CSRA 2026 ANNUAL MEETING - CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Monday, November 16, 2026

Time	Session
2:00 – 5:00 PM	**National Chain Partners' GA Meeting**
2:00 – 3:45 PM	**CSRA Board Meeting (All CEOs Invited)**
4:00 – 5:45 PM	**CSRA Board & National Restaurant Association Senior Staff Meeting (All CEOs**
6:30 PM	**CEO/National C-Suite Dinner - Barcelona Restaurant**
6:30 PM	**Government Affairs Staff Dinner — On Your Own** Suggested Meet-Up: Puttshack — wear your name tags to break the ice and get to know others!

Tuesday, November 17, 2026

Time	Session
8:00 – 9:00 AM	**Breakfast**
9:00 – 9:20 AM	**Welcome to Nashville** *Bob Luz, Executive Director, CSRA; Sara Beth Urban, CEO & President, Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association; State Representative, William Lamberth, for Tennessee's 44th District*
9:20 – 9:40 AM	**Welcome to Annual Meeting** *Scott Dolch, President & CEO, Connecticut Restaurant & Hospitality Association, and current chair of CSRA; Michelle Korsmo, President & CEO, National Restaurant Association*
9:40 – 10:40 AM	**State of the Union** Two weeks after the midterm elections, Sean Kennedy will discuss where things stand, what will shape policy in 2027, and how it will affect restaurant advocacy with trusted industry friend Dave Thomas. *Sean Kennedy, Chief Advocacy Officer, National Restaurant Association, and Dave Thomas, Partner at Mehlman Consulting*
10:40 – 11:00 AM	**Break –** Provided by Bluemont Group, a local **Dunkin'** franchisee
11:00 AM – Noon	**Credit Cards & Restaurants: An Imbalanced Relationship** The credit card interchange fight continues. Visa & MasterCard continue to report record profits. Federal agencies have seemingly blocked state legislative paths, so where do we go from here? *Moderator: Joe Kefauver, Managing Partner, Align Public Strategies Panelists: Daniel Swanson, Attorney and Consultant; and Kelsey Erickson Streufert, Chief Public Affairs Officer, Texas Restaurant Association*
Noon – 1:00 PM	**Lunch**
1:00 – 2:00 PM	**Packaging, Policy, and Public Health: Emerging Issues and Implications** From extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws to ingredient labeling and the evolving Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) agenda, states are advancing food and packaging policies that could significantly impact restaurant operations. Join industry

	leaders for a discussion on key developments in EPR, food warning labels, and MAHA-related policies shaping the restaurant industry. *Moderator: Bianca Weiss, State Affairs Manager; Panelists: Laura Abshire, Sr. Director, Food & Supply Chain Policy; Robin Repass, Executive Director, SVP, and Chief Legal Counsel; Michael Aguilar, Sr. Manager, Government Affairs at Inspire Brands; Kevin Dugan, VP of Public Affairs at NYSRA; Chris Kane, Sr. Manager, Government Relations at Panda Restaurant Group.*
2:00 – 2:30 PM	**Pricing, Privacy, and the Pursuit of Verification** As restaurants become more digitally connected, technology is playing a larger role in both operations and customer engagement. This panel will explore the emerging policy issues tied to that shift and what they could mean for restaurants. *Moderator: Aaron Frazier, Vice President of Public Policy, National Restaurant Association; Panelists: Walt Mullon, Director of Technology and Innovation Policy, National Restaurant Association, Libby Sharp, Government Affairs Lead, Inspire Brands and Brian Wise, Director of Government Affairs, Yum! Brands*
2:30 – 3:00 PM	**Medicaid Tax Proposals** Join us for a session on this rapidly emerging healthcare topic where we will discuss current political, communications, and legal strategies. *Moderator: Mike Whatley, Vice President, State Affairs and Grassroots Advocacy, National Restaurant Association. Panelists: Robin Repass, Executive Director and Chief Legal Counsel, Restaurant Law Center; Andrea Reay, Government Affairs Director, Washington Hospitality Association*
3:00 – 3:20 PM	**Break**
3:20 – 4:00 PM	**Was That Video Real?** AI is reshaping advocacy and campaigns—but how can you put it to work effectively? David Massey leads a discussion with legislative and campaign experts on practical ways emerging AI tools can strengthen advocacy, communications, and engagement. *Moderator: David Massey, Coordinator, State Affairs, National Restaurant Association. Panelists: Jeff Flint, President, HexaCom Group; Benjamin Fineran, Head of AI, State Affairs*
4:00 – 4:50 PM	**Government Affairs Only Breakout Session**
5:00 – 6:15 PM	**Welcome Reception -** Butterfly by José Andrés (Rooftop)
Evening	**Dinner on Your Own**

