

# F.B.I.

**FOOD & BEVERAGE IOWA**  
Iowa's Premier Publication for  
the Restaurant & Bar Industry **QUARTERLY™**

**New!**



# FIGHTING Form

Iowa Operators  
Pull No  
**PUNCHES**  
In the Battle  
For Customers

## Ask the Expert

BEVERAGE BASICS  
STILL BRING PROFITS

## Market Makers

FIVE QUICK WAYS TO  
BUILD AND MARKET  
CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

**Don't Recognize Us?** Welcome to the "new" *Entrée* magazine. Read more on page 4.

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# F.B.I.

## FOOD & BEVERAGE IOWA QUARTERLY™

Iowa's Premier Publication for the Restaurant & Bar Industry

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Since 1933, Iowa's Professional Association of the Restaurant and Retail Beverage Industries

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F.B.I. Quarterly is the official publication of the Iowa Restaurant Association. It is produced four times a year and is distributed to licensed restaurant and retail beverage establishments in Iowa. Editorial features cover business, legislative, and other trends impacting Iowa proprietors.



## New Look, New Content Reflect Changing Nature of Iowa's Hospitality Industry

For more than 75 years, the Iowa Restaurant Association (IRA) has represented, educated, and served the interests of the state's restaurant and retail beverage operators. Over the decades, every aspect of the association has evolved—from the events and advocacy efforts to the member benefits and communication tools.

The Association constantly evaluates its programs to ensure they are relevant to members and the marketplace.

Thus, the new look and approach to the quarterly publication.

### Entrée Retires

The IRA membership comes from all facets of the state's hospitality industry and all involved felt the name and content of the publication needed a broader focus. Moving to Food and Beverage Iowa Quarterly (FBIQ) seemed an obvious move.

### New Content

FBIQ will profile Iowa restaurateurs and tavern owners. It will cover legislative issues that impact Iowa operators. It will also provide news and information about the products and services that help Iowa

hospitality professionals operate profitably. It will remain a primary and visible marketing tool for the IRA.

The news and features will be presented in shorter stories. For those who want to learn more, the publication will tie back to the IRA website, where readers will find topics explored in greater depth.

This evolution is the Association's recognition that we too must operate smarter and better to compete into today's marketplace. In short, the IRA has found a new "fighting form" of its own—and we're ready to head into the ring.

