



Food & Beverage Iowa Business Quarterly

I Chose the Restaurant Industry

Three Business Professionals Share Why "Cube Life" Couldn't Compare to The Rewards of a Career in the Hospitality Industry





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Join Us. Make Your Voice Heard.

This quarterly publication is sent to you courtesy of the Iowa Restaurant Association. We are proud to partner with hundreds of fine establishments and businesses across the state to protect, promote, educate and advocate for Iowa's restaurant and hospitality industry. If you are not currently a member of the Association, we hope you'll join us. There may be no greater investment in your business' future than \$35 per month spent to ensure your voice is added to the conversation.



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Food & Beverage Iowa Business Quarterly

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"Our industry is one worth fighting to protect..."

we listen.

Fighting the Good Fight

Helping Restaurants and Taverns Do Business Better

Jessica Dunker, President, CEO
Iowa Restaurant Association

When I tell people my job title, they often assume I am some sort of expert foodie. That's an understandable misunderstanding of the role of the Association. Of course, we all appreciate the quality, variety and unique flavors of Iowa's many restaurants—but my team and I are less about food, and more about the business behind the food. We help restaurants and taverns do business better.

This puts us on the forefront of many of the local, state, and federal legislative, educational, and regulatory issues your business deals in day in and day out.

This year we made real headway educating legislators, media and the public on the impact DRAM insurance costs, tip wages, and the lack of qualified workforce has on our

industry across the state. We also stood up for the industry on local wage battles and spent time with Iowa's federal congressional delegation talking about overtime definitions, the affordable care act and other business related regulatory proposals.

Our industry is one worth fighting to protect—and the Iowa Restaurant Association is, and will continue to do all we can to advocate for you and your hospitality business.

I hope to visit your location soon. Invite me! I can be reached at jdunker@restaurantiowa.com

Jessica



No Need to Be a Lone Wolf

Matt Johnson, Chairman, Iowa Restaurant Association Board of Directors
Owner/Operator Barley's Bar & Grill, Council Bluffs

I am honored to serve as the Chairman of this year's Iowa Restaurant Association Board of Directors. Each quarter, this group of two dozen highly accomplished and engaged restaurant owners and industry professionals meet to discuss the business landscape, identify challenges and potential solutions, and ultimately chart a legislative path for the Association.

I wish every restaurateur in the state could see this group in action. Every time we gather, I learn things that ultimately help my business. These interactions with restaurant leaders from across the state remind me that regardless of concept type or model, we have many shared concerns. It has also opened my eyes to what other operations face.

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None of us choose the hospitality industry because we want to be "lone wolves." In fact, quite the opposite most of us choose the industry because we enjoy serving, delighting and working with people. It is ironic that the demands of our jobs might actually make us one of the most isolated professions out there when it comes to networking and collaboration with like-minded businesses and business people.

There is no need to go it alone. Join the Iowa Restaurant Association. It's only \$35 per month and one of the greatest benefits of membership is getting connected with other operators—via events, phone or e-mail.

Whether you're struggling or knocking it out of the park, the Association has a place for you. They are quick to pair you with

"Whether you're struggling or knocking it out of the park, the Association has a place for you."

partners and other operators who can offer wise counsel and fresh ideas.

I would be happy to discuss my experience with anyone in the industry. Just e-mail me at mattj@barleysbar.com

Cheers and here's to connecting soon.

Matt

coming home

Three Hospitality Professionals Who Found “Cube Life” Couldn’t Compare to the Pace and Rewards of Iowa’s Hospitality Industry

to the restaurant industry

Hassan Atarmal

Owner/Operator, Fresh Mediterranean Express, Waukee

Hassan Atarmal always knew hospitality was part of “who he was,” but he didn’t know it would also become “what he did.”

Growing up in rural Morocco, his mother taught him the art of hospitality as well as the savory flavors and special cooking techniques of traditional Moroccan cuisine.

When Hassan moved to New York City, working in a food-related business was a natural choice. He spent 8 years in a delicatessen and bakery—eventually managing 20 employees. He met an Iowa girl and the two moved to Cedar Falls—opening the door for him to pursue his finance degree at University of Northern Iowa.

Upon graduation, he took a job as a mortgage underwriter—but cubicle life was not for him. He missed the creativity, pace, and lifestyle of the hospitality business. He spent three years in his corporate position, but then decided to put his business skills to work for himself.