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Time	Session
8:00 – 9:00 AM	**Breakfast**
9:00 – 10:00 AM	**What the Polls Are Saying** A conversation on polling trends and how that affects legislative advocacy. How the electoral results impact perceived power and where caucus leadership goes from here. Presented by Chris Lane from Cygnal, one of the top polling firms in the country. *Chris Lane, Senior Partner & Pollster at Cygnal*
10:00 AM -12:00 PM	**Foundation Breakout Session: Program Innovation, Partnerships & Successes**

	Program Innovation, Partnerships & Successes | A conversation about innovative program models, unique partnerships, and industry-backed certificates that are creating new opportunities and strengthening our foundations. *Alycia Harshfield, President, California Restaurant Foundation; Hanna Naum-Stoian, Vice President of Talent Solutions, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce; Evann Vrana-Gerber, Director of Education & Workforce Partnerships, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce*
10:00 – 10:45 AM	**Hemp-Derived THC Beverage Policy** Where do we go from here at the federal, state, and training levels? A quickly emerging discussion regarding THC/Cannabis. *Moderator: Mike Whatley, Vice President, State Affairs and Grassroots Advocacy, NRA, and Allison DeRoberts with the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance*
10:45 – 11:05 AM	**Break**
11:05 AM – Noon	**CEO Only Breakout Session**
11:05 AM – Noon	**Government Affairs Only Breakout Session**
Noon – 1:00 PM	**Lunch**
1:00 – 1:20 PM	**Welcome to All** *Bob Luz, Executive Director, CSRA; Scott Dolch, President & CEO, Connecticut Restaurant & Hospitality Association, and current chair of CSRA*
1:20 – 2:00 PM	**National Restaurant Association Update** *Michelle Korsmo, President & CEO, National Restaurant Association*
2:00 – 2:45 PM	**Keynote Speaker** The Stories Behind the Songs: A Conversation with Country Music Legend Dean Dillon. Featuring Country Music Hall of Fame Inductee Dean Dillon in conversation with Clay Bradley, Vice President of Creative, BMI Nashville.
2:45 – 3:10 PM	**Break**
3:10 – 3:50 PM	**Collaborating for Greater Impact** Hear how SRA leaders are leveraging their foundations to strengthen membership, amplify advocacy, elevate their brand, and create greater impact through cross-functional collaboration. *Moderator: Alycia Harshfield, President, California Restaurant Foundation; Panelists: Meghan (Meg) Gardner, Vice President, Delaware Restaurant Association and Delaware Restaurant Foundation; Amanda Smith, Executive Vice President of Workforce Development for the Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association (MRLA), Executive Director of the Michigan Hospitality Foundation, and Executive Director of the Hospitality Training Institute of Michigan (HTIM); Stef Otterson, Director of Communications, Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association (PRLA)*
3:50 – 4:40 PM	**Practical Project Management** Panel discussion by association professionals who will share real-world perspectives on moving projects from concept to completion while navigating priorities, limited resources, cross-team collaboration, and the inevitable challenges that arise along the way. *Moderator: Yvette Tavares, Vice President of Sales & Operations, Connecticut Panelists: Stef Otterson, Director of Communications, Pennsylvania; Elizabeth Barry, Membership & Events Manager, Connecticut; Emily Daunt, VP Communications & Strategy, Michigan*
5:30 PM	**Bus Pick-up from Lobby**