Iowa Restaurant Association  
Finds Its Own

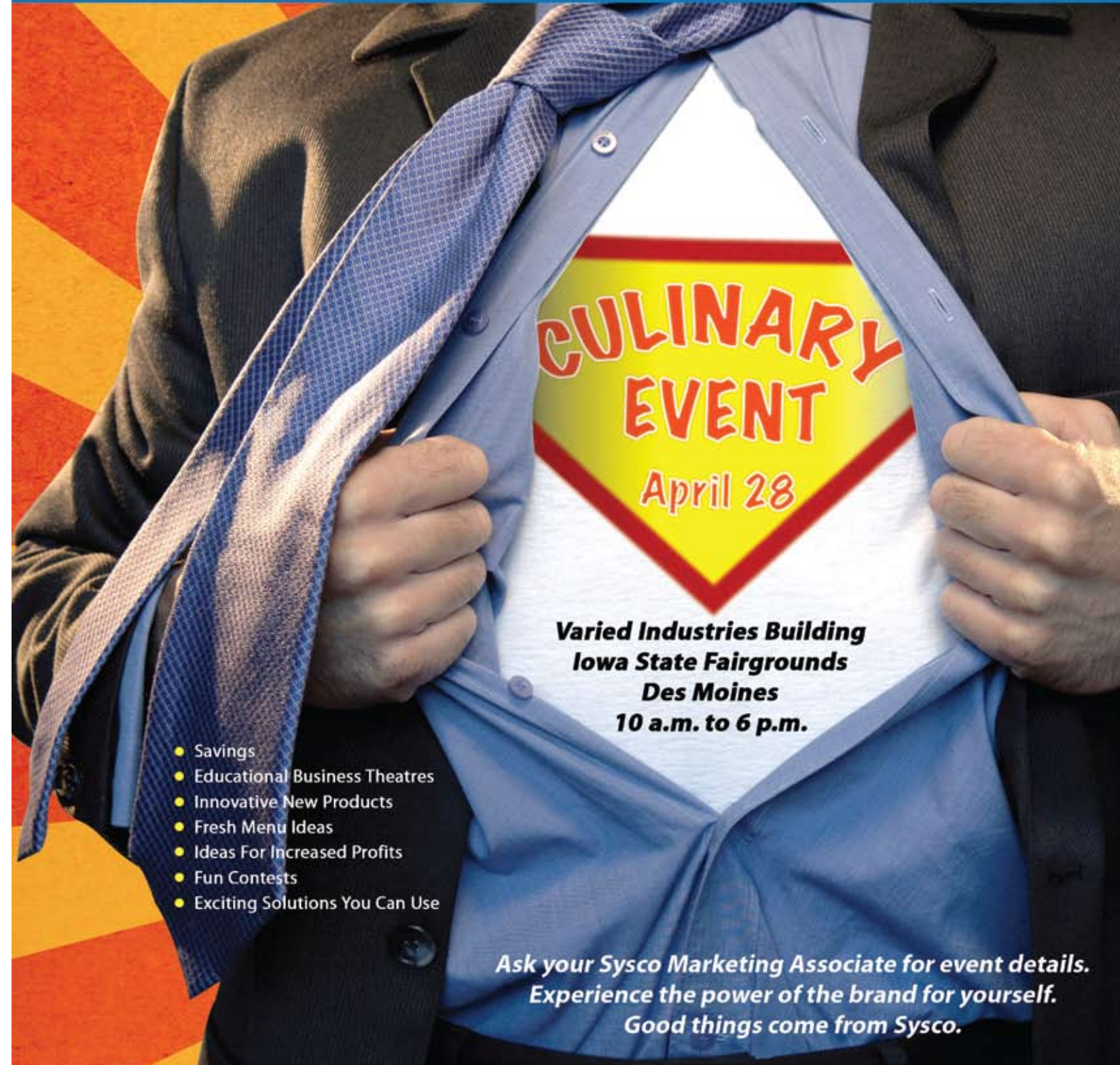
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# Iowa Operators Pull No **PUNCHES** In the Battle For Customers

In the face of tough economic times, Iowa's restaurant and retail beverage operators are getting creative as they seek ways to attract customers and keep them coming back. "I don't believe consumers, no matter the state of the economy, will abandon restaurants entirely, they will just use them differently—more cost-consciously. There will be no recession in eating.... The restaurants that deliver value...in new and compelling ways, will win," observes Harry Balzer, Restaurant Industry Analyst and author of *Eating Patterns in America*.

Operators across the state see the wisdom behind Balzer's commentary and have responded by holding nothing back as they try to balance customer satisfaction against cost savings measures. Top strategies include new promotions and menu modifications to energy conservation and revised ordering strategies. In short, Iowa operators are taking steps to ensure that they not only survive, but thrive through the coming year and beyond.

Don't batten down the hatches just yet.

That's the advice of Terry Morey, director of marketing for Restaurant Marketing Group, a company that has helped restaurants across the country keep customers coming in, and spending since 1981. RMG is also the telewebinar partner to the Iowa Restaurant Association.

Morey concedes that this is the roughest economic patch he has seen in his more than four decades in the hospitality business, but quickly adds that times of great challenge can also be times for great opportunity. His organization is advising clients to be proactive and take aggressive action right now, rather than rely on traditional cost cutting measures to ride out this economic storm.

"An operator's natural reaction in tough times is to hunker down, cut costs and perhaps even drop prices," says Morey. "But if you're facing price increases yourself, and your establishment's only differentiator is low price—someone else will always find a way to do it cheaper. That is not a recipe for success" Morey suggests restaurant and tavern operators focus their energies on building relationships with customers and use whatever marketing tools they have at their disposal to promote good relationships. "Marketing and advertising are not the same thing," says Morey, who works with restaurants to drive word of mouth advertising as well

## Make 2009 a Knock Out Year!

as build other low or no-investment customer loyalty building programs.

