 5 percent discount on specialty benefits products (dental, vision, life, disability, accident and critical illness) for fully insured groups — in addition to all other discounts including bundling benefits programs.

New Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust option for small employers.

The new Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust is now available to quote as an option for NRA hospitality member groups. The RH Association Benefit Trust is a new health benefits solution insured and serviced by UnitedHealthcare and focused on small employers with 2-99 eligible employees. This solution can offer NRA members some of the same advantages of large employers regarding more health plan designs for product and potential pricing flexibility. Available nationally, the new RH Association Benefit Trust features a product portfolio with more than 120 health plan designs. It is just one more way for hospitality businesses to access UnitedHealthcare’s solutions for NRA members.

Contact Alliah Sheta at alliah.sheta@optum.com for more information on the hospitality associations alliance program.

Contact your broker or UnitedHealthcare representative to get a UnitedHealthcare quote.

Visit uhctogether.com/nera.
New restaurant & hospitality association benefit trust option for small employers

Exclusive Health Care Pricing and Solutions from UnitedHealthcare®

To address the diverse health care needs of the hospitality industry, the Nebraska Restaurant Association and the National Restaurant Association are working with UnitedHealthcare through the hospitality associations alliance program to help provide easier access to health care coverage for hospitality employers, employees and their families.

UnitedHealthcare offers exclusive health care pricing and solutions for every size member business – including small, midsize and large employers:

- For small businesses: New Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust option for fully insured hospitality groups with 2-99 eligible employees.
- For businesses with 51 or more employees: Up to a 5 percent discount on manual medical rates for fully insured groups with 51 or more eligible employees.
- For large self-funded businesses: An annual invoice credit of up to 5 percent on administrative fees for new ASO medical products for self-funded groups with 100 or more eligible employees.
- For businesses of all sizes: Up to a 5 percent discount on specialty benefits products (dental, vision, life, disability, accident and critical illness) for fully insured groups – in addition to all other discounts including bundling benefits programs.

New Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust option for small employers.

The Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust is now available to quote as an option for hospitality member groups. The RHA Benefit Trust is a new health benefits solution insured and serviced by UnitedHealthcare and focused on small employers with 2-99 eligible employees. This solution can offer members some of the same advantages of large employers regarding more health plan designs for product and potential pricing flexibility. Available nationally, the new RHA Benefit Trust features a product portfolio with more than 120 health plan designs.

UnitedHealthcare also has a variety of wellness programs and services aimed at Helping people live healthier lives®. Several clinical and wellness programs are embedded with most medical plans – such as decision support, care management, complex-condition management and health improvement programs. Plus, all members receive access to a member website that includes dozens of tools and resources to help them understand, improve and maintain their health.
Legislative issues

the important areas addressed in the 2018 session.

**Mandatory Use of the Federal E-Verify program** - We successfully opposed legislation that would have required mandatory use of the federal E-Verify program and an additional license, renewable on an annual basis, for all Nebraska business units with more than twenty five employees. We testified and worked in opposition. The bill did not advance.

**Increase Minimum Tip Wage** - We successfully opposed legislation to increase the minimum hourly tip wage. This has been an issue in the past several sessions. It would have eventually raised the minimum tip wage from $2.13/hour to $4.50/hour. We testified against the bill at the committee hearing. In spite of our active opposition, it was advanced by the committee to General File and was discussed by the entire body on the floor of the Legislature in the 2018 session. We worked to inform Senators and were confident that there were not enough votes to pass the bill. Time ran out before it came to a vote and it did not advance in the 2018 session.

**Credit Card Fees on Sales Tax**
The cost to restaurants to collect sales tax is significant - especially on credit card sales as the restaurant is forced to pay the credit card swipe fee on the sales tax portion of the

**Clarify Employees of Franchisees are not Employees of Franchisors** - There have been efforts nationally to blur the fact that employees of franchisees are not employees of franchisors. To clarify this in Nebraska law, legislation was introduced at our request to clarify that persons who work for a franchisee are employees of only the franchisee and not the franchisor. The legislation did not advance in the 2018 session.

