

# Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 31

## Appetizers

Bonrue Bakery's  
Northern Utah  
expansion



Michelin star  
pedigree  
meets market  
disruption



America's Food  
& Beverage  
Show hits Miami



2027  
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Show debuts



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## Survey: Cooking oil influences where Americans choose to eat

National data shows cooking oil reshapes where Americans dine, exposes generational divide

Vernon, CA - Coast Packing Company, the leading supplier of animal fat shortenings in the Western U.S., has released new findings from a national consumer survey showing that the type of cooking oil a restaurant uses is no longer just a back-of-house decision. A survey of 1,005 U.S. consumers finds that 43% of Americans say a restaurant's cooking oil influences where they choose to eat. What's more, the data reveals a sharp generational split: younger diners are nearly twice as likely as older Americans to let cooking fat shape their dining choices.

When asked which cooking oil they want restaurants to use, nearly 1 in 4 diners (24.7%) prefer traditional animal fats — such as butter or Beef Tallow — compared with just 15.6% who prefer seed or vegetable oils. That represents a roughly 60% higher preference for animal fats. The findings suggest that what's in the fryer is becoming a deciding factor at the door.

### The Generational Divide

The gap between younger and older diners is striking. More than half of diners ages 18–34 (52%) say knowing whether a restaurant uses Beef Tallow



# COAST

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or seed oils affects where they choose to eat. Among those 55 and older, that number drops to just 33% — a 19-point difference that the restaurant industry may not yet fully appreciate.

The divide sharpens further when diners face a direct choice. When presented with two otherwise identical restaurants — one cooking with Beef Tallow, the other with seed oils — nearly 1 in 3 adults ages 18–34 (31%) pick the Beef Tallow option. Among those 55 and older, just 19% make the same choice. Gen Z diners choose Beef Tallow at 29%, Millennials at 28%, compared with only 19% of Boomers.

Among the youngest diners, butter preference alone rises to 25%, and Beef Tallow preference reaches 11.4% — compared with 5.8% among those

55 and older, who are less than half as likely to choose it.

“What we're seeing from younger customers is that they care about how their food is made,” said Greg Hozinsky, corporate chef at Coast Packing Company. “Specifically, they're asking about which cooking oils are used. Current data shows that there's a strong preference for animal fats and it's driving where they decide to eat. That's a signal that restaurants can't afford to ignore, especially those that want to lock in repeat, loyal customers.”

### From Taste to Dining Decisions

Coast has tracked consumer attitudes toward animal fats for more than a decade. Earlier research found

See **COOKING OIL** page 4

## How to set up outdoor seating for a restaurant

Setting up outdoor seating isn't just about putting tables outside — it's about creating a space that feels intentional, comfortable, profitable, and compliant. Here's a clear, operator-friendly guide you can use for Today's Restaurant content, supplier training, or even a checklist for restaurateurs.

### 1. Start with the purpose of the space

Outdoor seating can be:

- ◆ A revenue booster
- ◆ A brand statement
- ◆ A guest-experience differentiator
- ◆ A way to increase capacity without expanding the building

Decide if the space should feel:

- ◆ Casual and fast-turn
- ◆ Lounge-style and leisurely
- ◆ Upscale dining
- ◆ Bar-centric

This drives every decision after.

### 2. Understand local regulations

Before buying a single chair, operators need to confirm:

- ◆ Required walkway clearance (often 4–6 feet)
- ◆ ADA accessibility



- ◆ Fire code spacing
- ◆ Noise restrictions
- ◆ Alcohol service rules (fencing, barriers, or defined boundaries)
- ◆ Permits for sidewalk or street seating
- ◆ Umbrella or canopy height requirements

Cities in Florida, for example, often require a **site plan** showing table layout, barriers, and ingress/egress.

### 3. Choose the right furniture

Outdoor furniture must be:

- ◆ **Weather-resistant** (aluminum, resin, treated wood, powder-coated steel)
- ◆ **Stackable** for storage
- ◆ **Weighted** to withstand wind
- ◆ **Comfortable** without being bulky
- ◆ **Easy to clean** and sanitize

**Pro tip:** Dark tabletops hide wear

but get hotter in the sun. Light colors stay cooler but show stains.

### 4. Create shade and climate comfort

Florida operators especially need this dialed in.

Options include:

- ◆ Umbrellas (commercial-grade, wind-rated)
- ◆ Pergolas
- ◆ Retractable awnings
- ◆ Sail shades
- ◆ Misting fans
- ◆ Outdoor heaters (if applicable)

Comfort = longer stays = higher check averages.

### 5. Plan the layout like an indoor dining room

Outdoor seating should feel like an extension of the brand, not an afterthought.

Key layout rules:

- ◆ Keep **aisles wide** for servers
- ◆ Avoid dead-end corners
- ◆ Place **two-tops** along edges and **four-tops** in the center
- ◆ Maintain clear paths to the host stand
- ◆ Keep tables away from trash

See **OUTDOOR SEATING** page 12



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# Appell Pie Objectivity

Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

I was shaving this morning and I noticed that over time one of my sideburns had grown longer than the other. It took time to grow that long but I never saw it until this morning. Why didn't I see it? Why did none of my friends or wife see it and tell me? It started me thinking about what else was "growing" that I didn't see in my business.

What about things that are "growing" in your business that you don't see? One good way to take a look at what you are doing is to stand in the front door of your restaurant and look at the facility as if you were a customer seeing it for the first time. Take an objective look. The old adage is "people eat with their eyes first" Your customers can tell you the problems at a glance.

should not be the place for your laptop and papers to be seen by customers.

- Does the restaurant have a theme?
- Does the wait staff wear uniforms or what ever they decide to wear?
- Are the salt & pepper shakers etc. clean and not sticky to the touch?

If you see any or all of these items you need to do a quick make over to correct the problems. Consult a designer or friend with a sense of style.

Once you enter the door and correct the appearance problems you need to look at your Marketing Plan or lack of one. You need to connect with your potential customers using every means available today in this fast paced technology based economy. Collecting data on your customers will lead you to increased sales.

