On behalf of the MRA Board of Directors, we are excited to announce the 2019 Award Winners. These well deserving recipients will be honored at our Awards Gala on Monday, March 4, 2019 at the Seaport Hotel in Boston.

Tickets - $130 each
Tables of 10 - $1,175
Reservations are required.

Monday, March 4, 2019
5:30pm - Cocktail Reception & Silent Auction (Seaport Ballroom)
6:45pm - Dinner/Program (Plaza Ballroom)
Seaport Hotel:
1 Seaport Lane, Boston

Tickets - $130 each
Tables of 10 - $1,175
Reservations are required.

Sponsorship opportunities* are available here.

*Deadline to sponsor is Feb. 26, 2019.

JOIN US AT THE 2019 MRA ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER!

BUSINESS PARTNER ASSOCIATE OF THE YEAR
MIKE DEMERSKY, Boston Showcase Company

BUSINESS PARTNER OF THE YEAR
PEOPLE’S UNITED BANK

EXECUTIVE CHEF OF THE YEAR
RODNEY MURILLO, Davio’s Northern Italian Steakhouse

LIMITED SERVICE RESTAURATEUR OF THE YEAR
DUNKIN’

RESTAURATEUR OF THE YEAR
KATHI & JIM TURNER AND FAMILY
Turner’s Seafood Restaurants

CONGRATULATIONS!

THREE INSPIRING DAYS TO LEARN, CONNECT & SHARE
Sunday, March 3, 2019 - Tuesday, March 5, 2019
Boston Convention Center

See page 6 for details on The Toast - The NEFS afterparty.

New England Food Show
Register Here

Experience NEFS here.
Dear Members,

Wow…what a ride our New England Patriots have taken us on once again! It never gets old, does it? Yes, we are spoiled. Yes, we budget our January and February sales levels every year expecting that the Pat’s will be in the playoffs and ultimately the Super Bowl. Yes, we even schedule Board Meetings around the Patriots run. Congrats to the Patriots organization, and so many thanks to the restaurants and their staff’s who stayed open and served those looking to take in the big game at a local restaurant or providing food for them and their Super Bowl parties.

And while it is now back to the real world, the MRA will not let Foxborough or Gillette Stadium fade away just yet. On Tuesday, February 12th, a record 15 high schools will be competing on the Club Level at Gillette Stadium in this years ProStart Invitational for the chance to win the state competition and move onto the nationals in May in Washington DC. This is literally the Super Bowl for our ProStart program’s best and brightest, and what a year to have this event for the first time at Gillette. I wish to thank all the sponsors who have worked so hard to make this possible, especially 110 Grill/Evivva Trattoria, SnapChef, Horizon Beverage and The Kraft Group/Aramark. The complete list of sponsors and more information on the event can be found here under details.

And right behind that, we of course have the New England Food Show, March 3-5 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. There is clearly no place more important for any operator or business partner to be during those three days, do make your plans now. In addition, we have two social events not to be missed during the show. On Sunday, March 3rd, starting immediately at 5:00 PM when the floor closes, join us next door at MJ O’Conner’s for The Toast, featuring great camaraderie as well as our musical guest, Jamie Lee Thurston, sponsored by BMI. And on Monday March 4th, please come celebrate our best of the best at the MRA Annual Awards Dinner at The Seaport Hotel. Congratulations to Mike Demersky of Boston Showcase, People’s United Bank, Dunkin’, Davio’s Corporate Chef Rodney Murillo, and Kathi & Jim Tuner, and their family from Turner’s Seafood, all of whom were named award recipients this year.

I look forward to seeing you at all these great industry events!

Pat Lee

MRA Chairman
email: plee@themassrest.org

“Those at the top of the mountain didn’t just fall there.”
- Unknown.