"This is one of those times when hard work isn't enough," Morey says. "There are too many factors outside of the operator's control. Changing circumstances require that you proactively change your approach as well."

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### Try This... Five Quick Ways to Build and Market Customer Relationships

1. Send personalized marketing to your guests about items they are interested in, menu specials, local events, new menu items, etc.
2. Market regularly, not less than once a month and probably not more than once a week, to stay top-of-mind with your guests.
3. Recognize special occasions and family events like birthdays, anniversaries, graduation, Mothers' Day, etc.
4. Make sure ads are personalized and messages are conversational in tone. Use their name frequently in the message. Talk to them, not at them.
5. Automate your marketing so you will have time to market consistently.



### Don't Try This at Home...

Paul Rottenberg, president of Orchestrate Management, which oversees six of Des Moines's most frequented restaurants including Centro, Django and Gateway Market, is spending a great deal of time these days reviewing strategies that attract customers.



**Question:** What decisions have you made that have kept your establishments bustling?

**Answer:** "The keys to our volume holding are our mid-priced menu options blended with an investment in a high level of culinary talent. Our restaurants don't leap off of the pages of expense reports but they do offer patrons meals that are not easily replicated at home. While our no corkage fee policy at Django and prix fixe menus (a collection of pre-determined multi course meals at a set price) have been great sales builders, I believe it's affordable cuisine, that's hard to replicate, rather than special promotions that carry the day."



## It's All In the Glass

In the quest for new ways to increase profits, Mark Doll and Kathy Ong of Doll Distributing are encouraging Iowa operators to first revisit the basics. Doll Distributing is one of central Iowa's largest beer distributors and company representatives are inundated on a daily basis with questions from restaurant and tavern owners looking for new ways to increase beverage ratios.

"So much of that answer lies in the glass," says Doll. "Literally."

In fact, Doll and Ong are on a bit of a quest of their own—a quest to teach people about "beer clean" glasses and how careful attention to glassware can increase profits.

"A beer clean glass is essential," says Ong, who conducts on-site training on cleaning the perfect glass and pouring the perfect brew.

While the cleanliness of a glass may sound basic to the point of remedial, it's serious business. Glasses can look clean, but if they contain an invisible layer of film, odor or bacteria they can produce a seeming "flat" beer, "false" head or "off" taste. All of these conditions cost operators because to compensate, servers often over fill glasses or people stop buying. What may seem like a "penny's thought on profitability situation" quickly adds up.

For example, if an establishment draws beer from a half barrel keg, and serves it in a typical 16 ounce pint glass for \$3.25 per glass, the profitability on a serving with a one inch head versus no head is dramatic. The perfect pour into a "beer clean" glass increases the number of glasses per half barrel from 122 to 151 and the profit per glass from \$2.57 per glass to \$2.70 per glass. Over the course of a year, the margins add up to hundreds of dollars on the bottom line.

Ong explains that "beer clean" glasses require a five-step process in a three compartment sink using cleaners and sanitizers designed specifically for cleaning beer glasses.

### Try This...

*Don't pour bottled or canned beer by the "down-the-side" method. It minimizes the foam to the extreme—making beer look flat and the taste gassy. When CO2 is retained in beer and swallowed, customers fill up faster—leaving little room for snacks, a meal or another glass. Instead, pour in the middle of the glass, quickly raising the bottom of the bottle or can at high angle, causing the beer to agitate into the glass. Then lower the bottle or can to reduce flow until the foam rises to the rim. The result will be a beer that looks and tastes better, and leaves customers wanting (and paying for) more.*

To learn more, visit the Iowa Restaurant Association website at [www.restaurantiowa.com](http://www.restaurantiowa.com)



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What's Going Down

UP ON THE HILL

**NO RESTAURANT AND BAR TAX**

Of greatest concern to the Association right now is a proposed bill that could eventually lead to cities and counties being authorized to create restaurant and/or bar taxes of up to 5 percent—much like a hotel tax. The Association is always opposed to anything that increases the cost of doing business and is aggressively lobbying against this proposal. Watch the IRA website and your weekly member Legislative Brief, as this is one area that may require grassroots efforts to head off.

