

SHOW-ME DINING

An official publication on the Missouri
Restaurant Association 2026

Missouri's Restaurant Industry

Discover trends, tips, and exciting stories
for Missouri's Restaurant & Hospitality
Community!

Spring 2022, Vol 1, Issue 1.
Morestaurants.org



+
Plus

What's Hot
Culinary
Forecast

Meet Your
2026
Presidents

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2026 MRA PRESIDENT

We are thrilled to welcome Kim Halloran, Managing Partner of The Capital Grille in Kansas City, as the incoming 2026 President of the Missouri Restaurant Association.

PROSTART COMPETITION

From the kitchen to the boardroom, ProStart students are judged on professional-level skills and creativity. Culinary and management teams build real-world concepts under pressure, showcasing just how transformative the program can be.

CHEERS WITHOUT CURFEW

To prepare for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Missouri approved temporary extended alcohol service hours, allowing nearly 24-hour "liquor by the drink" service statewide to support increased tourism and demand.

MEMBER SAVINGS PROGRAM

Being a member means more than advocacy, it means tangible savings and trusted support for your business. Enjoy special pricing, rebate opportunities, training discounts, and financial perks that help you streamline costs and grow with confidence.

BOTTLES, BLUES, BRASS

With a nod to the Blues Brothers and a whole lot of heart, the Blues & Brews Gala struck all the right notes. The sold-out evening blended local flavor, industry recognition, and late-night celebration in true hospitality style.

NO TAX ON TIPS

In July 2025, a new federal provision allows eligible service workers to deduct up to \$25,000 in qualified tips from their taxable income. Industry leaders say the change marks an important step toward fairer tax policy for hospitality workers.

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MRA Board of Directors

Board Officers:

Jon Branstetter, Chairmen
Company Kitchen

Kim Halloran, President
The Capital Grille

Jason Pryor, Vice President
Pizza51

Mary Holland, Treasure
Pierpont's at Union Station

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Bartolinio's

Alan Kneeland
The Combine

Roland DeGregorio
Apex

Tyler Banker
Third Street Social

Joey Connaughty
Culver's

Meegan Whitehead
Anthonino's Taverna

Mike McVey
Transport Brewery

Roy Reichold
Lakenan Insurance

Van DeGregorio

Gio Favazza
Powers Insurance

Angie Fellers
Fellers Equipment

David Maxwell
Bread Basket

Government Affairs

Jay Hahn
Hahn | DeBoef

Ryan DeBoef
Hahn | DeBoef

A Year of Growth and Opportunity

As we begin the new year, we are excited to move forward with a clear and focused plan for our association, one centered on growth, impact, and member value.

Our first priority is expanding our footprint across the state, with a strong emphasis on reaching more restaurants. By growing our presence, we strengthen our voice, broaden our influence, and create new opportunities for collaboration within our industry.

Our Education Foundation is paramount to the continued success of the Hospitality Industry. Through our scholarships, Serv-training products, ProStart curriculum, and our community giving we are developing the next generation of restaurateurs, cultivating the future of the hospitality industry.

Finally, we are focused on ensuring our members fully utilize the benefits available to them. Your membership provides valuable resources, programs, and connections, and this year we will work to make those benefits more accessible, visible, and impactful.

This year is about purposeful growth and working together to build a stronger association for all. We are grateful for your continued support and look forward to what we can accomplish together.



Buddy

Buddy Lahl
MRA CEO



Kim H.

Kim Halloran
MRA President



Show Me Dining
Volume 1, Issue 1
An official publication on
the Missouri Restaurant
Association 2026

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Prostart Coordinator
KATHY NASH

Business Office:
1417 W 47th St.
Kansas City, MO 64112

KIM HALLORAN

Meet Your 2026 MRA President

We are thrilled to welcome Kim Halloran, Managing Partner of The Capital Grille in Kansas City, as the incoming 2026 President of the Missouri Restaurant Association.

Kim brings a rare blend of professional excellence and heartfelt service to everything she does. A respected leader in the hospitality industry, she is deeply engaged in her community, serving on regional boards including the Missouri Restaurant Association, Women of Hospitality, Visit KC, the Alcohol Advisory Board, and the Food Advisory Board. Outside of work, Kim values family, travel, and opening her home to international exchange students.

Professionally, Kim is especially proud of her role at The Capital Grille, where she leads with compassion, integrity, and strength. She credits the organization's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and professional growth as central to her leadership philosophy and considers her team an extension of family.

As a servant-leader, Kim is passionate about workforce development and elevating the hospitality profession across Missouri. Her leadership reflects a deep belief in people, connection, and the power of our industry to thrive together.

As President, Kim is focused on three key priorities:

- Strengthening Connections
 - Fostering meaningful relationships across members, regions, and partners to create a more united and engaged association.
- Building the Next Generation Workforce
 - Supporting workforce development initiatives that create clear pathways into hospitality careers and inspire future leaders.
- Championing a Strong, Inclusive Industry
 - Continuing to elevate the restaurant community by promoting resilience, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability statewide.