E-Mail Addresses - Almost everyone has an email address and you have to find a way to get your customers to submit their address to you for future use. A few years ago I wrote about the High School Club started by a restaurant that led to huge sales increases by collecting data and using it. (Contact me for details).

Data Collecting, Advertising, Loyalty Programs, Coupons and Public Relations should all be included in a well-rounded Marketing program. If you need help running any of these pieces of your Marketing puzzle consult a professional.

Taking an objective view of your Business on a regular schedule will avoid the loss of business that will occur when any of these items are neglected. Running a successful business is a 24/7 job but you need to take the time to make corrections on the fly.

*If you see any or all of these items you need to do a quick make over to correct the problems.*

When you stand back and look start with the appearance of the dining room.

- Floors - Are the carpets torn, spotted or generally dirty?
- Walls - Is the paint chipped, wallpaper coming off or torn? Are pictures outdated?
- Tables, Chairs and Booths - Are the seats ripped? Is the layout inviting? Are there tables waiting to be cleaned?
- Is the dining room your office? The booth or table in the back

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# What's Going On

Important new products, corporate news and industry events

After being ranked [the best Italian restaurant in Florida](#) last year, Prato in Winter Park has announced it plans to expand. Prato will open its first new location in Bethesda, Maryland in the Fall of 2026. This is only the first step in a broader national brand expansion. Park Lights Hospitality is the parent company to Prato, and according to the CEO, Scott Bowman, plans are to open a restaurant in Nashville in early 2027. Prato is a Michelin Guide restaurant and has won many awards.



### Closed or Closing Chains!

[Joe's Crab Shack](#) Expected to close most of its restaurants.

**Papa John's:** plans to shutter 300 of its restaurants by the end of 2027 as the struggling pizza chain moves to cut costs and close under-performing locations.

**Pieology Pizzeria** franchisee which operates five locations in Hawaii is closing all of its Hawaii locations.

[Pizza Hut](#) Plans to close 250 U.S. based locations in 2026, with more closures planned



to develop new locations now through Franchising, with several already in development. Visit [launchfamilyentertainment.com/franchise](http://launchfamilyentertainment.com/franchise).

[for the following years.](#)

[Tori's Tacos](#) is expected to close all its restaurants.

The parent company of **7-Eleven** plans to close over **600 convenience stores across North America**, potentially including some in Florida, in 2026 as part of a broader effort to streamline operations.

[Houlihan's Restaurant](#) is expected to close most of its restaurants. These closures are part of a broader

**Launch Entertainment, an indoor family entertainment franchise, is looking to expand nationally.** The indoor facilities offer a variety of attractions, a premium bar, and a full restaurant in each location. The brand is actively targeting expansion in both new and existing markets across the Midwest, Northeast, and Southwest, with a current focus on Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Launch is seeking franchise partners with the operational capabilities and financial qualifications

[trend in the industry, where many chains are making strategic decisions to improve profitability and reduce operational costs. The closures are expected to strengthen the remaining restaurants and improve franchisee health by allowing them to reallocate resources towards operational excellence](#)



**Vitamix Commercial** has introduced [Power-Prep™](#), a new back-of-house blending system that elevates the prep standard in professional kitchens. Foodservice operators are battling space constraints, labor challenges and tighter margins while consumer expectations for speed and consistency grow simultaneously. "Speed and repeatable results are an operational expectation for today's modern kitchen, but they're battling resource constraints that strain back-of-house systems," said Kelli Jenkins, Senior Product Manager at Vitamix Commercial. "Power-Prep was designed to help operators meet those demands by bringing multiple blending capabilities into a single system. Teams can move from small prep tasks

to large production and deliver the same high-quality output regardless of who's in the kitchen." [Vitamix.com](http://Vitamix.com).



### Hotel Happenings

[Bulgari Hotels & Resorts](#) has announced their plans for **Bulgari Hotel Miami Beach, to open in 2028.** The Hotel will be the 12th property in the collection. Located at 100 21st Street, it will be the first Bulgari Hotel in the



See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 6

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# How restaurants should manage rising 3D-party cyber exposures

By Patrick Ryder

McDonald's earned a few uncomfortable headlines over the summer after independent security researchers discovered some [elementary-grade security flaws](#) in the platform running its hiring chatbot.

The fault lay with the vendor, the artificial intelligence firm Paradox.ai, which built the chatbot screener "Olivia" and had some basic security issues of its own: for one, a password of 123456 on an administrator's account. It was a big issue, potentially giving access to standard and sometimes personal information of as many as 64 million job applicants' who had been "interviewed" by Olivia. Even worse, the McHire.com website is used by many of its franchisees.

Third-party vulnerabilities are a growing problem for the restaurant industry when nearly every aspect of operations is networked, requiring the skills of outside experts to work smoothly. Some 99% of restaurants use at least one [online ordering](#) solution, though many use three. Point of sale (POS) systems are now indispensable, and 67% of operators say the majority of their software systems overall integrate into their POS. AI creates another opening for cyber intruders, now used in some form by [79% of U.S. restaurants](#).

With this extensive digitization, the restaurant industry has vastly expanded its exposure to cyber intrusions, and today, third-party vendors are a big part of the problem. Data breaches over all that involved them [doubled](#) to 30% of all incidents in the past year. And there's a cost, regardless of who's at fault. Recent [reports put the damage](#) at \$3.4 million to \$3.9 million for hospitality overall, thanks to factors like lost business, forensic investigations and the price of a stolen record, which can run as high as \$225.

Restaurant organizations can enhance their cyber risk management practices by focusing as much on their vendors as they do their internal teams. Here's what's important to know, including the role insurance plays.

## Start with vendor cyber audits

Vendor audits are a must, assessing them all for their cyber security practices. Moreover, vendor contracts must be audited to ensure that indemnities are clearly specified. Done right, this will identify and address security gaps before a cyber intrusion occurs. A broker



with proven expertise in cyber risk will be invaluable partner in the process.