He studied the local market, created a business plan, and began testing recipes on friends and family. “I thought we could offer something unique by taking a casual, made-to-order, fresh ingredient approach to Mediterranean cuisine,” says Hassan.

He was right.

In 2014, Hassan and wife Jeni opened Fresh Mediterranean Express in Waukee. Not only has their concept been a hit, they have also expanded into the retail sector—selling fresh hummus, as well as their branded seasonings and oils through local grocery and specialty food stores.

Hassan encourages others who have left the hospitality industry for office and other jobs, only to find they still long for the tempo, environment and reward that can only be found in hospitality, to come back. “There’s a place for all of those



Hassan Atarmal

business skills in the restaurant industry,” encourages Hassan. “If you’re feeling called back—take the chance and come.”

He missed the creativity, pace, and lifestyle of the hospitality business.

Nicki Crozier

Bartender/Server, Kippy’s Place, Elkhart

Some people just exude hospitality. Nicki Crozier is one of those people—which is why her original career choice as an accountant just didn’t “fit.”

After graduating from the University of Iowa with a finance degree, Crozier went straight to work in an office job—but the work environment felt a bit rigid and the computer work not interactive enough.

“I enjoy people too much to run numbers all day,” says the bubbly 20-something. “I had to get back to what I loved.”

What Crozier loved was the hospitality industry. She had worked in restaurants through high school and college and knew it was the place she could find a fulfilling career. “I chose the restaurant industry or maybe it chose me,” says Crozier with a smile. “Either way, it’s where I belong.”

Crozier is bartending and serving at Kippy’s Place, a bar and grill in Elkhart. Her ultimate goal is to own the establishment or one like it. She’s taking full advantage of her time, learning every aspect of the business from Kippy’s owners and staff.

“I don’t feel like I’m wasting one penny of the money I spent on a four-year degree,” says Crozier. “I use my business background every single day.”

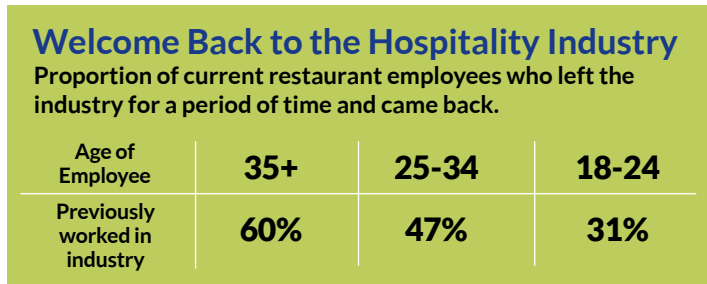
She says friends are often surprised to learn that she can make as much money working three days per week at Kippy’s as she did as an accountant. “I can support myself and still pay back those student loans, but I’m way happier now,” says Crozier. “There’s no substitute for the relationships you build in this industry.”



Nicki Crozier

He also knew he would thrive when he returned to hospitality because he had worked in, and loved, the restaurant industry from the time he was 15 until he graduated from University of Northern Iowa. “My personality fits the energy level of the restaurant industry,” says Koundakjan. “There is nothing as solid as the bonds you make with people when you share a great meal—I like that I get to a part of that for the people we serve.”

Koundakjan who also aspires to own his own restaurant someday, offers this advice to others who might want to put their business backgrounds to work in the hospitality industry. “I have been blessed to be able to work for, and around, some of the best hospitality operators in the state. Find those people. Work for them and glean everything you can from them. Like any industry—great mentors are everything in this business.”



Albert Koundakjan

Manager/Bar Manager, Guru BBQ, Des Moines

Albert Koundakjan, a manager at the recently opened Guru BBQ in Des Moines, clearly remembers the moment it struck him that his decision to leave his corporate position with a global logistics company and return to the restaurant industry wasn’t as big a leap as people might think. At the time, Koundakjan was working at Americana in the Western Gateway area of Des Moines.

“I glanced out the restaurant’s windows at the office buildings that surrounded us,” muses Koundakjan. “It dawned on me, I’m still doing all of the “business” things I did in my office job, but now I feed 300 people every day too.”

Interacting with and delighting those 300+ patrons was the daily rush Koundakjan, who has a degree in economics, knew he needed to be happy. “I missed the new challenges and fresh start you get every single day in a hospitality environment,” explains Koundakjan.