T H E
CAPITAL®
G • R • I • L • L • E

Welcome New MRA Members

Together, we can protect and advance the hospitality industry.



Crown Candy Kitchen
Photo: Uber Eats



Hawg Jaw Que & Brew
Photo: Hawg Jaw Que & Brew



Vivlore
Photo: Vivlore



Jeffery's Prime Rib & Lobster
Photo: Maine Lobster Now

Allied

AffordaCare Insurance
Associated Insurance Brokers
Bridging the Gap
Bukaty Companies
Conway Dressings
Entegra
EPM Construction LLC
General Parts
Gecko Hospitality
Google Fiber
Hovey Williams LLP
Image 360 & Wrap it Up
Improving Hospitality
Jarbo Employment Group
Kim Wright Business Services
Klogs Footwear

Leap X
Lifestyles by Design
Midstate Produce
Natural Tableware
On-Call Restaurant Accounting
Pete's Garden
Pinnacle Staffing Group
Presto-X Commercial Pest Control
Rapid Restaurant Solutions
Restaurant 365
Restaurant Technologies
SHC Roofing, Inc
SmartTab POS
Streamline Business Solutions
Sup Sup Inc
The Seals of St. Louis
Trust Think Products
Uber Eats Midwest

Restaurants

Arkansas Fried Chicken Gril N Bar
Asian Arch
Avenue Restaurant
Bay Boy Specialty Sandwiches
Beyond Sweet Kitchen + Bar LLC
Blue Hills Country Club
Brooksider Bar & Grill
Brothers Diner LLC
Cathys Soul for Real Eatery
Chappell's Restaurant and Sports Museum
Chef Pat's Kitchen
Crown Candy Kitchen
De Sweets
Diamond Squared Bistro
Everybody Eats Cafe & Restaurant
Esca
Guys With The Fries LLC
Happy Chop Suey

Welcome New MRA Members

Together, we can protect and advance the hospitality industry.

RESTAURANTS

Hawg Jaw Que & Brew
Italian Jewel on Brand
J. Marie Gumbo House
Jaden's Diner
Janays Cocktail Lounge
Jeffreys Prime Rib & Lobster
Joe-Jo's Fish & Chicken
K-Bop Inc.
Katsuya
K J's on Broadway Bar & Grill LLC
King Prince BBQ
Kingside Diner
Kingside Express Loop
Legends-Cunningham Bar & Grill LLC
Lil Rizzo's
Little Fox
Logue's Restaurant
Lovie's Ice Cream and Eatery LLC
Mack's Bar & Grill
Mom's Soul Food Kitchen & Catering LLC
Morning Rounds Bakery
Mother's Fish & Sports Bar
My Place
Hatchet Haus 2.0
NBC Lounge
Neighbors Good Eats
No Ordinary Rabbit
Novel KC
Ozells Kitchen and Food Mart
Palm and Paddle Grill
Par Lounge
Poochi' Que
Pop Pop Hurray

Roar Events
Ruby Jeans Juicery
Samplings by Ms. Deb LLC
Sasha's Wine Bar
Scooter Snacks and More
Seasoned to the Bone Jamaican Restaurant
So Deity Diner
Solls Gateway Market
Speedie Grill
Speedway Eatery Company
St. Louis Kettle Corn
Steak N Shake
Steve's Hot Dogs
Summit Pizza
Sweet Retreat STL
Tasty Treats Snack Shop
The Ambassador
The Crack Fox
The Director's Cut Take II
The Intercontinental Hotel
The Tavern at Clifton Heights
The Vault Sedalia LLC
The Venice Cafe
Thelma's Kitchen
Tony Stewart Point of Connect Food Truck
Too Much Sauce St. Louis
Village Cafe Lake STL
Vivilore
Yeatman2
Yemanja Brasil Restaurante





Calling All Restaurant Owners & Partners



boots on the ground:
HOSPITALITY STEPPING INTO ACTION

LEGISLATIVE DAY

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY

24

LOBBYING: 9AM

RECEPTION 3:30PM

THE MILLBOTTOM
400 WEST MAIN STREET
JEFFERSON CITY

featuring

LOCAL
LEADERS



FOOD
DRINKS



INDUSTRY
CHATS

REGISTER FOR FREE TO ATTEND | FOR MORE INFORMATION...

MORERESTAURANTS.ORG




ProStart Competition



The Missouri Restaurant Association ProStart Competition in Springfield showcases the top high-school culinary and management talent from across the state. ProStart, a nationwide career-focused program, gives students hands-on training in culinary arts, hospitality, and restaurant management, helping them build professional-level skills before they even graduate.

Date: 02/19 & 20 | The Oasis Hotel



Judges evaluate every detail, from knife skills and sanitation to flavor, presentation, and teamwork. The level of professionalism these students bring to the kitchen highlights how transformative the ProStart program can be.