MRA STAFF

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bluz@themassrest.org

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Vice President, Operations
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Tracy Zibell
Educational Foundation Program Assistant
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CURRENT ECONOMIC INDICATORS - MASSACHUSETTS MEALS TAX COLLECTIONS

- **NOV 2018:** $104,880,524
  - **NOV 2017:** $100,620,953
  - **4.2% INCREASE**

- **DEC 2018:** $95,266,337
  - **DEC 2017:** $90,032,953
  - **5.8% INCREASE**

- **YTD 2018:** $655,355,670
  - **YTD 2017:** $622,332,844
  - **5.2% INCREASE**

**CONSUMER CONFIDENCE**
(0-150 scale)

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<thead>
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<th>Month</th>
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<td>NOV</td>
<td>136.4</td>
<td>123.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
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**UNEMPLOYMENT**
as of December 4, 2018

- **Massachusetts:** 3.3%
- **United States:** 3.9%

**PRICES (YR OVER YR)**

- Wholesale food prices in 2018:
  - **DOWN 0.1%**

- Menu prices:
  - **UP 2.6%**

NEW LEGISLATIVE SESSION ON BEACON HILL

The 191st General Court of Massachusetts began a new two year legislative session last month. The House will once again be led by Speaker Robert DeLeo, while Senate President Karen Spilka will begin her first full term leading that chamber after taking over the top spot this past July.

Both branches will have new Chairs of their respective Ways and Means Committees, and committee assignments for all representatives and senators should be completed by mid-February. Each session brings with it thousands of bills. Some of these bills are signed into law and the vast majority never emerge from committee.

It is unclear what issues will be up for debate in this session, but we certainly can expect legislation dealing with health care, climate change and legalized sports betting amongst many others.

While it may be a new session, some bad ideas have not gone away. As an industry we will need to continue to work together to defeat harmful bills, such as those that propose to eliminate the tip wage, double the local option meals tax, and mandate employee schedules.

2018 proved to be a very dangerous year for business owners. As an industry we must come together to fight back and educate elected officials and the general public that these mandates do not happen in a vacuum, and restaurant operators across Massachusetts are facing an unprecedented increase in the financial burden to stay operational.

On the good news front, the EMAC tier II assessment is scheduled to sunset at the end of this calendar year. While legislation has been filed to end the assessment early, it is unlikely to pass before the end of the year. As the economy appears it will stay strong throughout 2019 and as unemployment rates remain historically low, consumers will continue to act on their pent up demand for eating out. Last year, food and beverage operations collected $1.185 billion in meals tax collections. This is the fourth consecutive year the industry has eclipsed the billion dollar threshold.

*(Continued on next page)*
THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE NEEDS YOUR HELP

Decisions about taxing food used to be easy: tax meals and otherwise don’t tax food. The industry is changing as demand for prepared food skyrockets. Knowing which food items are taxable in Massachusetts is not always obvious.

The goal of this questionnaire is to give the Department of Revenue some feedback on how businesses like yours are operating today by expressing any areas of concern and ideas for what would help make tax compliance easier.

Most of the questions are multiple-choice and will take approximately 5 minutes to answer. The four open-ended questions at the end are your best opportunity to give DOR feedback on your business.

Take a few extra minutes to let them know what it’s like for you to comply with the meals tax law and regulation in Massachusetts – they want to hear from you.

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE HERE: MEALS TAX QUESTIONNAIRE

DOR may assemble a focus group to dig deeper and discuss specific concerns that are raised. If you would like to participate by email, phone, or in person, send an email to DOR360@dor.state.ma.us with Meals Tax Focus Group in the subject line and include your contact information.
NATIONAL GRID SERVE UP SAVINGS

Over the past year our Endorsed Partners at National Grid have developed a restaurant specific Serve Up Savings team. Their goal is to work hand in hand with MRA member restaurants to drive efficiencies and enhance revenues. There is no cost associated for MRA Members with their consultations, analysis and recommendations. Given the current economic environment and ongoing challenges in increasing revenue, one call you should make in early 2019 is to the National Grid Serve Up Saving team.

The Serve up Savings team works with restaurants like yours to improve operations and save energy when they upgrade to more energy-efficient, higher performing equipment. These upgrades can increase customer satisfaction and improve operations and profitability. It all starts with National Grid’s no-cost customized energy analysis, which takes into account your energy usage, location and building size to identify the highest potential savings opportunities. You will receive a report with insightful and clear recommendations and next steps on your opportunities to reduce energy costs.