Here's what the vendor cyber audit should cover:

- ◆ Specifics details on how their policies covering data security and privacy are documented and enforced.
- ◆ Vendors' response and recovery plans, including for business continuity in the event of an incident.
- ◆ Confirmation of and details about staff training programs.
- ◆ Specific information on technical controls and data and compliance measures.

Evidence of vendors' own risk assessments and client reporting protocols.

The contract audits are key for understanding the risk at which vendors may put your business. This covers a clear statement of work and which parties are responsible and to what extent in the event of an intrusion. And indemnities must be specified. Here's where a broker partner is invaluable: even higher indemnities provided by a third-party vendor will not be adequate to guarantee an operator's survival of a vendor-caused data breach.

Another safeguard is to regularly test vendors for compliance with important standards for controls protecting customer data, like SOC (1, 2 and 3). They also should be checked for compliance with the mandatory PCI DSS security rules designed to protect credit and debit card data from theft and fraud.

## The backstop of cyber insurance

Digital liability exists and data breaches are just as prevalent in a restaurant as any slip, trip or fall and just as costly, if not more so. Cyber insurance is the natural backstop to digital exposures, first-party or third-party. And it's

a rare restaurant that goes unprotected.

Lining up a cyber policy, in and of itself, isn't that difficult. But exposures and adequate coverages and deductible structures can be complicated to navigate. A broker who knows the business is invaluable in structuring the policy.

Take wire transfer exposures. The way vendors are paid plays into that. How the policy responds to the exposure must be considered, along with the way it correlates to the balance of the program. Credit card exposure is

another big concern: If a breach blocks access to the point-of-sale system, the restaurant probably can't take orders or payments and is exposed to significant business interruption loss.

A further complication is a shifting regulatory environment, even as technology advances. Each state has its own cybersecurity laws, which can pose another risk on the compliance front, depending on the vendors that are being utilized and where they're located. It also adds another wrinkle to cyber insurance coverage: Many carriers are excluding indemnity in their cyber policies from such regulations (like those regulating biometric data and consumer privacy) until their impacts are understood.

Technology adoption has driven a host of benefits to the restaurant business, from operational efficiencies and cost savings to an enhanced customer experience. What's become a big challenge, though, is less keeping up with the advantages and managing the risks — especially those represented by the host of tech service vendors. **TR**

*About the author: Patrick Ryder is Senior Vice President and management and professional liability segment leader for leading cannabis insurance brokerage Hub International.*

## Cooking oil from page 1

growing openness to Lard and Beef Tallow, particularly among younger diners who associate them with better flavor and old-school cooking. This latest survey moves beyond attitudes to actual dining behavior, asking not just what consumers think about cooking fats, but whether those opinions translate into where they spend their money. The results suggest they do.

### A broader shift in food trends

The findings align with broader industry signals. Whole Foods Market's 2026 food trend forecast named Beef Tallow as an emerging ingredient gaining visibility on menus. Market analysts project continued growth in the global tallow

sector through 2030. And while the survey does not suggest a sweeping change in restaurant kitchens overnight, it does indicate cooking fat — long treated as a back-of-house operational choice — is becoming a front-of-house consideration for a growing share of diners. **TR**

*About Coast Packing Company: Now marking its 104th year in business, Coast Packing Company ([www.coastpacking.com](http://www.coastpacking.com)) is the No. 1 supplier of animal fat shortenings in the Western United States. The company sells to major manufacturers, restaurant chains, food distributors, retailers and bakeries. Coast's TasteMap™ ([www.coastpacking.com/community/tastemaps](http://www.coastpacking.com/community/tastemaps)) serves as an online guide to restaurants offering dishes prepared with Lard and Beef Tallow, featuring establishments nationwide. Coast is a founding member of the Healthy Fats Coalition ([www.healthyfatscoalition.org](http://www.healthyfatscoalition.org)).*



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# Bonrue Bakery's Northern Utah expansion

The beloved European-style patisserie from St. George begins its next growth phase, starting with Provo and Orem in 2026

St. George, Utah - [Bonrue Bakery](#), the European-style patisserie known for its handcrafted pastries, savory offerings, and deep community roots, officially announced plans to open 10 new locations across Utah through 2027, marking a significant new phase of growth for the brand. The expansion will begin in Utah County, with new locations in Provo and Orem opening later this year, as well as a central kitchen built in Springville.

Alongside this growth, Bonrue is welcoming seasoned culinary professional Emily Benson as Executive Chef, further strengthening the brand's commitment to craft and quality.

Since its founding in 2021, Bonrue has built a loyal following across southern Utah, earning a reputation for thoughtful execution, refined technique, and heartfelt hospitality. Rooted in the founders' fine-dining backgrounds, Bonrue brings a level of technique and refinement inspired by Michelin-level kitchens into a fast-paced, everyday experience. This next phase of expansion reflects both the strength of that foundation and the growing demand for the brand across the Wasatch Front.

"We've always believed that growth should feel like a natural extension of who we are," said co-founder Chris Connors. "The response from our guests has made it clear that there's a place for Bonrue in more communities. As we expand, our focus remains the same — quality, connection, and



Emily Benson

creating a place where people want to gather over great food. Utah County felt like the natural place to begin this next chapter."

As Bonrue scales its footprint, the addition of Executive Chef Emily Benson brings both depth and versatility to the brand's culinary program. With over two decades of experience spanning both pastry and savory kitchens, Benson's approach is grounded in precision, creativity, and a deep respect for craft. Her background includes owning and operating a café and bakery for six years, where she developed menus from scratch and led teams centered on



consistency, quality, and care.

In her role, Benson will focus on back-of-house operations, supporting menu development across both sweet and savory offerings, refining systems and processes, and helping to scale Bonrue's kitchen operations while preserving its high standards.

"Joining Bonrue feels like a natural next step for me," said Benson. "I was drawn to the balance they're building — growth without losing the craft. For me, it's always been about more than what's on the plate. It's about creating something people connect with and being part of a kitchen that cares about

doing things well. I'm excited to step in and contribute to that."