The management competition challenges teams to design an original restaurant concept from the ground up. Students pitch their business plan, menu, marketing strategy, and operations model to a panel of industry experts. Their work mirrors real-world entrepreneurship, showing the depth of knowledge ProStart students gain throughout the program.

At the end of the event, the top management team and the top culinary team earn the honor of representing Missouri on the national stage. These winning teams advance to Baltimore, where they compete against the best ProStart students from across the country at the National ProStart Invitational.

This important event is made possible through the generous support of sponsors who believe in investing in the next generation of culinary and hospitality leaders. We are currently looking for Volunteers and additional sponsors to support the program and thousands of students.

Interested in Sponsoring or Volunteering? Contact Us at mra@morerestaurants.org



GROWING CULINARY FUTURES

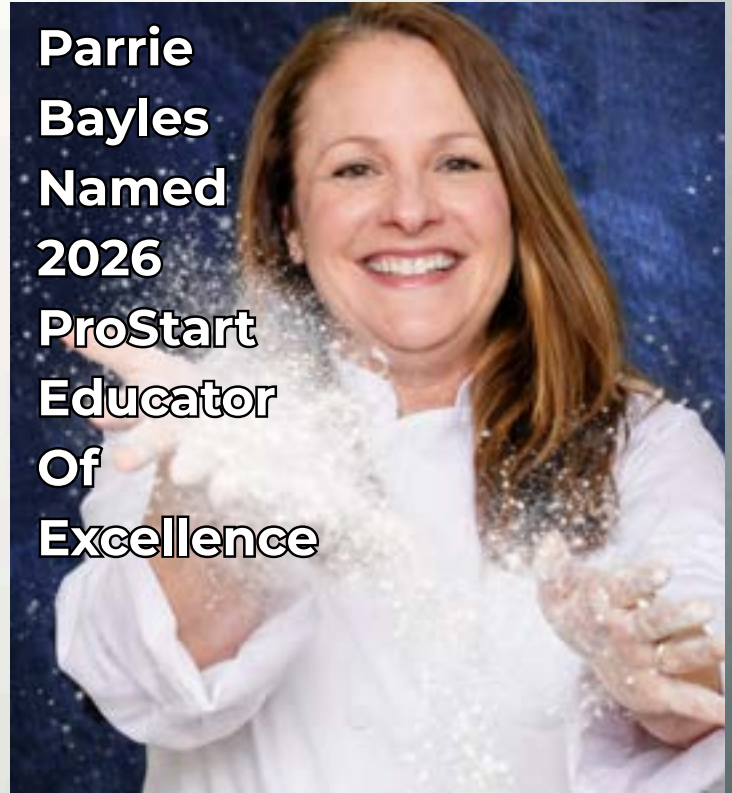


Dedicated to Education & Community

Parrie Bayles has been named the Missouri ProStart Educator of Excellence for 2026, an honor recognizing her outstanding contributions to culinary education and student success. For the past 12 years, Parrie has led the ProStart program at School of the Osage High School in Lake Ozark, Missouri. Under her guidance, ProStart students have catered school district events, Rotary Club meetings, Missouri Restaurant Association events, and school-based charity functions, while also participating in numerous community service projects.

Parrie's dedication is reflected in her students' competitive success at the Missouri ProStart Invitational in Springfield each February. Her teams have consistently placed in the top five in both Culinary and Management competitions, including a First Place Culinary win in 2023, which earned School of the Osage the opportunity to represent Missouri at the National ProStart Invitational.

**Parrie
Bayles
Named
2026
ProStart
Educator
Of
Excellence**



Missouri School Receives ProStart Grow Grant

Salt River Vocational Technology Center has been selected as a recipient of The Rachael Ray Foundation's ProStart Grow Grant™, awarding program leader Dawn Peak \$5,000 to enhance hands-on culinary and restaurant management education. The funding will support classroom resources and real-world learning experiences for students preparing for foodservice careers.

One of just 48 schools nationwide to receive the grant, Salt River Vocational Technology Center is part of a ProStart network supported by The Rachael Ray Foundation for more than six years. These grants help students gain industry-ready skills and clear pathways into higher education and hospitality careers across Missouri and beyond.



GROWING CULINARY FUTURES



Elevating Foundation With UMB Bank

We are sincerely grateful to UMB Bank for their generous \$25,000 donation to our Education Foundation. This meaningful investment directly supports our mission to expand access to educational opportunities through scholarships, innovative student programs, and other essential initiatives that benefit learners across our community.