6:00 PM	**A Taste of Nashville: Dinner at Martin's Bar- B-Que Joint — Offsite Dinner for All Attendees** Experience a true taste of Music City! Join fellow attendees and guests for an evening offsite at Martin's Bar-B-Que Joint, featuring legendary whole-hog BBQ, a laid-back Nashville atmosphere, and great food, drinks, and conversation. Enjoy live entertainment by The Dylan Altman Blues Band, courtesy of BMI, as we bring a little Nashville music to the evening. Location: Martin's Bar-B-Que Joint

Thursday, November 19, 2026

Time	Session
8:00 – 8:45 AM	**Breakfast**
8:45 – 9:15 AM	**Educational Foundation Strategic Plan Update** *Michelle Korsmo, President & CEO, National Restaurant Association*
9:15 – 9:45 AM	**Foundation Executive Director Introduction & Discussion** *Dr. Monica Parrish Trent, Executive Director, National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF)*
9:45 – 10:15 AM	**State of the Restaurant Industry** *Chad Moutray, Ph.D., CBE, Senior Vice President, Research and Knowledge, and Chief Economist, National Restaurant Association*
10:15 – 10:25	**Break**
10:25 – 11:15 AM	**From Busy Work to Better Work** A working session on using AI to run association operations, with a focus on real examples of how you can automate the time-consuming work that nobody wants to do through back-office automation. The latest year-end updates are provided as you discover practical ideas that can help your association work smarter. Bring your laptops for this interactive session led by Chris Gloede, Chief Consultant with Ricochet. *Chris Gloede, Chief Consultant with Ricochet.*
11:15 – 12:00 PM	**The SRA Idea Exchange — Bold Programs, Practical Takeaways** Why create from scratch when you can steal shamelessly from your colleagues? Big ideas lead to real impact, and some of the best come from peers who have faced challenges, found solutions, and achieved measurable results. Five SRA leaders will each share a proven success story, offering practical takeaways and actionable ideas you can put to work in your own SRA. These are ideas worth the theft charge! *Moderator: Douglas OFlaherty, COO, South Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association; Panelists: Andy Piccolantonio, Chief Growth Officer, Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance; Victoria Maggiacomo, Manager of Membership/Marketing, Rhode Island Hospitality Association; Corey Mobley, Lead Executive Director, Texas Restaurant Association; Laura Shunk, COO & Foundation President, Colorado Restaurant Association*
Noon – 1:00 PM	**Lunch**
1:00 – 1:55 PM	**Are We Ready for Who's Next? Leading The People Who Will Reinvent Our Industry** The next generation of leaders is already emerging—but are our associations ready for them? This conversation looks beyond generational labels to explore changing expectations, new ways of learning and communicating, and rapidly evolving technology.