Benson will also play a key role in mentoring team members and fostering a strong kitchen culture rooted in excellence, collaboration, and thoughtful execution.

"Bonrue is inspired by the French words for good (bon) and street (rue)," said co-founder Li Hsun Sun. "As we expand into new communities, bringing Emily onto the team allows us to deepen our commitment to the craft while continuing to build something meaningful for both our team and our guests."

The Utah County openings mark the first step in Bonrue's broader plan to bring its distinctive blend of European-inspired baking and community-driven hospitality to more neighborhoods across Utah in the years ahead. Bonrue partnered with Savory Fund in 2025 to support its continued growth, leveraging the firm's operational expertise and strategic resources to thoughtfully scale the brand while preserving its commitment to craft and community. 

*About Bonrue Bakery: Bonrue Bakery, formerly Farmstead, was founded in 2021 by Chris Connors, Li Hsun Sun, and the late Chris Herrin — three food craft connoisseurs with experience as chefs and restaurateurs in the Las Vegas market. The local, European-style patisserie is known for its warm hospitality and rich recipes of baked goods — freshly crafted with passion and precision. Bonrue Bakery currently operates multiple locations in southern Utah, with continued expansion planned across the Wasatch Front. Online at [BonrueBakery.com](#).*

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# What's Going On from page 3

United States, offering stunning ocean views and proximity to South Beach's attractions. Housed in a historic Miami Modern building, the hotel will feature 100 rooms, luxury amenities, a spa, pool, and a restaurant by Michelin-starred chef Niko Romito. Bulgarihotels.com. Photo is the Bvlgari in Beijing.



downtown revitalization and next to the renovated EverBank Stadium, home of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

**SunStop Acquires 10 Florida C-Stores:** The Big Boss retail sites will be integrated into the SunStop convenience store network. **Southwest Georgia Oil Company Inc., parent company to SunStop, has completed the acquisition of Big Boss Stores' portfolio of 10 convenience retail locations,** the company's commercial and wholesale fuel and warehouse operations and additional real estate sites, according to a press release sent to NACS. The Big Boss retail sites are located throughout the Florida panhandle and will be integrated into Southwest Georgia Oil's SunStop convenience store network, according to the company. "Nine of the acquired locations will operate under the SunStop banner, expanding the company's total store count to 91 across Georgia, Florida and Alabama. The company also plans to open its 92nd SunStop store later this year as part of its continued growth strategy," the retailer said.



**Aman Miami Beach** in the Faena District will blend serene luxury with Miami's vibrant energy. Set in the restored Art Deco Versailles Hotel, the 56-suite hotel offers ocean views and direct beach access. Guests and residents will enjoy an Aman Spa, exclusive dining, and the private Aman Club. Aman is slated to open in 2027.

**Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residences Jacksonville,** opening in 2027, will feature 170 luxury rooms and suites, 26 private residences, **four dining outlets including a rooftop restaurant,** a world-class spa, pools, gym, and event spaces. The project will come together also with Shahid Khan through Iguana Investments Florida LLC (Iguana Investments). It will be located in the Jacksonville Shipyards by the St. Johns River. It will be part of the city's

Mendicino, President and CEO of Port of Subs®." Portofsubs.com.

**Smokey Mo's BBQ has signed a franchise agreement to develop four new restaurants in Austin, TX.** Father-son entrepreneur duo Cody and Stephen Cox will own and operate the locations. Along with its expansion plans, Smokey Mo's has recently introduced a refreshed restaurant design. Founded in 2000, Smokey Mo's currently has 23 locations across Texas.

**Huey Magoo's,** known for its premium, hand-crafted chicken tenders, "The Filet Mignon of Chicken®," **has signed a development agreement in Texas,**



**Port of Subs®,** the neighborhood sandwich franchise serving up fresh, made-to-order subs, is accelerating its growth in Washington with ambitious regional development plans. Building on the brand's existing footprint in Bellingham, Mill Creek, Mountlake Terrace, Tulalip, **Regional Developer Ben Pearson has opened his first store in Spokane as part of a 10-unit development deal** across Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. As the brand accelerates its growth across the Inland Northwest, Port of Subs® is also expanding its presence in Seattle with its first location coming to Seattle Tacoma International Airport in Spring 2026, and goals

**continuing its rapid national expansion.** The development will span key counties including Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, and Montgomery, further strengthening the brand's growing footprint in the state. The latest agreement brings on the SMR Capital Group, a seasoned ownership team with extensive experience in multi-unit operations, franchise development, and business scaling across diverse industries.

**AeriTek Global Holdings LLC, a portfolio company of Mill Point Capital LLC recently announced the completion of the acquisition of the foodservice refrigeration and HVAC assets of National Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Products, Inc., operating under the Continental Refrigerator and National Comfort Products brands.** The acquisition further expands AeriTek's presence in the U.S. foodservice equipment market, positioning the Company as a leading commercial foodservice refrigeration

See WGO page 12

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# Michelin-Star pedigree meets market disruption

Chef Brandon Olsen and entrepreneur Michael Held launch As We Do Chocolate Company

Toronto, ON - As We Do Chocolate Company Inc. has officially announced its launch, aiming to fill a massive gap in the North American market by becoming Canada's premier scaled, chef-led, bean-to-bar chocolate producer. Founded by world-class chef Brandon Olsen and veteran entrepreneur Michael Held.

While Canada is projected to consume over \$5.4 billion in chocolate in 2025, nearly all premium supply for the hospitality and foodservice sectors is currently imported from large European conglomerates. As We Do is purpose-built to disrupt this model by offering high-quality, Canadian-made chocolate produced at scale using cutting-edge Italian machinery.

The company's portfolio is designed to serve two distinct markets: Wholesale Hospitality, providing professional grade pellets, cocoa butter, and batons for chefs and bakeries; and Retail/Gifting, featuring premium chocolate bars and custom-labeled corporate gift solutions.

The partnership between Chef Brandon Olsen and entrepreneur Michael Held brings together two rare profiles to ensure that As We Do Chocolate achieves both world-class product excellence and disciplined operational growth. By fusing elite culinary artistry with proven expertise in scaling profitable businesses, the founders are uniquely positioned



to build Canada's next great chocolate company.