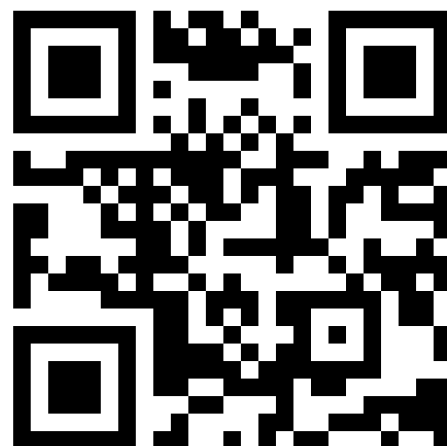
UMB Bank's commitment to education and student success goes beyond financial support it reflects a shared belief in the power of learning to transform lives. Their partnership helps us continue building strong pathways for students to achieve their goals, and we are proud to recognize UMB Bank for making a lasting and positive impact on the future of education.



Prepare for the World Cup with ServSuccess

As the World Cup brings bigger crowds, higher energy, and nonstop game-day demand, the ServSuccess Program helps restaurants stay ready for the rush. From streamlined operations and staff preparedness to consistent service execution, ServSuccess equips teams with the tools, training, and systems needed to deliver fast, flawless guest experiences, even at peak volume. With ServSuccess, restaurants don't just handle World Cup traffic, they turn it into repeat business, stronger teams, and winning results long after the final match.

Members of the association receive 15% off across all ServSuccess & ServSafe Products



HALL OF FAME INDUCTION



Paul Khoury

Paul Khoury is the 2026 Hall of Fame inductee, recognized for his lasting contributions to Kansas City's restaurant and hospitality community. As founder and owner of PBJ Restaurants, Paul has built enduring restaurant concepts rooted in operational excellence, consistency, and respect for both guests and employees.

Throughout his career, Paul has emphasized longevity over trends, developing restaurants that stand the test of time, and teams that grow alongside them. Under the PBJ Restaurants umbrella, he has helped bring to life standout concepts locals and visitors alike have come to love, including Red Robin, YaYa's Bistro, Starbucks, and more. His influence extends beyond his businesses through mentorship, leadership, and a steady commitment to strengthening the industry.

Paul's induction into the Hall of Fame honors a career defined by integrity, innovation, and meaningful impact across Kansas City and Missouri.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE



John LaRocca

John LaRocca is the recipient of the Missouri Restaurant Association's Distinguished Service Award, recognizing his decades of leadership and service to Missouri's restaurant and hospitality industry. Through his work with the MRA, John has been a trusted advocate for restaurateurs, educators, and industry professionals.

John's career includes leadership roles across independent restaurants, corporate hospitality, private clubs, and higher education. He served more than 14 years as General Manager of the University Club at the University of Missouri, where he elevated service standards, mentored hospitality professionals, and supported workforce development. John is also the host of The Dish, a monthly COMO Magazine column highlighting Missouri's dining culture. He serves as the MRA representative on the Governor's Wine & Grape Board and sits on the University of Missouri Hospitality School Advisory Board. His career reflects a lasting commitment to mentorship, integrity, and the future of hospitality.



HR RETAIL BY THE DRINK

Temp. Ordinance Extension of Liquor Serving Time

In recognition of the unprecedented tourism and economic opportunity that the 2026 FIFA World Cup will bring to Missouri, the state legislature passed companion bills, House Bill 1265 and its Senate counterparts, temporarily modifying alcohol service rules for the duration of the tournament. The legislation, now signed into law by Governor Mike Kehoe, allows establishments with a retail "liquor by the drink" license, such as bars and restaurants, to serve alcoholic beverages daily from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. the following day June 11 through July 19, 2026, effectively enabling nearly 24-hour service without requiring any special permits or temporary licenses. Under current law, on-premises liquor sales must generally cease by 1:30 a.m., with most municipalities imposing even earlier closing times — around 3:00 a.m. in places like Kansas City.

This temporary shift was championed by the Missouri Restaurant Association and other hospitality-sector advocates, who saw it as a way to help local businesses capitalize on the influx of international visitors and extended foot traffic throughout match days and fan events. By streamlining the process and giving restaurants and bars flexibility without new red tape, supporters argued the law would boost economic activity while preserving the ability of communities to manage their own nightlife environments.

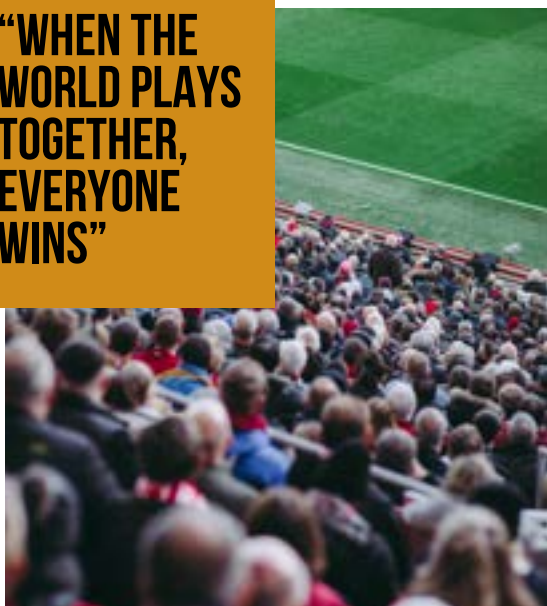


To balance statewide consistency with local control, the law explicitly allows cities, counties, and other political subdivisions to opt out or tailor the extended hours through local ordinances. The Independence City Council unanimously opted out of extending beer and liquor sales hours, maintaining its usual 1:30 a.m. cutoff even during the tournament period. Other local governments are still considering their approach. In Lee's Summit, council members have discussed alternatives to a full opt-out, including a compromise that would allow later service on select days tied to major World Cup events, though no final decision has been made as of this writing.