**NO DEBATE ON SMOKE FREE AIR ACT**

Many Iowa restaurant and retail beverage operators are still reeling from the effects of the statewide smoking ban passed in 2008. Lawmakers understood the impact the move would have on their own revenue streams—which is why casino floors were the only venues exempted. The ban is already having an impact on the economic health of the state's hospitality industry. Many small operators, particularly those on the borders and near casinos, are struggling. Sadly, the legislature is proving to be "all talk" and "no action" on the topic of "leveling the playing field." Numerous bills have been introduced to modify the ban, however all discussions have been sidelined by the Democratic leadership.

**UP THE PRIZE**

The IRA is supporting a bill that would allow operators to up the ante when they give prizes for electronic amusements or "games of chance." The bill allows bar owners to increase prize values to \$50 in food or merchandise. It looks to be on the path to passage.

**TAKE IT HOME**

The IRA is also supporting a bill that clarifies the regulations under which customers who purchase bottles of wine with meals, but don't finish them, can cap and bag the bottle to take home. This approach promotes responsible alcohol consumption as well as bottle sales within establishments.

**CLEAN SLATE SOONER**

A bill which allows new owners of previously owned and once-troubled properties to have a "clean slate" much

sooner is gaining support. The IRA is encouraging legislators to say yes to a bill that reduces to 30 months the time insurance companies consider as they issue dramshop liability insurance.

The current state of the economy has Iowa lawmakers doing all they can to find new sources of revenue. As always, the Iowa Restaurant Association government relations team is at the Capitol day-in and day-out serving as the advocates and representatives of the hospitality industry—communicating directly to legislators as they consider issues that impact business and ensuring the budget is not balanced on the backs of restaurants and taverns.

**Hungry for More?**

*If you are not currently receiving the Iowa Restaurant Association's weekly legislative briefs or want to learn more about the IRA's state and national advocacy efforts, contact Cindy Jordan, membership director at [cjordan@restaurantiowa.com](mailto:cjordan@restaurantiowa.com).*

Also you can check out [www.restaurantiowa.com](http://www.restaurantiowa.com).



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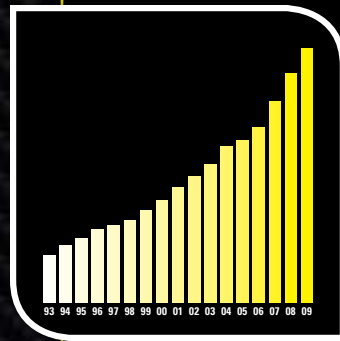
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### Best Breakfast

The Machine Shed Restaurant in Davenport was recently chosen "The Best Breakfast in America" by the Travel Channel's Food Paradise series. The Machine Shed was featured on a Food Paradise episode in December. Guests, staff, managers, and the owner Mike Whalen, were interviewed and featured on the show.

### Winning High School



Each year, the IRA Educational Foundation hosts the Iowa ProStart Invitational for Iowa high school students enrolled in its two-year career-building program. ProStart was developed by the National Restaurant Association and is taught in high schools. It is designed to teach the management skills needed for a career in the restaurant and foodservice industry. This year's Iowa competition took place in Cedar Falls in March at the Park Place Event Centre. The winning team was Davenport Central. They will advance to the National Competition in San Diego in April. Additional participating schools were Central Campus of Des Moines and Waukee High School.

### Top Chef



Iowa Restaurant Association Celebrating Excellence Culinary Competition Winner, Chef Haley Silhacek of Ferrari's Ristorante at the Park Place Event Center in Cedar Falls, has added another honor to her list. She was awarded first place honors—Chef Par Excellence—in the Iowa Pork Producers Association's annual Taste of Elegance competition in January. As the winner of the Iowa competition, Chef Silhacek will attend the National Pork Board's National Taste of Elegance competition this June in Baltimore, MD.