Brandon Olsen (Co-Founder): A renowned chef and chocolatier with decades of experience at elite institutions such as Thomas Keller's The French

Laundry. Known for creating Toronto's "most Instagrammable dessert," the Ziggy Stardust Disco Egg, Olsen is transitioning from chocolatier to chocolate maker to oversee every step of the bean-to-bar process.

Michael Held (Co-Founder & CEO): A seasoned business builder who previously founded LifeSpeak Inc. from scratch, scaling it to a \$50M ARR business and taking it public at a half-billion-dollar valuation. Held brings nearly 35 years of experience in strategic growth and capital management to ensure As We Do captures substantial market share.

"I have spent two decades working in some of the world's best kitchens, and I've always seen a glaring need for a high-quality, Canadian-made chocolate that chefs can actually rely on at scale," said Brandon Olsen, Co-Founder. "As We Do is about reclaiming that craft. We aren't just making another chocolate bar; we are building a new gold standard for the industry, focusing on pure, natural ingredients and the meticulous care only a chef-led company can provide."

"Canada is a nation of chocolate lovers, yet we source almost all of our premium product from elsewhere. The opportunity to build a scaled, sustainable, and truly Canadian champion in this category is immense," added Michael Held, Co-Founder and CEO. "By combining Brandon's world-class culinary know-how with my experience in scaling profitable, strategic businesses, we are uniquely positioned to win. Our Kickstarter is the first step in inviting our community to join us in building what will become one of the world's greatest chocolate companies."

Online at [Aswedochocolate.com](http://Aswedochocolate.com).

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## MEET THE FOUNDERS

Ata and Christian

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# Americas Food & Beverage Show

## Featured City Miami

Miami, FL - The Americas Food and Beverage Show & Conference, will be held this year from September 14-16. The location will be the Miami Beach Convention Center once again, located at 1901 Convention Center Dr. This event is the largest Americas focused food and beverage trade show in the Western Hemisphere. The show's goal is to assist companies in growing their market share and increasing two-way trade within the US and throughout the Americas. Held annually in a variety of cities

around the world, the Americas Food and Beverage Show in Miami is aimed at retailers and food service buyers from the US and all of Latin America and the Caribbean. Products from across the United States and Latin America are displayed by geographic location and accompanied by special theme pavilions, awards and competitions. The Organizers include The World Trade Center Miami and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Virginia-based. All detailed information on this Show is available at [Americasfoodandbeverage.com](http://Americasfoodandbeverage.com).



# TRN FEATURED R MIA

## Norwegian Luna Sailing from M

*Norwegian Luna offers round-trip Caribbean Cruises through April 2027 visiting NCL's beautiful resort-style destinations, Great Stirrup Cay, the Bahamas and Harvest Caye, Belize.*

Marking the Company's 21st ship in its cutting-edge fleet, Norwegian Luna, sailing roundtrip from Miami beginning April 4, 2026 through November 2026. At 1,056 feet long, 156,300 gross tons, and accommodating approximately 3,550 guests at double occupancy, Norwegian Luna boast an overall 10 percent size and capacity increase from Prima Class ships, [Norwegian Prima](#)® and [Norwegian Viva](#)®. Norwegian Luna is designed as a twin sister-ship to [Norwegian Aqua](#), the Company's latest new vessel that was delivered March 2025. Both ships were built by renowned Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri, with interior designs across the ship created by world-class architects AD Associates, Piero Lissoni, Rockwell Group, SMC Design, and Studio Dado.

The most spacious cruise yet, offering Specialty dining options which include: Cagney's Steakhouse; specializing in Premium Black Angus Beef and exceptional seafood, this American-style steakhouse is second to none. With classic cocktails, an extensive wine list, and attentive service. Le Bistro; A



French cuisine at its finest. Surround yourself in classic décor and plates of rich cuisine such as escargot and coq au vin. An all house-made menu. Los Lobos; A contemporary Mexican restaurant celebrating traditional flavors with a modern twist. From hand-crafted margaritas to carne asada to Ibarra chocolate ice cream topped with dulce de leche sauce, the chefs at Los Lobos focus on unique flavor combinations. Palomar; Norwegian's first-ever Mediterranean restaurant. Offering a selection of dishes from both the land and sea in a casually sophisticated setting, including an extensive wine and

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## RESTAURANT CITY

# MIAMI

## Cruise Ship 2026 Miami in April




cocktail selection for beverages that are perfectly paired with the European cuisine. Hasuki; their Japanese specialty restaurant where skillful chefs prepare shrimp, steak, chicken and fried rice on a large steel grill.

Above are a few of the Specialty restaurants. Along with casual dining options, this ship offers it all. Bars and Lounges, and several complimentary dining restaurants.

Norwegian Luna represents the evolution of NCL — a brand built on freedom, flexibility and delivering experiences that resonate with every type of traveler. Curated to deliver attractions

for families with the NCL-exclusive Aqua Slidecoaster, and the all-new Moon Climber and Luna Midway activities; as well as adult-only experiences like the late-night production of 'LunaTique™,' Norwegian Luna is the perfect ship for multigenerational travelers looking for a warm vacation in the tropics. With itineraries designed to bring guests to Great Stirrup Cay, our private island in the Bahamas, they will have the opportunity to experience firsthand the highly anticipated offerings that our guests are raving about.

Marc Kazlauskas is the President of Norwegian Cruise Line. 



According to Food & Wine's [2026 Global Tastemakers Awards](#), the Champagne Bar at the Surf Club in Surfside has been named the best hotel bar in the United States. The accolade comes from a panel of more than 400 culinary and travel experts, who evaluated bars across the country based on atmosphere, creativity and overall hospitality. It is located inside the ultra-luxurious Four Seasons Hotel.