As World Cup preparations continue from expanded transportation services to hospitality workforce planning this temporary liquor-service law stands as a notable example of how Missouri is adapting its regulatory framework to welcome fans from around the world while respecting local priorities.



"WHEN THE WORLD PLAYS TOGETHER, EVERYONE WINS"



MATCH SCHEDULE

ARGENTINA VS. ALGERIA

TUESDAY | 06.15.2026 | ARROWHEAD STADIUM

ECUADOR VS. CURACAO

SATURDAY | 06.20.2026 | ARROWHEAD STADIUM

TUNISIA VS. NETHERLANDS

THURSDAY | 06.25.2026 | ARROWHEAD STADIUM

ALGERIA VS. AUSTRIA

SATURDAY | 06.20.2026 | ARROWHEAD STADIUM

TBD

FRIDAY | 07.03.2026 | ARROWHEAD STADIUM

QUARTER-FINAL

SATURDAY | 07.11.2026 | ARROWHEAD STADIUM



LEGISLATIVE SESSION NOW OPEN

Your Grassroots Advocates for the Industry



As we look ahead to the 2026 legislative session, there is much to keep on our radar. Last year, the MRA celebrated a significant legislative victory with the defeat of Proposition A, a measure that would have imposed burdensome requirements on our industry. This outcome was the result of diligent advocacy and engagement, and it serves as a reminder of the importance of our collective voice at both the legislature and the ballot box.

This year, the legislative focus is expected to be heavily centered on taxes, including both income and property tax issues. Lawmakers have signaled that tax policy will dominate early discussions, and these debates may have a direct impact on businesses and individuals alike. In addition, the MRA anticipates significant activity surrounding ADA website compliance, with an overwhelming number of bills already filed. Given this volume, it is highly likely that some form of ADA-related legislation will pass, and the MRA is actively monitoring these developments to protect our members' interests.

Beyond taxes and ADA compliance, the MRA continues to engage on a wide array of important issues that impact our members' operations and long-term business health. These include statute of limitations reforms, intellectual property matters, video lottery terminals (VLTs), childcare support, hemp beverages, and liquor liability legislation. Our ongoing participation ensures that our members' perspectives are heard on bills that could shape the industry landscape for years to come.

Looking forward, one of the most significant challenges this year may come from the ballot, with [2026-047](#), a constitutional petition that seeks to make sick pay mandatory. This measure has the potential to have widespread effects on businesses and employees, and it will require careful attention and engagement from our membership. The MRA will continue to provide guidance, updates, and advocacy as this and other critical measures move through the legislative process.

As the 2026 legislative session unfolds, the MRA remains committed to protecting your interests, shaping sound policy, and ensuring that your voice is represented at every level of government.

Legislative Champions



*Legislator of the Year:
Jonathan Patterson*

Congratulations to Representative Jon Patterson for being named Legislator of the Year by the Missouri Restaurant Association! This honor recognizes his strong support for Missouri's restaurants and his dedication to policies that help local businesses thrive.



*Capitol Impact of the Year:
Greg Hunsucker*

Congratulations to Greg Hunsucker for receiving the Capital Impact of the Year Award! This award recognizes his outstanding efforts to drive economic growth and make a meaningful impact on communities across Missouri.



Network with hospitality industry leaders at one of MRA's upcoming events.

Learn More at **Morerestaurants.org**

- February 1**
STL Inaugural Gal | Rose of the Hill
- February 20**
MRA ProStart Competition | The Oasis Hotel
- February 20**
MRA ProStart Competition | The Oasis Hotel
- February 24**
Legislative Day | Jefferson City Millbottom

Take Advantage of Your FREE Food Show Ticket

Join thousands of foodservice professionals at the National Restaurant Association Show in Chicago, Saturday–Tuesday, May 16–19, 2026. Discover AI, robotics, plant-based trends, sustainable packaging and more.

Why Attend?

The pressure is real, but you don't have to face it alone. The National Restaurant Association Show is where foodservice pros from every corner of the industry come together to discover solutions, explore innovations, and find what's next. Whether you run a single location or a national restaurant chain, this is your chance to connect with peers, preview cutting-edge tech, and gain insights that help you stay ahead.