National Grid’s Serve up Savings team will be at this year’s New England Food Show. Look for them at Booth 153 at the show. Meet the team’s energy experts and hear the success stories that are helping restaurants upgrade to Energy Star food service equipment, efficient HVAC, lighting and controls, refrigeration upgrades and high performance kitchen exhaust ventilation.

National Grid is a proud MRA endorsed partner and sponsor, and works with MRA members to help them understand and improve their energy costs which can help increase their bottom line.

If you cannot make it to the show, find out more about improving your restaurant’s efficiency, production and profitability at serveupsavings.com or call 800-783-7253.

REGIONAL RESTAURANT LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

Restaurant Operators: Please Join Us at a Regional Restaurant Leadership Roundtable!
We look forward to your participation as we gather MRA leadership, key restaurant leadership, influencers and a local politician from your region. In true roundtable format, the topics will flow from the attendees based on what is important and current in the region. The sessions will run from 2pm-4pm and we hope you will stay for a cocktail reception following the meeting. We look forward to your attendance and participation. If you have any questions please reach out directly to Kerry Miller at 508-573-4190 or kmiller@themassrest.org.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
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<td>Merrimack Valley</td>
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<td>Horseshoe Grille</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Mass</td>
<td>February 26, 2019</td>
<td>Union Station Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston/Cambridge</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Seaport Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Mass</td>
<td>April 23, 2019</td>
<td>Sonoma Restaurant</td>
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<td>Cape</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
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<td>Metro West</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
<td>Arturo’s Ristorante</td>
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<td>South Shore</td>
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<td>North Shore</td>
<td>November 2019</td>
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</table>
LEARN, CONNECT & SHARE
Sunday, March 3rd - Tuesday, March 5th • Boston Convention Center

NEFS INDUSTRY AFTER HOURS PARTY “THE TOAST” - SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2019

Celebrate in style at M.J.’s O’Connor’s Westin Waterfront Irish Pub immediately following the closing of the New England Food Show on Sunday, March 3rd. Jamie Lee Thurston will headline our evening of fun, camaraderie, heavy hors d’oeuvres and cash bar.

MJ O’Connor’s
Irish pub
425 Summer Street
Boston, MA
DOORS OPEN AT 5:00 P.M.
TICKETS* ONLY $25.00!
(NEFS Exhibitors: Use code Exhibitor19 to get tickets for $10 each)

Live performance by JAMIE LEE THURSTON

*Tickets will be available soon!
Fun Facts about Romaine’s Wood Grill & Bar and Smokestack Urban BBQ

1. Romaine’s is celebrating 20 years this August.
2. They opened on August 24, 1999– their son’s 1st birthday and they still feel guilty!
3. The Chef at Romaine’s, Andy Hurd has been with them 19 years this January, fresh out of culinary school.
4. Erin used to be Peter Rano’s babysitter – he is now their chef.
5. Richard Romaine, grew up in South Louisiana, the very heart of Cajun and Creole cuisine.
6. Erin Romaine graduated from the University of Vermont in Education.
7. Smokestack holds an annual Beach Bash and they ship in sand to create the perfect “beach” party.
8. Smokestack is home to the Wing Challenge – eat a dozen of their hottest wings in 15 minutes and the wings are on them, along with a t-shirt and unlimited bragging rights!
What experiences let you to pursue a career in the hospitality industry?
I witnessed my sister while she was in high school have the same instructor I did and I was fascinated at the work she learned and what she would do in her culinary class. I fell in love with culinary half way through my junior year and figured I want to continue this passion as my career.

From your time in the workplace and classroom, what is the most important piece of knowledge you have learned?
The most important piece of knowledge I have learned in the workplace and classroom is to be dedicated and learn from your mistakes. I also know people’s criticism can be taken negatively or positively, but in the industry it is never personal. It is to simply help you better yourself.

What are your plans after college graduation?
My plans after college graduation are to graduate with my associates degree at Newbury College and transfer to Johnson and Wales University for my bachelors degree. After graduation in 2021 with my bachelor’s degree, I want to own my own business or take my first step in the industry and work at a well known bakery or high end restaurant.