**Music Licensing** - We successfully supported the Music Licensing Agency Act which provides protections for those entities that are being aggressively contacted by agencies claiming to hold the copyrights to the music being performed and demanding a licensing fee. It was passed by the body in the 2018 session.

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**Make a Difference**

Contact your senator or their staff and let them know how important these issues are to our industry.

**Senator Ben Sasse**
Phone: 202-224-4224

**Senator Deb Fischer**
Lincoln: 402-441-4600
Omaha: 402-391-3411
charge. Bills have been introduced at our request in past sessions to increase the amount Nebraska’s restaurants receive for collecting and remitting sales tax but we have not been able to overcome the millions this would cost the State of Nebraska. To address the problem without costing the State any money, legislation was introduced at our request to prohibit payment card networks from imposing interchange or swipe fees on the sales tax portion of a purchase made using a debit or credit card. It did not advance in the 2018 session.

**Forecast**—While any legislation that did not advance is officially dead and will have to be reintroduced in the 2019 session to be considered, we fully expect to see many of the issues back. We are almost certain that increasing the minimum tip wage will be reintroduced. With the continued immigration reform concerns, there could be several immigration bills on the state level. We are always concerned about the impact of liquor legislation on our membership and will be watching that closely.

For the past several sessions, rancor and acrimony among members of the body has increased and we expect this to continue. While there are several factors contributing to this trend, a major dynamic is the clash between income tax reform and property tax reform. Urban business interests believe income tax reform is necessary to lure more businesses to Nebraska and help existing businesses thrive and increase employment. The rural sector wants property tax reform. Agriculture is a huge part of Nebraska’s economy and Nebraska is a high property tax state. Agricultural land owners feel they are shouldering an unfair portion of the tax burden. The Nebraska Farm Bureau and other Ag organizations started a petition drive earlier this year to take property tax reduction to a vote of the people. The petition as drafted would have severely cut property taxes with no balancing increase in other revenue and created a huge budget shortfall. Fortunately, sponsors have since announced that they have put the petition effort on hold. Fortunately, sponsors have since announced that they have put the petition effort on hold. While this provides a temporary breather, the conflict between property tax relief and income tax relief promises to dominate the 2019 session. With current budget projections it will be very difficult to achieve either without higher sales taxes and the elimination of many sales tax exemptions. We will be closely watching the tax reform issue for potential impact on the restaurant industry in Nebraska.
Supreme Court: Colorado’s civil rights commission anti-religious bias violated cake baker’s rights

The U.S. Supreme Court has issued a narrow ruling in favor of a baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.

Background
The controversy between the cake baker and the couple he refused to bake a wedding cake for centered on the cake shop owner’s sincere religious beliefs and the couple’s identity as gay men. In 2012, the cake shop owner was asked by a gay couple to bake a cake in celebration of their wedding. The owner stated that he could not accommodate the request because he believed God intended marriage to be a union between one man and one woman. After the couple filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, the Commission and a state court ordered the owner to cease and desist discriminating against same-sex couples in the sale of his baked goods.

Supreme Court’s Decision
During oral argument, Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan alluded to the broad repercussions of a decision that could undercut public accommodation laws and civil rights protections in a variety of service industries. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch focused on safeguarding sincerely held religious beliefs and the potential for overreach by companies that refuse services because of an individual’s sexual orientation or other protected characteristics.

Though the case was highly publicized, the Court’s ruling leaves the question many had in mind unanswered: whether individuals who hold sincere religious beliefs can refuse service to individuals within a protected class, including same-sex couples. Kennedy acknowledged this question was not answered by the Supreme Court’s decision when he said, “The outcome of cases like this in other circumstances must await further elaboration in the courts, all in the context of recognizing that these disputes must be resolved with tolerance, without undue disrespect to sincere religious beliefs, and without subjecting gay persons to indignities when they seek goods and services in an open market.”