Restaurant Member Companies of the National Restaurant Association receive an allotment of complimentary Expo Only badge(s) as a member benefit. All communication regarding the promotional code for registration will be emailed to the main contact in your membership record. The main contact should check any clutter, junk or similar folders for an email from National Restaurant Association Show (admin@email.nationalrestaurantshow.com) containing the promo code.



NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SHOW



MEMBER SAVINGS PROGRAM

Food Industry professionals benefit from joining forces with the most powerful and knowledgeable group of restaurant industry advocates in Missouri. From City hall, to the state capitol the Missouri Restaurant Association provides a voice for the state's restaurant and hospitality businesses. With a variety of services and resources available, MRA will help make your life easier and your business stronger



OPERATION BENEFITS

Heartland

Receive preferred pricing on credit card processing and payroll processing with on-site training and installation. Heartland Hires makes hiring fast and easy



MRA members can save up to 20% on their music licensing fees by paying timely and online



soundtrack your brand

Soundtrack Your Brand offers the world's largest selection of background music for restaurants - your single source for fully licensed music, with BMI and ASCAP fees included at considerable savings.



Premium internet-based telephone solutions for businesses. Save up to 50% off current services, with 10% saving guaranteed.



United Healthcare

Members of the MRA can take advantage of special healthcare packages with United Healthcare that are tailored to your business.



evolv

MRA members can receive discounts on digital marketing services, website design, and website ADA compliance

ADMINISTRATIVE BENEFITS



McMAHON•BERGER



Exclusive provider of the MRA Labor & Employment Law Hotline. MRA members receive expert legal consultation at no cost.



StaffedUp
SIMPLIFY YOUR HIRING PROCESS

Increase your visibility with job applicants and decrease time spent in the hiring process by 80%. MRA receive a 10% discount on \$29 monthly fee for unlimited platform.

POSTERElite

MRA members can save 33% on mandated labor law compliance poster.



KRHA members in Johnson, Wyandotte and Leavenworth county receive complimentary membership into the GKCRA



Receive Discounted Rates on Property and Casualty Insurance Through HIS



To View the Full Benefits Portfolio Scan This QR Code



EDUCATION BENEFITS



MRA offers training and materials for Managers Certification, Food Handler Program, Alcohol Training & Certification, and ServSafe Allergens Training. Members receive a 15% discount through the National Restaurant Association.



MRA Members can participate in the U.S. 3rd largest ProStart program by partnering with high schools to help empower youth to prepare them for the hospitality industry.



ServSuccess is designed to advance the industry's workforce with training and certification that drives career development opportunities for all workers. With online courses, skill and role-specific learning suites, and industry-recognized certifications, ServSuccess is the most comprehensive restaurant career training solution in the nation. MRA Members receive a 15% discount on ServSuccess Products.



Our partner for administering ServSafe Courses. When you sign up for membership with the MRA you receive A FREE ServSafe Class Registration after your second purchase!

REBATE / SAVINGS BENEFITS



The Missouri Restaurant Association has partnered with Adesso Capital as the Preferred Tax Refund/Credit and Lending Partner. Explore some options below and if at any point you have questions, Adesso is here to assist!



MRA refers our members to Dining Alliance, a group purchasing organization that gives manufacturer discounts and buying power to local, independent restaurants. Contact MRA for proper referral



With a dual-membership with the NRA, MRA members receive one free admission to the food show, and have access to free research publications in the industry



GiftAMeal

Members of the MRA can sign up with GiftAMeal and receive a discounted rate on their subscription plans.

For each photo, GiftAMeal donates to a local food bank near you to cover the cost of distributing healthy groceries to a local pantry.



Members of the GKCRA ONLY can register for the Annual Kansas City Restaurant Week event FOR FREE during early bird registration only!



MRA Members are automatically enrolled into The Gift Card Market's digital gift card program. Sending a gift card is easy! Simply choose a local restaurant, spa, or salon, select the amount, and send it via text or email.



MRA Members Receive Discounted Registration Fees on Columbia Restaurant Week



MRA Members Receive Discounted Rates on all Marketing and Advertising Services

GIO FAVAZZA

Introducing Your 2026 STL President

We are proud to welcome Gio Favazza of POWERS Insurance & Risk Management as the incoming 2026 President of the Greater St. Louis Chapter of the Missouri Restaurant Association.

Gio grew up in a family-owned St. Louis restaurant and learned early that hospitality is about far more than food and four walls, it's about people. Employees who become family, guests who become regulars, and communities that rely on restaurants as gathering places in both good times and hard ones. He saw firsthand the long days, the sacrifices, the pride in taking care of employees and guests, and the responsibility that never really turns off. Those early experiences shaped how Gio views hospitality: not just as a business, but as a community built on people.