Albert Koundakjan

we advocate.



This legislative year the Iowa Restaurant Association made some significant changes in strategy. First, the Association brought on a new, multi-person lobbying team. Led by Eric Goranson, the team took the Association down a more proactive path to our issues.

Dram Bill Made Progress

This year the Iowa Restaurant Association worked with Representative Peter Cownie to introduce a bill (HSB 505) that would eliminate the DRAM requirement from restaurants and bars.



The Association was able to secure a House Commerce Subcommittee hearing on the topic. Two Iowa restaurateurs-Sarah Pritchard of Table 128 in Clive and Kris Kay of Go Fish Marina Bar and Grill in Princeton shared how the cost benefit of current DRAM laws give little protection but come with a high price. The two restaurateurs were surrounded by a pack of lobbyists representing insurance companies, trial attorneys and grocery/convenience stores. Their opposition was loud and bold.

The Sub Committee included: Representative Gary Carlson, Muscatine, Representative Dave Dawson, Woodbury and Representative Ken Rizer, Cedar Rapids. They voted two to one to pass the Bill to the next level. While the Bill was not passed out of the full committee for floor debate, this was the farthest the Association has ever gotten with this legislation. We will be back next legislative session.

Wage Issues

The Iowa Restaurant Association is working closely with legislators to bring clarity to wage issues in Iowa restaurants and bars. Specifically, we are educating legislators on the tip wage and how it works. We are working hard to separate the tip wage issue from conversations on minimum wage and seeking ways to freeze the current \$4.35 wage (versus the sliding percent) regardless of what happens with Iowa's minimum wage in the future. We feel as though more and more legislators are seeing that this is less about "what" we

pay employees versus "how" we ensure equity in compensation among the front and back of the house.

Leadership Meetings

In January a dozen Iowa restaurateurs held meetings with Iowa's legislative leadership, as well as their own representatives to share the industry's concerns. Meetings took place at the Capitol as well as at the Iowa Tourism reception that evening where Waukee ProStart students, as part of the Iowa Restaurant Association's booth, also got to interact with legislators and share the importance of Career and Tech Education.

#1 TIP WAGE SHOULD FREEZE
Iowa restaurants and bars with tipped employees are already paying twice the federal mandated "tip credit." Because of this impact tips have on the way the hospitality industry compensates employees, the Iowa Restaurant Association is calling for a freeze of the current \$4.35 tip wage and the elimination of the 80% of minimum wage sliding scale for tipped employees.

#2 REPEAL AND REPLACE CURRENT DRAM REQUIREMENTS
The Iowa Restaurant Association is calling for the decoupling of liquor licenses for restaurants and bars and DRAM insurance policies. Hospitality operators are the only segment of the marketplace required to provide proof of a particular line of insurance to receive licenses. This has created an unfair playing field and places undue burden on hospitality operators. The Association would like to see this repealed with a state operated victims fund that is derived from the already collected taxes on beer, spirits and wine. (IAR 500)

#3 STATE, NOT COUNTIES, SHOULD DETERMINE MINIMUM WAGE
It has been several months since Johnson County's Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance to raise its minimum wage. On Nov. 2, the county jumped from \$7.25 an hour to \$8.20. Wages are slated to increase into more times this year. Civil Union Johnson County limits had the ability to opt out of the increase—some did, others chose to comply. The Iowa Restaurant Association is one of the few organizations that publicly opposed the county's approach because if they are allowed to thwart state pre-emption laws, there will be an unpredictable patchwork of wages across the state.

#4 HORIZONTAL-ORIENTED DRIVER'S LICENSES
Currently those under the legal drinking age are required to carry vertical-oriented driver's licenses. Since they're turned 21 years old, they are not required to get a new license until it is due for renewal—often years later. The Iowa Restaurant Association believes that alcohol age compliance would be improved by requiring people to receive a new horizontally-oriented driver's license within 90 days of turning 21.

Want more information? Check out our legislative issues document at www.restaurantiowa.com



Waukee ProStart students met Speaker of the Iowa House Linda Upmeyer at a large legislative reception.



Iowa restaurant industry members meeting with Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal.