Miami-Dade Farmers Month will be held November 1st to November 30th this year. Stretching from [Pinecrest](#) all the way to the Redlands, [Homestead](#), [Florida City](#) and the edge of the [Everglades](#), this rural enclave is the heart of Miami's agricultural and farming community. To celebrate the annual Miami-Dade Farmers Month, some of the participating Farms are; Tinez Farms, Knaus Berry Farm, The Little Farm,

The Berry Farm, and Pintos Farm. These show a different side to the region. Included will be Schnebly Redland's Winery & Brewery, the southernmost winery in the U.S. They brew beer and produce tropical fruit wines along with hosting winery tours and tastings.

Truffle Temptations has opened at [2333 Salzedo Street](#) in Coral Gables. The grand opening included champagne and special tastings. The new shop carries items such as truffle salts, truffle oils, truffle pastas, truffle sauces, plus fresh truffles and more. This is a Retail store and an online ordering for these specialties. You can visit the company online at [www.thetruffletemptations.com](http://www.thetruffletemptations.com).



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## US Foods accepting applications for annual scholarship offering

Scholarships aim to empower next generation of culinary talent and fuel skilled labor for foodservice operators

Rosemont, IL - US Foods Holding Corp. (NYSE: USFD), one of America's largest foodservice distributors, announced that applications for the 2026 US Foods Scholars program are now being accepted through May 11. The company's signature scholarship program offers 20 need-based scholarships of \$20,000 each to students pursuing degrees in Culinary Arts or a related discipline, including Culinary Science,

Baking and Pastry Arts, Nutrition, Food Business Management and Hospitality Management.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of chefs and head cooks will grow 7% between 2024 and 2034, with about 24,400 openings per year throughout the decade. US Foods Scholars provides an avenue for aspiring young talent

See **US FOODS** page 14

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10	Co-owner	Victor Erazo	3975 Holco	Norcross	30092	470 395-7936		victor@peachtree-cafe.com		
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# The 2027 NY Restaurant Show debuts the Pizza Tomorrow Summit Pavilion

Dedicated Pavilion expands resources for pizzeria and Italian restaurant operators; U.S. Pizza Team competitions

New York, NY – The [New York Restaurant Show](#) has announced the launch of the [Pizza Tomorrow Summit Pavilion](#), a dynamic new show floor destination dedicated to the business, craft, and culture of pizza. The Pavilion brings together leading suppliers, innovative products, and targeted education – all focused on one of the most influential segments in restaurants and foodservice.

With the highest concentration of pizzerias in the United States – over 1400 in the five boroughs alone and thousands within 50 miles of NYC – the New York tri-state area represents a powerful and trend-setting market. The Pizza Tomorrow Summit Pavilion is a hub where operators can discover targeted products, education, and networking opportunities for pizzeria operators, Italian restaurant owners, and chefs.

“The addition of the Pizza Tomorrow Summit Pavilion brings an exciting new dimension to the New York Restaurant Show,” said Glenn Celentano, Partner/CEO, Restaurant Events. “With New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut serving as the epicenter of American pizza culture, this is the perfect stage to showcase the incredible talent, creativity, and energy of the pizza community. We’re excited to expand the Pizza Tomorrow Summit brand to meet the demand of the Northeast market, which

is long overdue for a sourcing and educational event.”

The Pavilion builds on the success of the [Pizza Tomorrow Summit](#) brand in other key markets, including its flagship event in Orlando and the pavilion at the California Restaurant Show in Anaheim.

formulation and ingredient sourcing to equipment and technology solutions.

As a centerpiece attraction within the Pavilion, the [United States Pizza Team](#) will bring its nationally recognized competitions to New York, adding an interactive and high-energy

“Bringing the Pizza Tomorrow Summit Pavilion to the New York Restaurant Show is a natural evolution for both brands,” said Brian Hernandez, U.S. Pizza Team Director. “New York is one of the most influential pizza markets in the world, and this Pavilion creates a dedicated space for operators to explore new ideas, discover the latest products, and celebrate the craft at the highest level. The addition of the U.S. Pizza Team competitions adds an experiential element that will energize the show floor and create meaningful connections across the pizza community.” 

The 2027 New York Restaurant Show will once again bring together thousands of restaurant and foodservice professionals for three days of education, networking, and discovery. With expanded programming and new features like the Pizza Tomorrow Summit Pavilion, the event continues to evolve to meet the needs of a changing and growing industry. For more information about exhibiting, sponsoring, or attending, [click here](#).

The [Pizza Tomorrow Summit](#) brand continues to build strong momentum nationwide. The Summit has been named one of *Trade Show Executive Magazine's* Fastest 50 Growing Trade Shows for two consecutive years. The 2026 event will take place October 25–27 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, co-located with the [Florida Restaurant Show](#), while the Pavilion will also return to the [California Restaurant Show](#), August 23–25 in Anaheim – further extending its reach across key regional markets. All events are produced by [Restaurant Events, LLC](#), a trade show management company in the restaurant and foodservice industries.



Strong attendance, exhibitor growth, and industry feedback from those events reinforced the need for a dedicated pizza-focused environment in the Northeast; one of the largest and most influential pizza markets in the world.

Within the Pavilion, attendees will experience a dynamic mix of product showcases, live demonstrations, and education designed to help operators improve efficiency, profitability, and menu innovation – from dough

element to the show floor. Open to professional pizza makers from across the country, the competitions will feature both culinary and athletic categories that highlight the full range of skills required in today’s pizzeria environment. Events will include freestyle dough acrobatics, fastest pie-making, box folding, and signature pizza challenges, offering attendees a front-row seat to the creativity, precision, and showmanship of top industry talent.

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Create the highest quality frozen desserts (ice cream, gelato, sorbet, custard, etc.) with this 2.75 qt. air cooled countertop batch freezer. This unit can make a batch of product but also features a continuous churning design to freeze mixes of ice cream, gelato, sorbet, custard, and more, combining cooling and stirring to reach the perfect serving consistency of any frozen dessert. Additionally, this batch freezer maintains the product structure for an indefinite time within the batch freezer cylinder. It's the perfect addition to ice cream shops, restaurants, bars, and coffee shops.