That perspective has guided his work ever since. Gio is a dedicated advocate for the St. Louis restaurant community and brings a relationship-driven approach to leadership. Through his work with POWERS Insurance, he has built deep connections across the hospitality industry and developed a firsthand understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing restaurant owners and operators throughout the region. He believes the industry is strongest when people are connected, supported, and looking out for one another, and that leadership isn't about titles, but about trust, accessibility, and bringing people together around shared goals.

As Chapter President, Gio is focused on bringing the Greater St. Louis restaurant community together strengthening relationships, encouraging collaboration, and making the Association a place where operators feel welcome, heard, and supported. He believes the most powerful thing the Association can do is create shared understanding and foster real connection. His goal is simple: to help build a chapter that reflects the grit, generosity, and resilience of the people it represents.

Gio is honored to serve and excited to give back to the industry that shaped him by fighting for operators and helping move the St. Louis restaurant community forward - together.



EVENT ALMOST
SOLD OUT!

PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL GALA
for
Gino Favazza

presented by...

POWERS

INSURANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

AT RECEPTION AT 5PM

ROSE OF THE HILL BY FAVAZZA'S

2300 EDWARDS STREET

QUESTIONS? WWW.MORESTaurants.ORG



Meet Your KC President

Meet Your President MIKE McVEY



We are excited to welcome Mike McVey of Transport Brewery as the incoming Kansas City Chapter President. Mike is a passionate advocate for Kansas City's vibrant restaurant and craft beverage community. As a leader at Transport Brewery, he brings an entrepreneurial spirit and a deep appreciation for the collaboration that fuels a strong local hospitality scene. His hands-on experience gives him a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing operators across the KC region.

Known for his approachable leadership style, Mike values connection, creativity, and community. He is committed to supporting local businesses, strengthening relationships among members, and ensuring the KC Chapter remains an engaged and valuable resource for the industry.



As Chapter President, Mike looks forward to building momentum, celebrating the unique character of Kansas City's hospitality scene, and helping the chapter grow in both impact and participation.

As Kansas City Chapter President, Mike's priorities include:

- **Strengthening the KC Hospitality Community**
 - Encouraging collaboration and connection among restaurants, breweries, and industry partners.
- **Growing Chapter Engagement**
 - Expanding involvement and participation to ensure the chapter reflects the full breadth of the KC market.
- **Supporting Local Operators**
 - Advocating for the needs of members and helping provide tools, resources, and support to navigate an evolving industry.
- **Refine Organizational Structure of KC Chapter**
 - Ensure strong organizational structure to increase the effectiveness on behalf of its members.



≡ ON THE AIR ≡ *This Is Kansas City*



Local Voices. Real Stories.

"This is Kansas City" is a weekly radio show that spotlights the people, places, and stories that make the Kansas City region unique. From Local restaurants and entrepreneurs to cultural events and community leaders, the show amplifies voices that shape the heartbeat of KC.

We are currently accepting applications to join our radio show, if you are interested in getting your story out in the Kansas City Community... Scan the QR Code Below to get a segment booked!



Show Highlights

- 60,000+ Monthly Listeners
- ESPN Sports Affiliation
- One-Hour Show Segment
- Show Recording & Article Provided Post Show

*Scan
Me!* →





Meals that Heal

Supporting Care & Education, One Meal
at a time

In August 2025, restaurants and diners across the Kansas City metro area joined together for a powerful cause: Meals That Heal. This unique campaign, organized through a meaningful partnership between the Missouri Restaurant Association (MRA) Education Foundation and Children's Mercy, brought the hospitality community and caring neighbors together in support of children's health, family resources, and education initiatives. Throughout the month of August, participating restaurants, quick service eateries, and coffee shops offered customers simple ways to give back while enjoying their favorite foods. Diners could round up their checks to the next dollar, with each extra cent donated to the cause, or choose menu items tied to matched contributions, where restaurants pledged to donate a set amount for each item sold.



Featured above is the Children's Mercy Hospital Adele Hall Campus in Kansas City, Mo, which serves as the primary location for Children's Mercy. Photo by ShawnCMH

“

Our community is strongest
when we come together to
support families and
children,

”

-CAMPAIGN ORGANIZERS

In addition, funds raised helped further the MRA Education Foundation's work in supporting educational initiatives for future industry professionals, reinforcing a strong connection between restaurant professionals and community wellbeing. "Our community is strongest when we come together to support families and children," said organizers of the Meals That Heal campaign. Restaurants of all sizes, from local coffee shops to full-service eateries, embraced the opportunity to be part of something bigger, proving that giving back can look like a slice of pizza, a cup of coffee, or simply rounding up a bill. With each swipe of a credit card and every shared plate, Meals That Heal reminded participants that healing and hope can come through something as universal as breaking bread together.

Blues and Brews Gala

*The Dual Inauguration of MRA
President Kim Halloran & GKCRA
President Mike McVey*

The MRA & GKCRA hosted our annual gala themed as Blues and Brews, a nod to the famous film - Blues Brothers at the Intercontinental Hotel on January 3rd.