If you could offer advice to those considering pursuing a career in the hospitality industry, what would it be?
Be passionate and dedicated. Never give up! Failure comes with success.
Go to [www.themassrest.org/mraef-scholarship-app.html](http://www.themassrest.org/mraef-scholarship-app.html)

Mail application to:
Massachusetts Educational Foundation
160 East Main St., Suite 2
Westborough, MA 01581
or email it to Jennifer Almeida at jalmeida@themassrest.org

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION IN BY **APRIL 1ST!**

### 2019 SERVSAFE TRAINING SCHEDULE

#### SERVSAFE MANAGER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 6th &amp; 20th</td>
<td>Kowloon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5th &amp; 19th</td>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>4-8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15th &amp; 29th</td>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>4-8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13th &amp; 20th</td>
<td>Cape Codder</td>
<td>10am-2pm</td>
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#### SERVSAFE ALCOHOL

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 20th</td>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>3-7pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26th</td>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>3-7pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8th</td>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>3-7pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18th</td>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>3-7pm</td>
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#### SERVSAFE RECERTIFICATION

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<tr>
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<td>MRA</td>
<td>3-7pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23rd</td>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>4-8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14th</td>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>3-7pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLASS LOCATIONS:**

- **MRA:**
  160 East Main St, Suite 2
  Westborough, MA

- **KOWLOON:**
  948 Broadway, Saugus, MA

- **CAPE CODDER:**
  1225 Iyannough Rd Suite 1
  Hyannis, MA

- **CAFE CODDER:**
  1225 Iyannough Rd Suite 1
  Hyannis, MA

**GET YOUR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS IN TODAY! DEADLINE: APRIL 1, 2019**

Go to [www.themassrest.org/mraef-scholarship-app.html](http://www.themassrest.org/mraef-scholarship-app.html)

Mail application to:
Massachusetts Educational Foundation
160 East Main St., Suite 2
Westborough, MA 01581
or email it to Jennifer Almeida at jalmeida@themassrest.org

**SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION IN BY **APRIL 1ST!**

### CHOKE SAVING COURSES AVAILABLE AT THE MRA

**UPCOMING CLASSES FOR 2019:**

- **Thursday, February 14, 2019**
- **Thursday, March 14, 2019**
- **Thursday, April 11, 2019**
- **Thursday, May 9, 2019**

*All classes are 10-11am.*

Click [HERE](http://www.themassrest.org/mraef-scholarship-app.html) to register and for more information.
## Welcome New MRA Members!

**Food & Beverage Operators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>308 Lakeside</td>
<td>308 E Main St., East Brookfield, MA 01515</td>
<td>(774) 449-8333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Next Page Cafe</td>
<td>550 Broad St., Weymouth, MA 02189</td>
<td>(781) 340-1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion Tap &amp; Table</td>
<td>198 Worcester St., North Grafton, MA 01536</td>
<td>(774) 293-5501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tremezzo Ristorante</td>
<td>2 Lowell St., Wilmington, MA 01887</td>
<td>(978) 447-5967</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Business**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Vollrath Company</td>
<td>1236 North 18th St., Sheboygan, WI 53081</td>
<td>(401) 479-7838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TimePayment</td>
<td>1600 District Ave, Suite 200, Burlington, MA 01803</td>
<td>(877) 868-3800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Energy Executives</td>
<td>14 Southwick St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030</td>
<td>(413) 302-3124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OpenCity</td>
<td>50 Milk Street, Floor 15, Boston, MA</td>
<td>(774) 239-2561</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Thank You to Our 2019 Annual Sponsors**

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- [Ecolab](#)
- [GrayGray&Gray Certified Public Accountants](#)
- [Heartland](#)
- [Hospitality Insurance Group](#)
- [Kens](#)
- [Metropolitan](#)
- [National Grid](#)
- [Oracle Food and Beverage](#)
- [People's United Bank](#)
- [Plantedos](#)
- [Sprague](#)
- [Sysco](#)
- [Twinbrook Brokerage](#)
- [US Foods](#)
- [Us Wealth Management](#)
- [Ruby Wines, Inc.](#)

Massachusetts Restaurant Association
160 East Main Street, Suite 2, Westborough, MA 01581
Phone: (508) 303-9905  www.themassrest.org

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- [Check out the MRA Linkedin Group](#)