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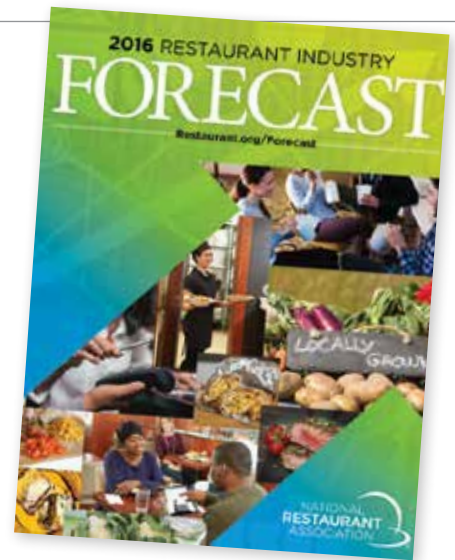
we inform.

forecast 2016

a peak into the crystal ball

No organization studies the nation's restaurant industry as closely as the National Restaurant Association. Each year they publish their Restaurant Industry Forecast.

Check out some highlights from their latest report.



Labor Need is Growing. Labor Pool is Shrinking.

Iowa's restaurant industry shattered job growth projections. Last year's forecast had projected a 1,200 job net increase in 2016, but it appears that number will be an astonishing 5,000+ net new hospitality jobs in Iowa this year. As a result, recruitment and retention of employees will present a tremendous challenge to operators across the state.

Post your jobs on the Iowa Restaurant Association's Industry Job Board and let us help you find a high quality workforce. This service is free to members.

2016 Restaurant Industry Forecast

The National Restaurant Association's comprehensive, annual outlook for and overview of the U.S. restaurant industry, covering national and state-by-state sales and employment forecasts, as well as workforce, segment, consumer, technology and menu trends. Go to: <http://www.restaurant.org/News-Research/Research/Forecast-2016>

Positive, but Moderate Sales Growth.

Iowa's projected and real sales revenue growth has hovered right around 3 percent for the past five years. This year, Iowa's restaurant revenues are expected to grow by 4.2 percent—a small move in the right direction!

If I had \$60...

Fifty-six percent of American adults said if they had an extra \$60 to spend each month, they would likely spend it in restaurants.

Welcome to the Middle Class!

Between 2010 and 2014 the number of restaurant jobs with an annual income of \$45K to \$75K jumped 32.7%!

In contrast, the total number of jobs in the US economy with income growth in this range was just 8%.

That means that the restaurant industry was responsible for almost 6% of net new middle class jobs.

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Culinary Results:

- 1st – Waterloo West High School**
- 2nd – Waukee High School
- 3rd – Burlington High School

Management Results:

- 1st – Davenport Community High Schools**
- 2nd – Waukee High School
- 3rd – Sergeant Bluff – Luton High School

2016 Iowa ProStart Invitational Reigning Culinary Champs Defend Their Title

For the second year in a row, the culinary team from Waterloo West High School will represent Iowa at the National ProStart® Invitational Culinary Competition. The state management competition champions advancing to nationals are from Davenport High School.

State ProStart Invitational Moves to Iowa Events Center

On March 1st after months of preparation with teammates, teachers and mentors, working to refine recipes, business plans, and presentations, 11 high school culinary teams and seven restaurant management teams finally got to show their stuff at the Iowa ProStart® Invitational.

This year's competition took place at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines where more than 80 students participated in and numerous spectators watched the event. In the end, Waterloo West High School and Davenport Community High Schools were crowned the state culinary and restaurant management champions, respectively. Both teams will represent Iowa at the National ProStart Invitational at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center in Dallas, Texas April 29 – May 1.

Support The Culinary Champions at Nationals!

With a \$250 donation, your business' logo will be embroidered on the chef coats of the Iowa culinary champions, to be seen by restaurateurs, future employees, potential customers from across the country and – most importantly – the Waterloo West High School students you're supporting.



Your donation supports the IRAEF's ProStart Program which equips students with the skills they need to enter the restaurant industry ready to make an immediate impact.