Implication for Employers
Masterpiece Cakeshop will not affect the protected status of individual employees’ sexual orientation. The Court specifically acknowledged the equal rights of persons who identify with the LGBTQ community. This emphasizes the importance of addressing sexual orientation, religious accommodation, and other protected groups in anti-harassment trainings and training materials.

This case does not change any of our nation’s fundamental civil rights laws that protect individuals of protected classes from discrimination in the workplace. However, it underscores the importance of unconscious bias and LGBTQ sensitivity trainings for all employees.
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Nebraska’s ProStart® teams serve it up at nationals

Two Nebraska ProStart teams served up their best at the National ProStart Invitational (NPSI) held April 27-30 in Providence, Rhode Island, and they placed higher in the competition than any previous Nebraska team.

Team members Savana Moore and Jazmin Koebel from Papillion LaVista South High School’s “MoodFood”, competed against 45 other teams in the Management Competition and took a commanding sixth place finish.

‘Guac and Roll’, Lincoln’s Career Academy’s team of Francisco Chavira Gonzalez, Tessa Mariscal, Corbin Reinhardt, and Sagan Smith, placed in the top 25, a strong showing in a tough Culinary competition.

ProStart is a program of the Hospitality Education Foundation, the educational arm of the Nebraska Restaurant Association. The curriculum is designed to teach high school students the culinary and management skills that lead to successful careers as professionals in the hospitality and food service industry.

Annually, over 400 of the top ProStart students from across the U.S. - the winners of Regional and State competitions - vie for scholarships in the secondary school invitational which focuses on restaurant management and culinary arts. At the 2018 NPSI, students had the opportunity to interact with more than 80 representatives from leading industry corporations, colleges and universities who judged the students on the skills they developed through ProStart.
As one of the 46 teams in the Management competition, the “MoodFood” team was required to develop their own unique restaurant concept. They focused on how food influences the mind, body, soul, and mood and created a plan for a casual, full service dining experience designed to provide patrons with a “mouthful of memories” and great food, good music, and local art. The team presented a written and oral proposal to a panel of world-class judges who then quizzed them on how they would solve some of the challenges restaurateurs face daily.

“MoodFood” received invaluable support and training from Educator Louise Dornbusch and Mentor Casey Craven, a ProStart “alum”.

Culinary contenders, the “Guac and Roll” team showcased their creativity and proficiency by preparing a three-course meal in 60 minutes using only two butane burners and without access to running water or electricity. They prepared a starter of Mache Salad, an entrée of Pan-Fried Veal Chops with Mushroom-Cider pan sauce, Parmesan-dusted Polenta Fries and Braised Vegetables and for dessert, a White Chocolate Bavarian in a gold-dusted Dark Chocolate Pyramid with sweetened cream Quenelle, Fresh Berries & Mixed Berry Sauce. Judges evaluated “Guac and Roll” not only on taste, but on skill, teamwork, safety, and sanitation.

Chef Maybell Galusha, the Career Academy Educator, and Mentor Justin Stout, provided unparalleled professional guidance and assistance to the team.

Brandy Nielson, Nebraska Restaurant Association Membership and Marketing Director accompanied the group to NPSI and viewed the competition. According to Nielson, “It was an impressive showing by both the Culinary and Management teams. A huge thank you to Fayrene Hamouz and the Hospitality Education Foundation Board of Directors for their support, assistance, and advice. The teams – along with Educators Chef Maybell Galusha and Louise Dornbusch and Mentors Justin Stout, Corporate Chef for ‘Eat Fit Go’, and Casey Craven of ‘Herbe Sainte’- spent countless hours practicing and preparing to compete against the best of the best at Nationals. The future looks bright for these Nebraska culinary students – and the Nebraska food service industry!”

Attendance at the competition would not have been possible without the support of our National ProStart Sponsors: Don & Millie’s and Nebraska Pork Producers.
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How to be “Instagrammable”

I will admit that I’m new to the Social Media hype, but we can likely agree, it’s all the rage! With a camera in everyone’s pocket nowadays, we’ve become pre-programmed to snap pictures of our food, whether it’s to show friends and family, or to post it on social media. According to Yelp, users searching for the word “Instagram” in their restaurant and food searches grew 3,000 percent from May of 2015 compared to August of 2017. So how does a restaurant become “Instagrammable?” It starts with you.