The cylinder can be refilled with fresh liquid mix as your product is sold. This machine's inverter adjusts the motor speed for a variable beating speed to better control the gelato consistency. Variable beating speeds allow the unit to produce special recipes like granita and frozen coffee cream.

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Website



# Outdoor seating from page 1

bins, HVAC units, or noisy equipment

Consider sightlines for both guests and staff

## 6. Add lighting to set a mood

Lighting is one of the biggest missed opportunities.

Use:

- ◆ String lights
- ◆ Lanterns
- ◆ LED candles
- ◆ Pathway lighting
- ◆ Under-bar or under-bench lighting

Warm lighting = ambiance. Harsh lighting = cafeteria.

## 7. Incorporate greenery and design elements

Plants soften the space and create privacy.

Options:

- ◆ Tall planters as natural dividers
- ◆ Potted palms or bamboo
- ◆ Herb planters (bonus: culinary use)
- ◆ Living walls
- ◆ Design elements:
- ◆ Branded signage
- ◆ Outdoor rugs
- ◆ Accent pillows (weatherproof)
- ◆ Fire pits or fire tables (if allowed)

## 8. Weatherproof the operations

Outdoor seating requires operational planning:

- ◆ Storage for cushions
- ◆ A plan for sudden rain
- ◆ Weighted bases for umbrellas
- ◆ Slip-resistant flooring
- ◆ Outdoor POS or handhelds
- ◆ Bus stations nearby
- ◆ Clear table-numbering system

## 9. Train staff for outdoor service

Outdoor dining changes the rhythm.

Train staff on:

- ◆ Longer walking distances
- ◆ Wind-sensitive items (menus, napkins)
- ◆ Beverage refills
- ◆ Clearing tables quickly
- ◆ Managing pests
- ◆ Greeting guests outside

## 10. Maintain it like a showpiece

Daily:

- ◆ Wipe furniture
- ◆ Sweep debris
- ◆ Check umbrellas
- ◆ Refresh plants

Weekly:

- ◆ Deep clean floors
- ◆ Inspect lighting
- ◆ Tighten furniture hardware

Monthly:

- ◆ Pressure wash
- ◆ Re-oil or treat wood furniture

## 11. Security

In light of the current conditions in the world today where we have seen vehicles driven on sidewalks and into businesses restaurant operators should know who to contact for outdoor seating security.

### 1. Local Law Enforcement

- ◆ Why: They can inspect your site, advise on barrier placement, and help restrict vehicle access near seating areas.
- ◆ What to ask for:
- ◆ Site inspection for security gaps
- ◆ Emergency Action Plan development
- ◆ Coordination for street closures or traffic rerouting

### 2. CISA Protective Security Advisor (PSA) Program

- ◆ Agency: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
- ◆ Services Offered:
- ◆ Vulnerability assessments
- ◆ Risk mitigation tools
- ◆ Public gathering protection strategies
- ◆ Contact: Visit CISA PSA Directory ([cisa.gov](http://cisa.gov) in Bing) to find your regional advisor.

### 3. Insurance Agent and Legal Counsel

- ◆ Why: To ensure liability coverage and compliance with local ordinances.
- ◆ Topics to discuss:
- ◆ Barrier liability
- ◆ Temporary structure safety
- ◆ Emergency protocols

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# What's Going On from page 6

manufacturer. As AeriTek's third North American acquisition in less than eight months, the transaction underscores continued momentum in executing its strategic growth plan. For more info, visit [Continentalrefrigerator.com](http://Continentalrefrigerator.com) and [Nationalcomfortproducts.com](http://Nationalcomfortproducts.com).



built for quick service restaurant (QSR) environments. Designed to solve a persistent bottleneck in high-volume kitchens, Toast EZ combines dual

## ◆ Puttshack, the leading social entertainment concept reimagining mini golf and dining, has debuted a new U.S. menu with 50+ food and beverage additions.

Developed based on guest feedback and market research, Puttshack offers fan favorites that are bold and made to share. "This is Puttshack's biggest menu change to date," says Billy Caruso, Puttshack Food and Beverage Director. "Puttshack has grown and evolved tremendously since we opened our first U.S. location and it was time our menu reflected that. Our new menu offers the foods you loved growing up, reimagined for the flavors you love now." The global headquarters is in Chicago, Illinois, with a U.K. office in London, England. For more information, visit [puttshack.com](http://puttshack.com).



◆ Prince Castle, a global leader in restaurant operational efficiency has announced the launch of Toast EZ, a next-generation commercial toaster

independent lanes, two belts, intuitive tap-to-switch icon controls, and efficient infrared radiant heat to deliver speed and consistency—even as menus expand and bread variations multiply. "Operators are under more pressure than ever," said Christine Peggau, Sr. Product Manager at Prince Castle. "Menus are more complex. Labor is stretched. Every second counts. Toast EZ brings together faster performance, dual-lane flexibility, and practical maintenance features to support daily operations...We

engineered a solution that helps teams move faster, stay consistent, and protect uptime," Peggau added. As automation and operational optimization continue to reshape food-service, even small improvements in

speed can deliver meaningful impact at scale — especially for multi-unit and franchise operators. [Princecastle.com](http://Princecastle.com).

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# US Foods from page 10

to pursue a career in this growing and exciting field. Since its launch, the program has awarded nearly \$2.5 million in scholarships to more than 120 students. Program alumni have propelled their careers by starting their own businesses, joining prestigious restaurant groups, building successful baking and pastry professions, and receiving mentorship from leading chefs throughout the industry.

*The US Foods Scholars program is open to all U.S. culinary or hospitality students pursuing a two- or four-year postsecondary degree.*

“To support the next generation of culinary talent in their pursuit of a foodservice career, it is an honor to officially open applications for the 2026 class of US Foods Scholars – our largest annual scholarship offering to date,” said Lisa Whitson, vice president of corporate communications, US Foods. “As we support culinary students nationwide with the financial support to fulfill

their culinary dreams, we know we are helping to fuel the foodservice talent pipeline with motivated and worthy students.”