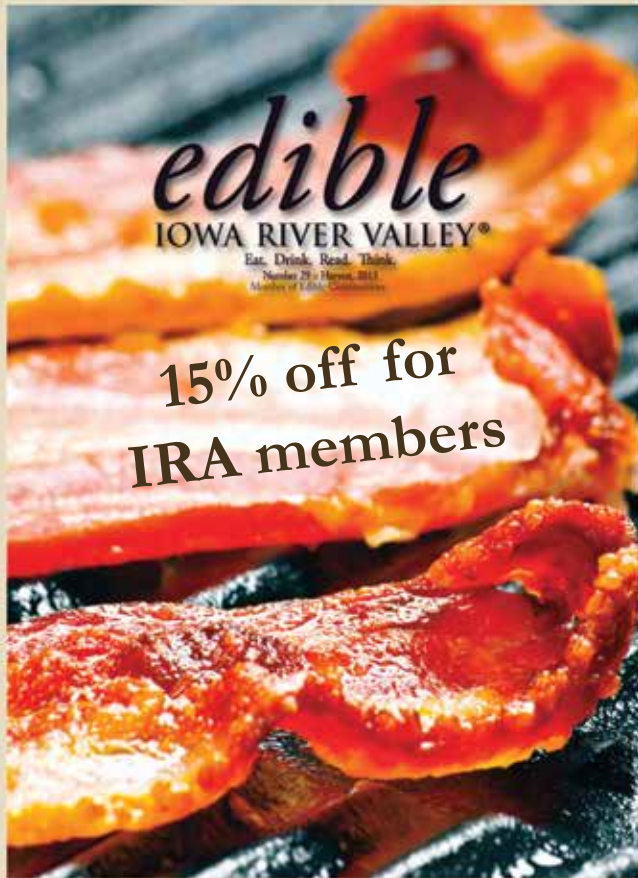
Visit the IRA website or contact Katelyn Kostek for more information at (515) 276-1454 or kkostek@restaurantiowa.com to learn more.



With the move to the Iowa Events Center this year, we received more media coverage than previous years. Here a WHO Television reporter interviews IRAEF Executive Director May Schaben about the event.

More than 60 industry professionals volunteered as judges for the event including Tony Rezek from Loffredo, Tag Grandgeorge from Le Jardin and Dan Warren from Americana Restaurant & Lounge.





tan·gi·ble

adjective

1. discernible by the touch; material or substantial.
2. real or actual, rather than imaginary.

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we award.

The Iowa Restaurant Association's Stars of Hospitality Program celebrates people who have made a career in the restaurant industry by working at a single establishment and/or for a specific company for 20+ years. We recognize the importance of these team members to your business, but also celebrate the professionalism they exhibit day in and day out.



CONGRATULATIONS

First Quarter 2016 Stars of Hospitality Recipients

Let us visit your establishment to present Stars of Hospitality plaques to your 20+ year team members. Learn more about the program at www.restaurantiowa.com. You can submit your employees via e-mail to kkostek@restaurantiowa.com.



Sheree May and Deanne Plew, both started 30 years ago with Trostel's Greenbriar in Johnston.

7 out of 10 restaurant employees say they plan to work in the restaurant industry until they retire.



88%
of the restaurant workforce said they are proud to work in the restaurant industry



Matthew Rumeliote, Pam Bartholomew, Cindy Papouchis and Donna Meacham with Northwestern Steakhouse, Mason City.



Shelbe Krogman, 23 years; Tom Peiffer, 33 years; and Mike Lietz, 28 years, with Flapjacks Restaurant in Maquoketa.

SHOWCASE YOUR TALENT

Compete in Dine Iowa's Upcoming Competitions



IOWA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Mixology Championships

Searching for Iowa's Top Mixologist!
Think you've got what it takes? Throw
your name in the "mix"!

The Iowa Restaurant Association is looking for Iowa's top mixologists to compete in the Association's regional and state mixology competition in August and September. The top mixologist will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and serious bragging rights!

Top winners at the regional competitions earn their spot at the state finals. Regional events will be held during August in:

- Iowa City
- Cedar Rapids
- Davenport
- Sioux City
- Des Moines

State Mixology finals will be held in Des Moines in September.

Contact:

Stacy Kluesner at skluesner@restaurantiowa.com or
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Culinary Competition

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The Iowa Restaurant Association and a team of travelling judges will visit 10 restaurants from August to October on a designated night to judge a competition dish using beef and soy. Winners will be announced at the Dine Iowa Grand Tasting Gala on Thursday, October 6th in Des Moines. Make samples of your competition dish for nearly 300 attendees who will vote for the People's Choice Award Winner.

Competition and People's Choice winners receive cash prizes!