This year's gala was a sell-out success, drawing 580 Industry Professionals, Owners, and Partners to support the association, and the transition of leadership for our state association and local KC chapter. Guests experienced a full Pre-Reception with tastings from local breweries, a full three course dinner with awards ceremony, and a fun blues inspired after-party

Presented By:



Congratulations Honorees



Company of the Year Scavuzzo's
Restaurateur of the Year: Kim Halloran



Influencer of the Year: All
Things Mikita



Legislator of the Year: John
Patterson



Capital Impact of the Year:
Greg Hunsucker



Edwin Gray: Jenn Timmons | Workhorse Award: Alan Kneeland | Director of
the Year Steve Scavuzzo | Community Table Award: Joey Connaughty &
Culver's

Thank You to Our Sponsors

This event would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors, guests, and volunteers

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- U.S Foods
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- Trimark
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- Holladay Distillery
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Additional Support came from Soul Man Sponsors: Fairwave Coffee, Prime Chemical, HLA, Excel Linen, Broken Shed Vodka, Restaurant365, Boulevard Brewing, Culver's, Ben E. Keith, J. Rieger & Co. , Country Club Plaza, Southern Glazers, Company Kitchen, Marriott Downtown, Central States Beverage, J&J Gaming, Transport Brewery, C&C Produce, Summit Hospitality Group

KC 2026 RESTAURANT WEEK



The most delicious days of the year are back in January, offering endless ways to sample and savor Kansas City's culinary landscape. Plus, a portion of all proceeds benefit reStart.



January 9-18
KCRestaurantWeek.com
#KCRW2026





COMO

Restaurant Week

JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 8

DISCOVER YOUR COMO CRAVING

COMO Restaurant Week is a nonprofit event benefitting the Food Bank of Central and Northeast Missouri.

In 2026, explore Columbia's vibrant food scene and discover incredible local restaurants offering exclusive, multi-course menus at special prices.

From fine dining to casual cafes, it's the perfect time to try something new all while fighting food insecurity in our community!

Scan to see
participating
restaurants,
special menus,
and more!



@comorestaurantweek



NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION
WHAT'S
Hot
2026

Culinary Forecast



Top 10 chart- topping trends

What can we expect on restaurant menus in 2026? Flavors, dishes, and experiences that take us out of the “day-to-day” and transport us somewhere, sometime, or both—without breaking the bank.

This quest for comfort, nostalgia, and “flavor-escapism” intersects with an ever-present search for healthy options and value, as restaurant operators seek out the dishes that satisfy consumers’ cravings.

1

Local sourcing

2

Comfort foods

3

**Value menus
and options**

4

Smashed burgers

5

**Clear
menu labeling,
icons, and cues**

6

**Allergen-friendly
menus**

7

**Global
comfort foods**

8

**“Cleaner” recipes,
additive- and dye-free,
or less processed
menu items**

9

**Proteins
as add-ons**

10

**Compostable and
reusable packaging**



Photo by Briana Tozour on Unsplash

No Tax on Tips:

What the Big Beautiful Bill Means for Hospitality Workers

In July 2025, President Donald Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill, a sweeping budget and tax package that, among many other provisions, includes a new federal tax break commonly referred to as “no tax on tips.” It creates an above-the-line tax deduction, meaning eligible workers can subtract up to \$25,000 of qualified tips from their taxable income before federal income tax is calculated, whether or not they itemize deductions. The Missouri Restaurant Association (MRA), representing more than 230,000 hospitality workers statewide, praised the new law as a meaningful win for those who rely on tips for much of their income.



Photo by Sam Dan Truong on Unsplash



Photo by Pelle Martin on Unsplash

“ So, when they file their taxes, they won’t have to pay federal income tax on up to \$25,000 of their tips. ”

-BUDDY LAHL, MRA CEO



Buddy Lahl, CEO of the Missouri Restaurant Association, noted that part-time workers with lower tip income pay little federal tax, but as their earnings increase, the deduction has a greater effect. “When you start to get a little higher up in your income, then it will definitely start to have an impact,” he told MissouriNet. Lahl also mentioned that the bill expanded meal tax breaks for employers and introduced a “no tax on overtime” provision. Under this separate provision, hospitality workers can deduct the tax on the first \$12,500 of overtime premium pay they earn. Industry leaders hope this is just the beginning of tax reforms that better support service workers. The MRA’s Lahl expressed a desire for future legislation that would broaden relief and make it more inclusive for all restaurant employees.



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175K

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Leverage Dining Alliance's buying power to negotiate chain-like supplier contracts. Our members never receive a bill from us. We make money by saving you money.

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Cutting Edge Industry Technology

Leverage Dining Alliance's technology for real-time insights into purchasing behavior. We either build or partner with technology platforms that enhance our members' abilities to save money and run efficiently—for little to no additional fees.

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