	Brian Connors of Accelerating Leaders will challenge us to consider what we need to stop, start, and rethink today to remain relevant tomorrow—and how we can attract, motivate, and retain the people who will reinvent our industry. *Brian Connors, M.S., CHE, CSW, Director of Innovation & Strategy at Accelerating Leaders*
1:55 – 2:40 PM	**From Noise to Value: Communicating What Restaurant Operators Actually Need to Hear** SRA's are working harder than ever and stretched thin across our teams responsible for communications, advocacy, education, events, and member expectations. At the same time, engagement can plateau, renewals are less predictable, and recruiting new members is increasingly difficult. Cheri Quinn and Emily Youngblood from The Mercury Creative Group will lead a session on providing practical strategies to simplify messaging, tell stronger stories, and create communications that strengthen engagement, participation, and member growth. *Cheri Quinn, Director of Brand Strategy, Mercury Creative Group; and Emily Youngblood, Client Services Director, Mercury Creative Group*
2:40 – 3:00 PM	**Break**
3:00 – 3:45 PM	**What SRA Member Benefits Drive Recruitment & Retention** An interactive panel discussion of SRA leaders who will share proven member benefit programs and best practices that have successfully driven recruitment, increased retention, and strengthened member engagement. Discover new partnerships and programs to enhance your association's value proposition and make membership an indispensable investment for restaurant operators. *Moderator: Ben Feliccia, SVP, Strategy & Engagement, Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association Panelists: Carol Dover, CEO, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association; Kerry Miller, VP, Operations, Massachusetts Restaurant Association + one more*
3:45 – 4:45 PM	**Learning Labs – NRA Solutions Through the Lens of State Success Stories** In this interactive session, attendees will choose two of four 20-minute learning labs, each featuring an NRA expert teamed with an SRA leader who has effectively implemented the program at the state level. Through practical examples and peer insights, participants will learn how these solutions are positioned, promoted, and driving engagement, workforce development, and operational success. • *ServSafe: Jarrett Whitlow, SVP | Product Sales, National Restaurant Association* • *Restaurant Owner: Chip Romp, Senior Director, Workforce Development and Business Services, National Restaurant Association* • *Serve Success: Sarah Bray, VP Workforce and Business Development, National Restaurant Association* • *American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI): Andy Winston, Vice President of Career & Academic Markets at the National Restaurant Association*
Evening	**Dinner on Your Own**

Friday, November 20, 2026

Time	Session
8:00 – 9:00 AM	**Breakfast**
9:00 – 9:45 AM	**Foundation: Tapping Into New Funding**

	What are founders funding and where are the opportunities? Attendees will share ideas, lessons learned, and new approaches to generating revenue. *Alycia Harshfield, President, California Restaurant Foundation*
9:45 – 10:30 AM	**Foundation: Defining Our Value Proposition – Differentiating Our Programs.** As more culinary and workforce programs enter the space, how do we stand out? Share ideas for differentiating our programs, communicating their unique value, and perhaps partnering with other programs. *Alycia Harshfield, President, California Restaurant Foundation*
10:30 – 11:15 AM	**Foundation: Building Boards That Show Up** A discussion on board recruitment, engagement, and leadership development, with a focus on building boards that actively support your mission, relationships, and foundation growth. *Alycia Harshfield, President, California Restaurant Foundation*
9:00 – 9:45 AM	**Membership/MarCom: Turning Great Ideas into Action – The best ideas often come from those sitting next to you.** Brian Connors will return with a session to guide us through a collaborative problem-solving process designed specifically for SRA Membership and Marketing & Communications professionals. Working with our peers, he will help us discover common challenges, exchange proven strategies, and leave with practical ideas and an action plan to put into practice immediately. *Brian Connors, M.S., CHE, CSW, Director of Innovation & Strategy at Accelerating Leaders*
9:45 – 10:30 AM	**Membership/MarCom: Peer Exchange Roundtable: Real Conversations. Real Solutions.** We will break into four facilitated roundtable discussions of some of our biggest challenges to spur honest dialogue, idea sharing, and problem-solving. We will leave with practical insights that are working. *Roundtable Facilitators: Chris Tapia, Director of Communications & Outreach, Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association; Megan Bol, Director of Member Engagement, Massachusetts Restaurant Association; Devany McNeil, EVP, Strategic Partnerships, Colorado Restaurant*
10:30 – 11:15 AM	**Membership/MarCom: Looking Ahead, Team Wrap-ups & Conference Takeaways** Each work group will meet alone to review the week and share notes on what they are bringing back to their states, and conversations that will continue through work group calls throughout the coming months.
11:15 – 11:30 AM	**Closing Remarks & Adjourn**