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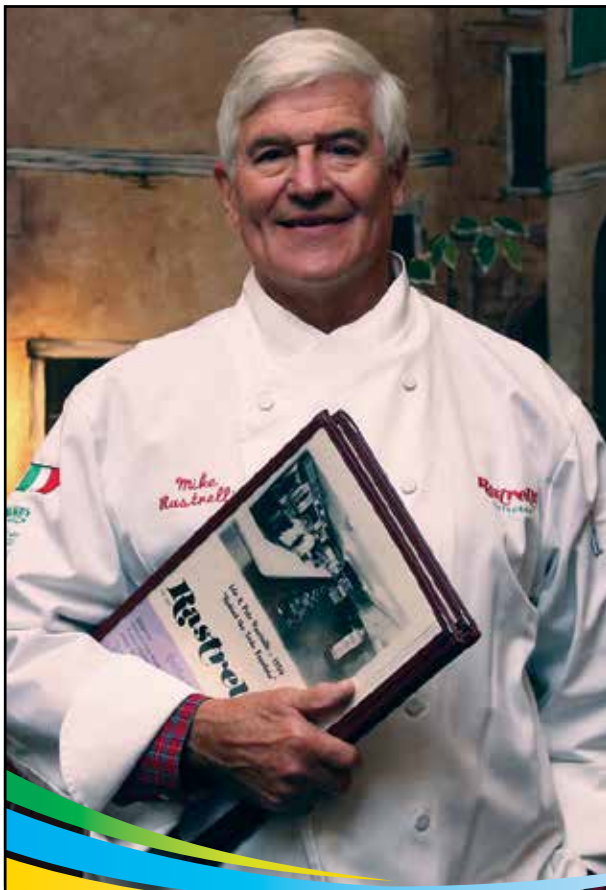
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Baratta's Named 2016 Business of the Year

In January, IRA member Baratta's in Des Moines was named the 2016 Business of the Year by the Des Moines East and South Chamber of Commerce. The staff accepted their award at the Chamber's annual dinner hosted at Prairie Meadows in Altoona.

Congratulations to IRA Member Ankeny Diner Named a Top 10 Finalist in Best Burger Contest

Congratulations to IRA member Ankeny Diner, for being named one of the Top 10 Finalists in the Iowa Beef Industry Council's 2016 Best Burger Contest. All finalist establishments will be visited by a panel of secret judges. The winner will be announced May 2nd.



RoCA Named to Top 100 Hottest Restaurants

IRA member RoCA has been named one of the 100 Hottest Restaurants in America for 2016 by OpenTable. RoCA

is the only Iowa restaurant to be named to the 2016 list and this is their second year in a row winning this award.

RoCA



Jethro's Owner Opens New Concept

IRA member and 2012 Restaurateur of the Year Bruce Gerleman has opened a new Italian concept in Altoona named Jethroni Pepperoni. The menu includes a number of Italian dishes and unique pizza toppings.

New West Des Moines Restaurant - Gilroy's

IRA Member and immediate past chairman of the board Scott Carlson has opened the third establishment within his restaurant family - Gilroy's Kitchen + Pub + Patio on 8th street in West Des Moines.



Iowa's Best Breaded Pork Tenderloin Contest

Starting in May, nominations will be accepted for the Iowa Pork Producers Association's 2016 Best Breaded Pork Tenderloin Contest. Cast your vote at www.iowapork.org.



Alba Chef Receives James Beard Award Nomination

Executive Chef Joe Tripp of Alba in Des Moines has been named a nominee for the James Beard Foundation "Best Chef: Midwest" award.

4th Annual Soy Salad Dressing Professional Chefs Contest



On August 15th, The Soyfoods Council in conjunction with the Iowa Restaurant Association will be hosting its 4th Annual Soy Salad Dressing Professional Chefs Contest at the Iowa State Fair. Chefs will be challenged to create a unique salad dressing recipe using soft silken tofu as the base for a panel of judges and hundreds of fairgoers. Interested in competing? Cash prizes will be awarded. Contact Katelyn Kostek, kkostek@restaurantiowa.com or 515-276-1454

we saw you there.



Chefs Don Garrett and Chad Meyer of Two Rivers Grill in the West Des Moines Marriott mingled with guests while serving sliders at the Iowa Pork Producers Association's Taste of Elegance.



Robyn Trostel McSheehy of Trostel's Dish and Trostel's Greenbriar learned about the winemaking process and what it takes to be a Sommelier at an educational luncheon with Penfolds Winemaking Ambassador D'Lynn Proctor.



