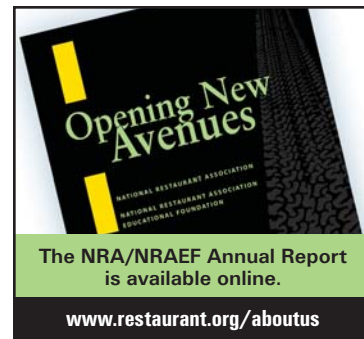


# Report

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## Association Names Dawn Sweeney President and CEO

**D**awn Sweeney will join the National Restaurant Association Oct. 1 as the president and chief executive officer.

"Sweeney is an extraordinary executive with a record of success leading business and trade associations," said Association Chairman Richard E. Rivera, chairman and CEO of Sarasota, Fla.-based Rubicon Enterprises LLC.

"She has the leadership, business and marketing skills that will enable her to build on the National Restaurant Association's success as we seek to grow.

"Her breadth of experience will be critical as we move forward."

Sweeney has been president and CEO of AARP Services Inc. for the past five years. In that role, she was responsible for generating more than \$700 million in annual revenue for AARP's for-profit entity. AARP Services develops market-changing products and services for millions of older Americans. Under Sweeney's leadership, the organization recorded double-digit sales and revenue growth each



Dawn Sweeney

of the past four years.

"This is an enormously exciting time for the restaurant and hospitality industry," Sweeney said. "I share the vision of the members of the board, staff and the state restaurant association partners for broadening and strengthening the reach of the Association and look

forward to this unique opportunity."

Among her 25 years of experience in marketing and advocacy, Sweeney's previous leadership includes positions at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the International Dairy Foods Association, where she began her career.

She succeeds Steven C. Anderson, who resigned in February. Since then, Peter Kilgore, the Association's general counsel, has been acting interim president and CEO.

## Restaurateurs Make Sure Presidential Candidates Understand Industry Issues

**A**s presidential campaigns gear up, the National Restaurant Association is seeking restaurateurs to act as liaisons for declared candidates. Last fall, the NRA decided to recruit at least one restaurant-industry volunteer for each campaign.

Each volunteer works with the campaign

of his or her choice to help recruit fellow restaurateurs, says Ned Monroe, NRA vice president of political affairs.

The campaigns assign them to specific tasks to help the candidates. At this point in the race, the candidates mostly need help

*Continued on Page 2*



Want even more timely information? Visit the Association's Web site: [www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org)



**CHALLENGE YOUR THINKING** Register for the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance Conference, Aug. 5-7, to broaden your perspectives on how inclusion strategies can help you grow. Visit [www.mfha.net](http://www.mfha.net) for more information.

## Association Seeks Restaurateurs for Campaign Contacts

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with grassroots networking and fundraising, he says.

Sam Facchini, owner, Arena Corp., Las Vegas, is among the NRA members trying to get to know the presidential candidates and familiarize them with restaurant-industry issues.

Facchini, a former New Yorker, volunteered for former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani's presidential campaign.

"There's a candidate for everyone," Facchini says.

"We need to get restaurateurs of both parties involved in the campaigns," says Bill Anton, chairman, Anton Airfood, Washington, D.C. "They can be conduits to get our voice heard in the process after the election."

Anton is working with former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney's campaign and plans to

support Fred Thompson. The former senator from Tennessee is expected to announce his candidacy this summer.

Restaurateurs need to get to know the candidates at this early stage in the presidential race so restaurateurs aren't surprised after the winner takes office, says Rosalyn Mallet, president, Caribou Coffee, Brooklyn Center, Minn. The Iowa caucus, considered the first official step in the campaign process, is Jan. 14, 2008, less than six months away. Mallet is a key contact for the campaign of Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.

"We have to get involved now," says Matt McMahon, owner, Outback Steakhouse McMahon Restaurants Group, Scottsdale, Ariz.

"We can't wait until the month

before the election."

Anti-business activists are constantly working to influence legislators to pass laws that would hurt the restaurant industry, says McMahon, who plans to support Sen. Thompson. And those activists are already volunteering for presidential campaigns, too.

At this stage in the race, the

Michigan. He also plans to host a fundraiser for Thompson, whom he got to know in May at the National Restaurant Association 2007 Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show. The former senator was the keynote speaker at the Show.

Thompson also impressed McMahon at the Show.

"He answers questions when

**'We need to get restaurateurs of both parties involved in the campaigns. They can be conduits to get our voice heard in the process after the election.'**

candidates have more competition, Facchini notes. They're trying to set themselves apart from the other candidates, especially in states with early primaries or caucuses, he says. And restaurants are perfect venues for candidates to meet people.

"That's where we come in," Facchini says. "Restaurateurs are ideally suited to provide high-profile venues for fundraisers — places where citizens can go and media like to put on camera."

Anton is going a step further. He's planning a Romney fundraiser in early August at his summer home in Northwest

asked, even when he doesn't know the answer," McMahon says.

For example, when an NRA Show attendee asked Thompson a question about casino gambling, he acknowledged not knowing enough about it, McMahon says. Then Thompson pledged to find out more about it because it was important to that attendee.