The US Foods Scholars program is open to all U.S. culinary or hospitality students pursuing a two- or four-year postsecondary degree. The program’s scholarships enable recipients to manage education-related expenses such as tuition, fees, books, supplies and room and board, and provides access to exclusive professional development opportunities, including learning engagements with US Foods experts and participation in customer-facing events.

Beginning today, US Foods, in partnership with Scholarship America, is accepting applications through an online application portal, available on the company’s website at [usfoods.com/scholars](https://usfoods.com/scholars). The deadline to apply is May 11, 2026, at 3:00 pm CT. **TR**

**About US Foods:** With a promise to help its customers Make It, US Foods is one of America’s great food companies and a leading foodservice distributor, partnering with approximately 250,000 customer locations to help their businesses succeed. With more than 70 broadline locations and approximately 90 cash and carry stores, US Foods and its 30,000 associates provides its customers with a broad and innovative food offering and a comprehensive suite of e-commerce, technology and business solutions. US Foods is headquartered in Rosemont, Ill. [USfoods.com](https://usfoods.com).

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Paris - SIAL Network continues to strengthen its position as a global leader dedicated to B2B agri-food trade and food innovation. For over 60 years, SIAL has been shaping the global food ecosystem by connecting industry leaders, driving innovation, and facilitating trade across continents.

Today, SIAL Network brings together more than 17,000 exhibitors and over 700,000 professionals worldwide across 12 major events spanning Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

The launch of SIAL Vietnam in 2026 marks a new milestone in SIAL Network’s development. Vietnam represents one of the most dynamic and fast-growing food markets in Southeast Asia, driven by strong domestic demand, rapid urbanization and increasing international trade flows. This event will be co-located with Food Expo, a well-established exhibition with more than 10 years of presence.

This strategic move reinforces SIAL’s positioning in Southeast Asia, a key region responding to increasing global demand for diversification and new growth markets.

This expansion is further supported by the continued success of SIAL’s major events worldwide. In Asia, SIAL Shanghai stands as a key pillar of the network and ranks as the fourth largest food exhibition in the world.

In North America, SIAL Canada is expected to reach record-breaking levels, reinforcing its role as a strategic gateway to the region.

*Across all its markets, SIAL Network provides companies with direct access to strategic buyers and concrete business opportunities.*

Meanwhile, SIAL Paris, the flagship event of the network, continues to set a global benchmark for the industry. This year’s edition is expected to be even larger, with over 8,000 exhibitors and 295,000 industry professionals, once again demonstrating SIAL’s unparalleled ability to bring together the entire global food value chain under one roof.

Across all its markets, SIAL Network provides companies with direct access to strategic buyers and concrete business opportunities. Acting as a true global business accelerator, it supports companies in identifying new growth markets, navigating evolving supply chains and responding to increasing demand for diversification. **TR**

# TR Today's Restaurant

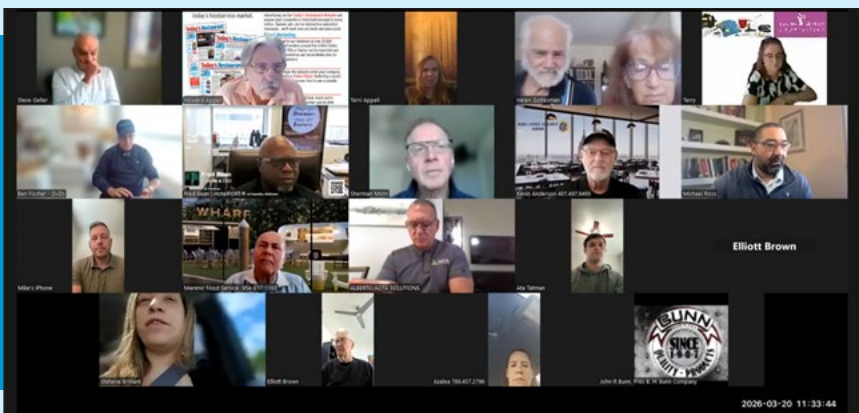
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# Today's Restaurant

## NETWORKING GROUPS

Two Exclusive Groups of Top Vendors Servicing the Restaurant & Hospitality Industry

### CHAPTER 1 ♦ VIRTUAL MEETINGS ♦ FRIDAYS 11 AM

#### ADVERTISING / MARKETING / PUBLISHING

Today's Restaurant Howard Appell / Terri Appell  
561.870.9663 ♦ 561.620.8888 ♦ www.trnusa.com

#### AI MARKETING SERVICE

Cornucopia AI Ata Tatman  
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#### AI SCHEDULING

X-Shift AI Noah Marbach  
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#### ATTORNEY

Evan D. Appell, P.A. Evan D. Appell  
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#### BUSINESS BROKER

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#### COFFEE ROASTERS

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#### EQUIPMENT FINANCE

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954.817.1183 ♦ jmarenic@marenic.com

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917.767.1960 ♦ michael@mkrmgmt.org ♦ www.mkrmgmt.org

#### GENERAL CONTRACT

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Christian@thechergroup.com ♦ www.thechergroup.com

#### HANDS ON RESTAURANT COACH

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#### PAYROLL

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#### RECRUITING

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#### MARKETING, ADVERTISING & VIDEO PRODUCTION

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#### TELECOMMUNICATION/INTERNET/CELLULAR

AOTA Solutions Alberto Flores  
alberto@aotasolutions.com

#### TYING MACHINE

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#### UNIFORMS

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317.385.2539 ♦ terry.lena@wwof.com ♦ www.wwof.com

### CHAPTER 2 ♦ VIRTUAL MEETINGS ♦ FRIDAYS 9 AM

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#### COST REDUCTION SPECIALISTS

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msmith@eragroup.com ♦ https://usc.eragroup.com

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rick@life-lineinsurance.com ♦ www.life-lineinsurance.com

#### LEASE/FINANCING

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#### MANAGEMENT RECRUITER

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#### PAYROLL

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#### POS/PROCESSING

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Spectrum Jessica Kirby  
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We are looking for new members! Call for info or to join us at the next meeting!

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