Iowa Restaurant Association Education Foundation Chair-Elect Charlie Campbell from Performance Foodservice volunteered as a judge and announced the winners of the 2016 Iowa ProStart Invitational.



Prairie Meadows Racetrack & Casino representatives celebrated the release of the Greater Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau's new culinary marketing initiative Catch Des Moines Flavor at the CVB's Spring/Summer Release Party held at BASH Events & Catering in Des Moines.



The Iowa restaurant industry Career Fair, hosted at the Iowa Events Center in conjunction with the Iowa ProStart Invitational, brought in nearly 30 exhibitors including the Two Rivers Hospitality Group to visit with and interview job seekers across the metro.



Des Moines Embassy Club Sommelier Stephen Volkamer-Jones and General Manager Michael LaValle enjoyed an educational evening at Splash Seafood Bar & Grill with Penfolds Winemaking Ambassador D'Lynn Proctor (center) learning about what makes a great wine.



IRA member KeyImpact Sales & Services, Inc. prepared unique samples while discussing business best practices with guests at the Martin Brother's food show held at Prairie Meadows Racetrack & Casino in March.

SWEET ENDINGS

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Join Us for a Day on the Course!

Wednesday,
June 15, 2016

Toad Valley Golf Course
in Pleasant Hill

Shotgun Starts:

7:00 A.M. &
2:00 P.M.

\$90 per golfer



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Spend a day on the golf course and promote your restaurant or bar. You will be placed at one of the holes where you can share food, beverages or both with nearly 300 participants who will be eating and drinking their way across the course. Meet, greet and entertain your patrons and potential customers.

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Space is limited and we are already promoting participating establishments, sign up today!

We encourage every hospitality establishment to partner with one of our purveyor partners for product, hole games and prizes.

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upcoming events

NRA Public Affairs Conference

April 12-13, 2016

Washington DC

Register: www.restaurant.org/paconference



With the election year looming, the NRA is looking forward to a high-impact, high-stakes National Public Affairs Conference. Join the NRA and industry leaders across the country as they go to Capitol Hill to talk about top public policy issues that affect restaurants.

2016 NRA Show

May 21-24, 2016

McCormick Place, Chicago, IL



Experience the 2016 NRA Show and see how four days of meeting, seeing, tasting, testing and more can change your business. With more than 75 educational sessions and exhibitors to meet with, you will walk away with endless business best practices and industry connections.

Duffers, Diners & Drives Golf Classic

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Toad Valley Golf Course

Pleasant Hill

Shotguns: 7:00 AM & 2:00 PM



Register: www.restaurantiowa.com or 515-276-145

You don't need to be a pro to enjoy this day on the course. With food and drink at every hole, it's sure to be your best day of golf, ever!

National ProStart Invitational

April 29 – May 1, 2016

Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center

Dallas, TX



Representing Iowa:

Culinary Team - Waterloo West High School

Management Team - Davenport Community Schools

ServSafe Classes

April 21, 25

May 3, 12, 17, 23

June 2, 7, 21

Iowa Restaurant Association Office

1501 42nd St. Suite 294

West Des Moines, IA 50266



To register call (515) 276-1454 or visit www.restaurantiowa.com

Iowa's food code requires a certified food protection manager on staff. ServSafe™, a one day food safety and sanitation certification class, fills this requirement.



Hospitality Human Resources Management and Supervision Course

Instructor: Jeanine Buckingham,
Orchestrate Hospitality, Des Moines

Week of May 23

Controlling Foodservice Costs

Instructor: Lynn Pritchard, Table 128 Bistro + Bar, Clive

Week of June 20

Cost: \$300 per course

Register online!

www.restaurantiowa.com/hipdi

The Iowa Restaurant Association Education Foundation and the Des Moines Area Community College's Continuing Education have collaborated to offer the Iowa Hospitality Industry Professional Development Institute. Develop your management skillset through a series of certificate programs taught by industry professionals, for industry professionals. Start the journey to obtain the industry's premier credential – the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's ManageFirst Professional® credential.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY Extension and Outreach

Educational Opportunities

ServSafe classes are also taught in multiple languages by the Iowa State University Extension Offices across the state. See all upcoming class sites and dates at www.restaurantiowa.com or www.iowafoodsafety.org and search ServSafe.



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