### Best Sandwich

Gateway Market in Des Moines was selected by *bon appetit* magazine as one of the ten best places in the country to buy a sandwich. The editorial teams' favorites were the egg sandwich and a burger made from Chef George Formaro's own blend of beef brisket and chuck.



### Rastrelli's Turns 70



Rastrelli's Restaurant in Clinton turns 70 this year making it one of Iowa's longest standing family-owned establishments. The restaurant was started in 1939 by Italian immigrants Pete and Ida Rastrelli, parents of current owner Mike Rastrelli.

### Beef Backer

Court Avenue Restaurant & Brewing Company was named the winner of the Iowa



Beef Backer award. Chosen by Iowa's beef producers, this annual honor is bestowed upon a single Iowa restaurant that exemplifies exceptional presentation of premium beef products. Court Avenue Restaurant went on to represent Iowa in the national competition in Phoenix in January.

### Got News?

Send news about Iowa restaurants and taverns to:

Jessica Dunker,  
FBIQ editor at  
[jessica@dunker.com](mailto:jessica@dunker.com)

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## Membership Pays!

Membership in the Iowa Restaurant Association pays—immediately and in the long term. For many, using the exclusive member discounts saves hundreds or even thousands of dollars annually—far more than the cost of membership. But most quickly realize that the most invaluable element of membership is the connections—to the people, information and resources they can't do business without.

**Members who take advantage of the exclusive IRA programs average a Return on Investment of \$5,000 annually.**

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Save real money! One of the fastest ways to put membership to work on your bottom line is to take advantage of one of the 20+ members-only discount programs. Among the programs are specially negotiated rates in the areas of:

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- Credit card processing
- Energy audits
- Food safety and other training
- Marketing
- Prescription card
- Music licensing fees
- Business and POS equipment

### Education and Networking

IRA members regularly tap the expertise of other successful operators as well as the Association staff. The IRA can partner you with a mentor, refer you to a vendor, or help you find counsel. Your membership is a dual membership in the National Restaurant Association—providing access to their vast educational and other resources. The IRA's member resource CD puts 200+ pages of critical information at your fingertips, including everything from customizable forms and employee manuals to emergency planning tools and links to mandatory signage.

### Advocacy and Representation

The IRA works directly with lawmakers to represent Iowa's hospitality industry at national, state, and local levels of government serving as the industry's public voice. Even if you are not a member, you have already benefitted from these efforts. However, you will receive much more with your membership, including regular legislative briefings on issues of importance to you.

### Join Today

To learn more about how the IRA can help your business contact Cindy Jordan, Membership Director, [cjordan@restaurantiowa.com](mailto:cjordan@restaurantiowa.com) or 515-276-1454.

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education and networking

# events

## 2009



### April



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**April 15**  
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Polk County Extension, Altoona  
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**April 21**  
ServSafe® Food Safety Training  
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**April 22 - 2:00 p.m.**  
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**April 24-26**  
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Dubuque Co. Extension Office, Dubuque  
To register, call (563) 927-4201

**June 09**  
ServSafe® Food Safety Training  
Webster County Extension Office, Fort Dodge  
To register, call 515-576-2119

**June 16**  
Up-Selling for Fun & Profit Telewebinar  
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## May/June

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Iowa Restaurant Association  
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ServSafe® Food Safety Training  
Black Hawk County Extension, Waterloo  
To register, call 319-234-6811

**May 13**  
ServSafe® Food Safety Training  
Linn County Extension Office, Marion  
To register, call 319-377-9839

**May 16-19**  
90th Annual National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show  
McCormick Place, Chicago  
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<http://show.restaurant.org/NRA09/public/enter.aspx>  
\* IRA Regular Members receive a free floor pass to the NRA Show!