"He has the ability to reach out to people," McMahon says, comparing Thompson to former President Ronald Reagan. "He understands people. He speaks in common tones. That's what we need in a president."

### How you can get involved

- **Visit your candidate's local campaign headquarters.** "Walk in, and introduce yourself," says Bill Anton, chairman, Anton Airfood, Washington, D.C. "They'll find a way to get you involved. They have a lot of opportunities."
- **Contact your state restaurant association and/or its political action committee.** "Every state restaurant association would love to hear from you," says Matt McMahon, owner, Outback Steakhouse McMahon Restaurants Group, Scottsdale, Ariz.
- **Get out the vote.** Encourage your employees to vote and help them get registered to vote, regardless of their party affiliation or whom they support. "We have 12.8 million people in this industry," McMahon says. "That's a lot of people to get out and vote."
- **Get involved in state and local campaigns or grassroots issues.** Restaurateurs can impact the vote and legislation at every level, says Rosalyn Mallet, president, Caribou Coffee, Brooklyn Center, Minn. "Restaurateurs need to make sure the candidates understand the restaurant industry's issues and how their decisions affect us, as well as how restaurants affect the economy," she says.

Interested in getting involved? Visit [www.restaurant.org/government/grassroots](http://www.restaurant.org/government/grassroots). Contact Ned Monroe at [nmonroe@dine-out.org](mailto:nmonroe@dine-out.org) or (800) 424-5156, ext. 5917.

## Be a 2008 Presidential Convention Delegate

You don't have to be a party VIP or elected official to participate in the 2008 presidential conventions. There are two types of delegates. Statewide at-large delegates typically are elected officials or party leaders. But delegates or alternate delegates elected through congressional districts generally are grassroots activists.

That's where you come in. First, endorse a presidential candidate, then volunteer for and contribute to his or her campaign. Contact the presidential campaign and the local party leadership and ask them to place you on the ballot as a congressional district presidential delegate or alternate delegate.

## Road to the 2007 Public Affairs Conference

Sept. 25-26



### Beltway Bound: Attendees empowered to defend friendly, defeat harmful legislation



Members of the Texas Restaurant Association delegation attend the 2006 National Restaurant Association Public Affairs Conference.

Bob Westbrook

**WHO:** Bob Westbrook, owner, CiCi's Pizza, Tyler, Texas.

**YEARS AT CONFERENCE:** Four.

**LOCAL INVOLVEMENT:** I've been active in my state restaurant association for 10 years. I joined the Texas Restaurant Association's political action committee eight years ago, when Houston was facing a wage increase. If it passed, I knew it was a matter of time before a similar hike would make it to my market in East Texas. An increase like that would have crippled my business, so I got active. Eventually Texas became one of 12 states to pass a law preventing cities from passing wage hikes higher than the state wage.

**TALKING HEADS:** Those of us who attend the NRA Public Affairs Conference have created this nexus of information for our chapters. We've become spokespeople for the restaurant industry locally and obtained a lot of media time. We're informed about the issues, and we can passionately get the message across about what we're trying to defend or defeat.

**GENERATING INTEREST:** I make it a point to seek out new state board members or new chapter presidents. I pick up the telephone and invite them to attend the NRA Public Affairs Conference. I tell them why they have to go: that we can accomplish something collectively.

**NETWORKING 101:** I've always found great value in visiting with my peers and getting ideas for ways to tweak my business. The Public Affairs Conference is a lot of fun; you get to meet people from all over the country — people who face the same issues as I do.

Visit [www.restaurant.org/paconference](http://www.restaurant.org/paconference) to register for this year's National Restaurant Association Public Affairs Conference, Sept. 25-26 in Washington, D.C.

# Are You Ready for the Minimum Wage Increase?

**M**ake sure you're ready for potential financial, legal and employee-relations issues connected with the federal minimum wage increase.

The first of three incremental raises Congress approved in May takes effect July 24. That day, employers who follow the Fair Labor Standards Act must pay \$5.85 an hour instead of \$5.15 for starting wages.

Businesses in states with higher starting wages must comply with state law.

Confused? Consult an employment law attorney about whether FLSA applies to you and whether your company must pay the federal or state starting wage, suggests Peter Kilgore, general counsel, National Restaurant Association. The Association also offers a members-only, state-by-state wage chart at [www.restaurant.org/legal](http://www.restaurant.org/legal).

Read on for more tips:

- Post updated labor law posters where all employees can see them. The Fair Labor Standards Act requires employers subject to its minimum wage provisions to post a notice explaining the act where all employees can read it. The Department of Labor

### Wage hike schedule

July 24, 2007 .....	<b>\$5.85 an hour</b>
July 24, 2008 .....	<b>\$6.55 an hour</b>
July 24, 2009 .....	<b>\$7.25 an hour</b>

offers compliance posters at [www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/posters/flsa.htm](http://www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/posters/flsa.htm). Contact your state restaurant association about state posters.

- Be on the lookout for potential employee-relations issues related to the wage increase. Those who now earn more than \$5.85 might expect raises, and the effects could ripple throughout your hourly labor force, says Eric Athey, a partner in Kegel, Kelin, