



Member Focused; Results Driven

Mark your Calendars 2012 February, March,
April & May Meetings and Annual Events

RHODE ISLAND FOOD DEALERS ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2012 - MAY 2012 MEETINGS & ANNUAL EVENTS * TRADE DAY 2012 * RHODE ISLAND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE *

Thursday
March 8, 2012

RIFDA Trade Day 2012

EVENT OVERVIEW

Providence
Marriott Hotel

Industry Seminar/Panel Discussion "Social Media and the Food Industry, what does it mean to you?" Moderated by James Spellos



James Spellos is the President of Meeting U., a company specializing in helping people become more productive and comfortable with technology.

Jim is certified as a Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS). He delivers over 150 seminars annually on how to use technology more efficiently, including social media. He is currently working as a

consultant on social media with a food industry organization. Jim teaches at New York University, teaching in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies since 1990.

Through Meeting U., Jim publishes a monthly technology e-letter named Techniques. This free newsletter shares technology applications and services that apply for professional and personal use. He also shares cool technology tools through his Facebook, Twitter and ScoopIt pages.

Outside of the meetings industry, Jim is an accomplished musician and songwriter, playing guitar, keyboards and singing for the New York City rock band Contraband. They released their first CD, "Welcome to the Neighborhood" in late 2008, with more original songs to be released.

Rhode Island State Final ~ Best Bagger Competition

The proper bagging of groceries is an important part of the operation of a successful retail grocery business, and front-end employees, in particular, have a major effect on how well a retailer serves the customer. Each year, N.G.A. holds one of the industry's most exciting events, the Best Bagger Championship. This will be the 26th year for this exciting national contest conducted by N.G.A. Baggers will compete using reusable bags. This national competition is the culmination of contests all across the country, with a champion from each state eligible to enter the contest.

Legislative Networking Reception

Takes on a Rhode Island legislative flair as we will have members of our General Assembly present. Among the attendees will be members of the House Small Business Committee. Make new food industry contacts in a relaxed atmosphere.

Industry Dinner

Enjoy a delicious dinner among food industry camaraderie. Which will be followed by the presentations of RI's Best Bagger Award and the 2012 RIFDA Food Industry Honoree of the Year.

RI Legislative Update continued...

Overview: Although this year's legislative session started off slowly as the General Assembly concentrated on the state pension issue and the financial situations of cities and towns in crisis – over the past two weeks we have seen a flurry of new legislation proposed. Keeping in mind that Senate and House leaders are not in full agreement with the governor's recently submitted budget they are looking at other options to overcome the projected budget shortfall. We could see additional legislation submitted that addresses those issues when we get beyond the closing date for bills to be submitted. Leadership can submit bills after this date and often do. Here a few of the bills that we are currently watching closely:

Product Stewardship: H7027 – Walsh, Handy, Tanzi, & Others – This resolution would create a five member special commission to study producer responsibility. This bill had a hearing on Feb. 2nd and a Sub A was forwarded for a House vote on Feb. 8th. The House voted to recommit back to Committee. We can expect other legislation to be submitted in the area of product stewardship but initial indications are that it will be in the area of mattresses.

Minimum Wage: H 7396 – Bennett, Gutherie, McNamara & Others – This bill would raise the minimum wage by .35 per hour effective on Jan. 1st 2013. More alarmingly this bill calls for yearly increases thereafter consistent with the cost of living. We are, of course, opposed to this bill and although not currently scheduled for a hearing we are in the process of drafting a letter of opposition on behalf of the association. We may need additional member support if this goes to a hearing.

Beverage Tax: H 7396 – Ajello, Blazejewski, Naughton, & Others – Similar to last years bill this would tax all sugared beverages (including all fountain drink) at a rate equal to \$1.28 per gallon (a penny an ounce. This year's bill includes detail as to where the funding would go and for what purpose. In its current form none goes to the general treasury. We are watching this closely to determine momentum – but due to Ajello's status as Judiciary Committee Chair this will more than likely be scheduled for a hearing. We are currently working with new Directors of the Health Department – Dr. Michael Fine – to both make sure there is a clear understanding of what our industry has done to alleviate obesity and to seek other measures to educate and provide alternatives to consumers.

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February 15, 2012 Executive Comm.
MeetingFebruary 16, 2012 Food Safety Comm.
MeetingFebruary 22, 2012 Legislative Comm.
Meeting

March 8, 2012 RIFDA Trade Day

March 21, 2012 Board of Directors
MeetingMarch 22, 2012 Legislative Comm.
MeetingMarch 28&29, 2012 NGA/FMI/FIAE
Washington, DC Legislative Conf.April 11, 2012 Legislative Committee
MeetingApril 18, 2012 Executive Committee
MeetingApril 26, 2012 WIC Committee Meeting
(tentative)May 1-3, 2012 FMI Convention Dallas,
TX

May 16, 2012 Board of Directors Meeting

May 23, 2012 Legislative Committee
MeetingMay 28, 2012 Office Closed Memorial
Day

June 21 - 24, 2012 RIFDA Convention

August 9, 2012 RIFDA PAC Event

September 10, 2012 RIFDA Charity Golf
EventSeptember 19, 2012 Sen. Reed Trip to
WashingtonDecember 8, 2012 Annual Meeting &
Holiday Gala

Thank you

February Supplier of the Month

Wakefern
FOOD CORP.