**May 20**  
Marketing Without Money Telewebinar  
To register go to [www.restaurantiowa.com](http://www.restaurantiowa.com)

## July



**July 7**  
ServSafe® Food Safety Training  
Iowa Restaurant Association  
To register, call 515-276-1454

**July 21 - 2:00 p.m.**  
Easy to Use Cost Control Systems Telewebinar  
To register go to [www.restaurantiowa.com](http://www.restaurantiowa.com)

**July 27**  
IRA 2009 Golf Classic  
Briarwood Golf Course, Ankeny, Iowa  
Shotgun starts — 8 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.  
\$100 per golfer/\$90 before May 29th  
Registration deadline July 20, 2009  
Call 515-276-1454 or 800-747-1453  
[dorothyg@restaurantiowa.com](mailto:dorothyg@restaurantiowa.com)

Funded by the soybean checkoff

For more information about soyfoods, visit [www.TheSoyfoodsCouncil.com](http://www.TheSoyfoodsCouncil.com) or call 866-431-9814.

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**IOWA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION**

**2009 GOLF CLASSIC**

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**Join other restaurant and retail beverage industry professionals from across Iowa for a day of golf, camaraderie, food, drink and award-winning hospitality!**

**IRA 2009 Golf Classic**  
**Monday, July 27,**  
**Briarwood Golf Course**  
**Ankeny, Iowa**  
**Two shotgun starts —**  
**8 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.**  
**\$100 per golfer/  
 \$90 early bird**

**\$100 per golfer per round includes lunch or dinner, cart, green fees, refreshments, flight prizes, gifts, games on the course and more!**

**Take advantage of early bird registration and save!**  
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**Iowa Restaurant Association**

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**Download yours at [www.restaurantiowa.com](http://www.restaurantiowa.com)**

### SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS

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## from the association

### Doing Great Work In Your Community?

#### Win \$5,000 through the 11th Annual Restaurant Neighbor Award

Each year, the National Restaurant Association and American Express awards \$5,000 each to four restaurants—one small business, one mid-size business, one large business/national chain and one Humanitarian of the year—through its Restaurant Neighbor Award, an awards program that recognizes outstanding community service efforts among our nation's restaurants.

The IRA will select state winners who will go on to compete for the national award. To apply for the award or to nominate a restaurateur who is actively involved in his or her community, please go to [www.restaurant.org/community](http://www.restaurant.org/community). The deadline to apply for the award is June 5, 2009.



### Iowa Restaurant Association Industry Resource CD

The Iowa Restaurant Association is the definitive source for educational and business operations tools for Iowa's restaurant and retail beverage industry. We have assembled some of our most often requested information resources, document templates, and educational materials onto a member resource CD. Available upon request at no charge in CD form, or for \$69.95 in printed form, this is an exclusive member benefit tool.

**INCLUDES:**

- **Employer Tools**, such as customizable templates for an employee handbook, job descriptions, applications, reference checks, performance reviews, and other forms.
- **Business Operations Tools**, including a customizable crisis management plan, food cost calculation forms, and health and safety checklists and guidelines
- **Compliance Information** on wages and labor issues
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**Call or e-mail to receive your copy today!**  
**800-747-1453 • [info@restaurantiowa.com](mailto:info@restaurantiowa.com)**



### "Our Apologies"

Iowa Beverage Systems was inadvertently left out of the Iowa Restaurant Association's Annual Buyer's Guide Issue. Iowa Beverage Systems, Inc. is a wholesaler of beer, ale and wine in the greater Des Moines area. Their product line includes Beck's, Diageo-Guinness USA, Gambrinus Co., Molson Coors Brewing Co., Pabst Brewing Co., and others.

**Iowa Beverage Systems, Inc.**  
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**A Celebration of Fine Wine & Cuisine**

*2009 Gourmet Dinner  
 & Silent Auction*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 26TH, 2009**  
 West Des Moines Marriott Hotel



*5:30 pm* **Cash Bar & Hors d'oeuvres**  
*6:30 pm* **Six-Course Gourmet Dinner**  
 (includes a selection of fine wines)

*\$89 per person - Call (515) 276-1454*  
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*Proceeds will support food safety and responsible alcohol service training for Iowa's hospitality industry through the Iowa Restaurant Association.*

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