1. Create an Instagram account.
   If you don’t already have an account for your restaurant on Instagram, create one and start populating it with professional-quality photos of your food, interior, specials, catering and more. If you have an account that’s collecting dust, bring it back to life.

2. Use hashtags and mentions.
   Research has shown that including just one hashtag with your photo can increase engagement by more than 10 percent.

3. Monitor your feed.
   It’s imperative to monitor what happens once you start posting to any social media platform, especially one that moves as quickly as Instagram. Use a social media monitoring service to track and respond to the activity on your page. Once visitors start commenting and liking the photos that you’re posting, respond in kind with likes and appreciation. If someone posts a photo of your restaurant (which you’ll also be able to track), like it and thank them.

4. Post more “Instagrammable” photos.
   A lot of what gets shared on Instagram are drool-inducing photos that make serial scrollers stop in their tracks.

5. Create “Instagrammable” food and experiences.
   Whether you’re following a trend or creating something unique that integrates with your brand (e.g., latte art at a coffee shop or a 30-scoop sundae at a sweet shop), enlist the feedback of your staff and social media followers when creating signature dishes and experiences. If you need help, consider hiring a food stylist on a contract basis for additional thoughts and opinions.

6. Deliver on the hype.
   Last, but not least, deliver on your social promises. Don’t build up a social media frenzy and then fall short of delivering great food and service when your customers come in.

Many factors play into how much time you’ll end up spending to build and manage an Instagram account that gets followed. You’ll want to post one to three times per day, and each one of those posts will need to be planned, photographed, have a caption, hashtags, etc.

Don’t get discouraged. Trying to attract customers with an Instagram account may feel like a daunting task in the beginning, but with a little practice, you’ll soon get hooked on the free marketing!
Nebraska Restaurant Association honors hospitality industry leaders at the 28th annual Taste of Nebraska

The Necropolis Group and Pepsi received the Nebraska Restaurant Association hospitality awards at the association’s annual banquet, Taste of Nebraska. This year’s event was held Monday, April 16th at the Embassy Suites, LaVista Conference Center.

Winners of the award are selected for the contributions they make to both the hospitality industry and the communities in which they do business. Brent Lindner accepted the 2017 Restaurateur of the Year Award for The Necropolis Hospitality Group. The Necropolis Hospitality Group has five restaurants, Wave Pizza Company, J Alfred Prufrock’s, Sin City Grill, The World Famous Glass Bar in Grand Island and Wave Pizza/Staple Brewing in Hastings. Allied Member of the Year was presented to Pepsi and accepted by Chuck Parker.

Denis Hall, Fernando’s Café & Cantina was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his many years in the hospitality industry. Michelle Daize, The Eatery, was acknowledged as Volunteer of the Year for her significant time commitment and dedication to the Board of the Hospitality Education Foundation.

Hillis & Co. added the finishing touches to the evening with an “Island in Paradise” theme and “Dance of a Parrot Head, a Jimmy Buffet Tribute Band” ended the evening rocking the stage with well known classics by Jimmy Buffet.

Money raised at Taste of Nebraska supports the mission of the Nebraska Restaurant Association to represent, educate and promote the hospitality industry across the state. Additionally, money is used to support Nebraska ProStart – a two-year high school curriculum to get students interested in the hospitality industry.

The Nebraska Restaurant Association would like to thank special guest, Lt. Governor Mike Foley, and the many sponsors and guests that made the 28th annual Taste of Nebraska another success.
From pod to plate

What do aquafaba, parmesan broth, kitchen made chorizo, ProStart students, flourless black bean muffins, 3 cups/day and Chester B. Brown have in common? Ask the attendees of the recent “Dry Beans: From Pod to Plate ProStart Teacher Forum”, co-sponsored by the Nebraska Dry Edible Bean Commission and Nebraska ProStart in Scottsbluff.