Member Focused; Results Driven

Thank you

February Retailer of the Month



HELPFUL INDUSTRY LINKS

FMI National Legislative Updates

<http://www.fmi.org/gr/>

RI Legislative Info

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/genmenu/>

RI Pending Bills and Calendar

<http://dirac.rilin.state.ri.us/billstatus/webclass1.asp>

RI News and Press Releases
From the House and Senate

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/news/>

Food Safety Certification Classes

The Food Safety Certification classes will be conducted by Ken Collins, RI State Certified Food Safety Instructor. The 15 hours required by the State will be spread over four classes:

Tuesday February 21

Tuesday February 28

Tuesday March 6

Friday March 9

All classes will begin at 4pm and will be held in the RIFDA conference room. The cost for this program is \$215 per student and includes all books, materials and the final exam.

Please confirm your interest in this program asap 401 431-0808.

RI Legislative Update* National Legislative Update * Industry News * Helpful Links * Food Certification Classes

RI Legislative Update...continued

E Verification: S 2216 - Cote, Felag, Sheenan & Others - Similar to legislation submitted during previous sessions this bill would require companies with three or more employees to apply to participate in E-Verify and if accepted participate in this screening process. This bill was referred to committee and is not scheduled for a hearing.

Summary

As bill submission deadlines are at hand we will be able to gauge the significance of these bills as the legislative objectives will be defined by House and Senate Leadership. As stated previously, this is an election year for the General Assembly and this normally dictates some bills being submitted on behalf of constituents that have little chance of moving forward. Additionally in a state with the current economic climate it would seem unlikely that bills would move forward that would increase taxes and fees or provide controversial restrictions on contributing industries – but nothing is for certain and we need to remain diligent.

For a complete RI Legislative Update, please visit www.rifda.com

Other Legislative Updates

SNAP Distributions: On a related point of interest for our membership we have a meeting scheduled this week with Steven Constantino – the State Secretary of Health & Human Services in order to submit a formal request that the current state distribution of SNAP funds be changed, consistent with a majority of other states whereby these benefits are distributed over a 10 day period (vs. one day currently). His support for this will go a long way into moving this initiative forward. I was able to secure information from FMI that outlines how other states administer this distribution and I think this will serve in providing a good basis to position our request on.

RI Food Policy Council: Last week the RI Food Policy Council held in second open meeting where it outlined, in broad terms, its objectives for the coming year. Additionally, the meeting established the format for future committees that would work on some of these objectives. It was encouraging to note at this meeting that there was little political presence as the majority of the committee are from academia, non-profit organizations representing agriculture or from the Health and Human Services Departments (activist not necessarily politicians). Initially the Council seems open to input on where to deploy its resources and most of the recommendations have not been adversarial to our industry.

The third meeting is scheduled for late March and at that point we should be able to gain a more complete understanding of their planned activities. It will be interesting to see at that point if they form “opinion” on some of the suggested legislation that is active or if they stick to more tangent programs to help feed the poor and promote RI based agriculture and aquaculture.

National Legislative Update

As we all await the President’s budget to be released this week, lawmakers in Congress are continuing discussions on extending the payroll tax holiday. With the pending deficit projected at 1.33 trillion, both of these initiatives will be interesting to follow to see how actions contained – help or hinder our industry.

Other national legislative items of interest:

Meat Nutritional Labeling Required by March 1st: All retailers including small businesses must provide nutritional information to consumers for major muscle cuts of meat and poultry. This information can be placed on the label or made available via Point of Sale at the point of purchase. The latter can be fulfilled via signs or pamphlet. Further information and posters available to download can be obtained on FMI’s website.

Potential Restrictions on Criminal Background Checks: Larger food companies and national trade associations are lobbying heavily to block new restrictions on background checks that could severely limit the availability of employers to appropriately review criminal histories of potential new employees. Letter expressing your view on this matter can be sent to Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Menu Labeling: The food industry has joined a number of others in applying for an exemption for supermarkets for the new menu labeling requirements. This exemption would clarify language in the proposed legislation “similar retail food establishments” provision.

Industry News - from The Food Institute

Health News: About 90% of Americans eat more sodium than is recommended for a healthy diet, according to CDC's *Vital Signs*. About 65% of sodium eaten comes from food bought at retail stores and about 25% comes from restaurants, while more than 40% of sodium also comes from 10 types of foods including breads and rolls, cold cuts and cured meats, soups and snacks.

Washington News: To date, FDA collected samples from 99 shipments of orange juice or orange juice concentrate. Of these, 63 shipments tested negative for carbendazim and 46 were released. FDA found 23 samples that tested positive; the agency detained and/or refused these shipments. An additional 13 samples are still pending.

Market News: Total agricultural exports for calendar year 2011 totaled \$136.3 billion, up \$20.5 billion over the previous record set in calendar year 2010. Grains were the biggest contributor to the overall record, reaching an all-time high of \$37.7 billion, a \$9.2 billion increase over 2010.