



Member Focused; Results Driven

Mark your Calendars July 2013
Meetings and Annual Events

July 4, 2013 Office Closed

July 10, 2013 Legislative
Committee Meeting (Wrap Up)

July 23, 2013 Executive
Committee Meeting @ 7:30am

August 12, 2013 Office Closed

August 15, 2013 WIC
Committee Meeting (tentative)
@ 9:30am

August 20, 2013 Executive
Committee Meeting @ 7:30am

August 29, 2013 NE Association
Executives Meeting (tentative)

September 2, 2013 Office Closed

September 9, 2013 RIFDA
Charity Golf Tournament
Kirkbrae Country Club

September 18, 2013 Sen. Reed
Business Leaders Day in
Washington, DC

October 3, 2013 PAC Member
Event

December 7, 2013 Annual
Meeting & Holiday Gala

July 2013 ~ Volume 2 ~ Number 4

RHODE ISLAND FOOD DEALERS ASSOCIATION

July 2013 Rhode Island Legislative Update - Meetings and Event Calendar - Welcome New Member

July 2013 Rhode Island Legislative Update

It finally appears that the state now has a budget for fiscal 2014 as the Senate has passed the final House version of the state budget (a significantly amended version of the governor's original budget). The governor now has the option to veto, sign, or let it become law without his signature. Most believe it will be one of the latter two options.

Beyond the fiscal outlining of the state spending this budget – particularly this one - is also a statement of policy. As the General Assembly vetted the budget submitted by the House Finance Committee the delays in passage were surrounded by the ongoing controversy and varying positions on the payback of bonds from the 38 Studio debacle, the ongoing battle with regard to the state pension fund, the state support of the Newport Casino, and the ongoing debate over the Sakonnet River Bridge toll. The funding allotted or denied (or in the case of the bridge toll delay) are not only fiscal decisions but are also quite clearly a political “hot spots” and as a result determine or attempt to determine policy as well.

Of particular interest for our members were the following budget outcomes:

The \$2.5 M payment to the bondholders signals that most likely the taxpayers of RI will be paying off this debt over the next several years. As this amount of annual payback increases that money will need to be allocated. In order to be allocated it needs to come from tax revenue or from spending cuts in other areas. As it took some work this year to cover the projected \$30M shortfall – this could prove to be a huge burden on consumers and businesses.

The same could be argued with regard to funding the state pension. The projected surplus from 2013 about \$12.2M was going to go into the next year's (this one) budget. It will not go to the state pension fund.

On the plus side, the Sakonnet River Bridge toll implementation has been delayed until next year. This additional cost does not only affect the residents of the area but also the businesses within it and those that sell goods and services into the area. This delay will allow some time for some additional time for the General Assembly to explore other options. As the final budget reflected a \$4M cut (from the original proposed budget) in bridges and road repair some additional funding will need to be done going forward. As a result of all this expectations of any RI road improvements need to be kept at a minimum.

Overall, the final budget - and related individual legislation - did not supply much in the area of the much anticipated business stimulus. The restructure or reorganization of the economic development council was put off and the budget reflected only moderate financial relief for businesses in the form of accelerated depreciation options and reinstated the historic tax-credit program. There was little help in the area of providing stimulus for hiring or expanding worker skills.

You will remember that initially the General Assembly (and more specifically the House) spent a good deal of time on some social issues including same sex marriage, modifying marijuana laws, and gun control - for a significant part of this session. Since that time they have started to consider a number of different bills that were fast tracked.

We have been tracking a number of these bills over the past several months.

The most recent activity of the General assembly is in three areas, minimum wage, bridge tolls and EPR (product stewardship). There has been a number of pieces of legislation submitted in an attempt to deal with the proposed toll on the Sakonnet River Bridge as mentioned previously. The most recent was submitted and had a hearing (6/13) in the same week. This bill is S 989, submitted by DePalma, Felag (and others). It provides amendments to restrict tolls and establish a bridge maintenance fund that would be financed out of General Assembly funds. As this was submitted well after the intro period it needed to have the support of leadership and could be considered in a revised form during the delay outlined in the budget.

The EPR bill that had a hearing this week is S 0406 (Cool Rumsey, DiPalma, and others) that had an original hearing two months ago. A Sub A was submitted that basically called for a study of the contents of the debris/contamination in order to determine what the issues are and where they may be coming from. If this bill passes, this commission will report back next year with its findings. As mentioned, this year's special Senate commission that was assembled last session to look at packaging in general and determine a proper course of action for the legislature to take. **(Please visit www.rifda.com for the complete 5 page article)**

Welcome New Member

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RIFDA 2013 Annual Convention - Thank You Sponsors, Product Donors and Door Prize Donors

RIFDA 2013 ANNUAL CONVENTION AT THE RED JACKET BEACH RESORT

Since our arrival with the RIFDA this has been the best convention yet! The weather was perfect, the private beach was gorgeous, the location unbeatable, the crowd pleasing dueling piano performance, savoury food, and an open plan Hospitality House with a magnificent view...of the Nantucket Sound. Who would of thought the Chairman's Dinner entertainment would have everyone on the dance floor...kanga-line and all! All members should make plans to join us next year, pass the word...don't miss out on this fun filled event!



THE END

Join us next year on the
beach, golf course and the
dance floor!!

Thank you **Convention Sponsors** for your support it made this event a success!

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