Courtney Schuler, Trinidad Benham Bean, reviewed the history and economic impact of dry edible beans in Nebraska. In the early 1920’s, Brown planted the first fields of great northern beans near Morrill in western Nebraska. Today, the Nebraska Dry Bean industry contributes $200.3 million to the economy of the Panhandle. In 2017, Nebraska was the leading producer of great northern beans, second largest producer of pinto and light red kidney beans and ranked third in the US for all dry bean production. Nutritionist, Dr. Henry Thompson, Colorado State University, encouraged us to consume three cups of beans each day in support of a healthy lifestyle.

Chefs Brian O’Malley and Cathy Curtis, The Institute for the Culinary Arts, Metropolitan Community College, baked gluten-free black bean chocolate muffins and demonstrated aquafaba, whipped canned garbanzo bean liquid, that can be used in place of meringues. ProStart students and educators refreshed their knife skills under Brian and Cathy’s supervision—the result, a roasted tomato, bean, and cucumber salad reflective of Mediterranean cuisine.

Chef Anthony Seto, The Culinary Institute of America—Greystone Campus, used beans in soups, appetizers and entrees that were equally exciting. With a focus on Southwestern and Italian cuisine, ProStart educators and students made chorizo with black beans, parmesan broth to enhance soup and entrée flavors, and enjoyed turkey-bean meatloaf and sautéed rapini.

Five Scottsbluff High School ProStart students and their ProStart teacher, Hannah Liptac, supported the chefs in organizing the workshop. In addition to the valuable culinary tips, the students were the first to sample each item that was prepared. One student commented that the learning in the three-day workshop was equivalent to a semester in the classroom.

Lynn Reuter, Executive Director of the Nebraska Dry Bean Commission, wrapped up the forum by saying, “All goals, including equipping attendees with new recipes and ideas to teach the next generation innovative ways to eat and use dry beans, discover the impressive health & nutritional benefits of dry beans, and understand the contribution of dry beans to Nebraska’s economy had been met.

Nebraska ProStart appreciates the support of Lynn Reuter and the Dry Bean Commission in co-sponsoring the forum.
Introducing ServSafe Workplace

ServSafe Workplace is a comprehensive suite of training programs rooted in the cultural and social issues affecting today’s restaurant and hospitality work environments. This new product line focuses on mitigation and management of issues associated with the work and safety of employees and will assist in strengthening every establishment’s stance against harassment in the workplace.

ServSafe Workplace equips employees and managers with training to help manage emerging risks and advance the positive culture of the foodservice and hospitality industries. These programs will combine online training to create consistent messaging, while providing additional free resources such as breakroom posters, videos, and discussion guides to reinforce key training points.

Training topics may include:

- Sexual Harassment Prevention for Restaurant and Hospitality Employees/Managers (Launching Fall 2018)
- Diversity and Unconscious Bias, in partnership with the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance (Winter 2018)
- Workplace Safety
- Privacy and PCI Compliance
- ServSafe Workplace is being unveiled with multiple webinars on preventing sexual harassment that will be available to the entire industry, at no charge, during the summer months.

Send us your news!

We want to promote our members! Do you have a big anniversary coming up? Did your restaurant or company get recognized for a big award in the news? Do you just want to brag about how great you are? We want to hear it! Please share with us all good things happening in your world and we will promote you on our social channels. Send me a link at bnielson@windstream.net.

ServSafe Certification

Do you need to take an online ServSafe exam? Easy! Brandy is a certified ServSafe Proctor. Contact me to set up a day and time to take the online exam and it’s as easy as that! Exams are done in as little as one hour right at the Nebraska Restaurant Association’s office.
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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September 10
NRA Fall Golf Classic
Hillcrest Country Club, Lincoln

September 12
NRA 3rd Quarter Board Meeting
Valentino’s Corporate Office, Lincoln

LINCOLN SERVSAFE DATES

Wednesday, July 18th

To register, contact Gary Hosek 402.416.4432 and email of gary.hosek@gmail.com

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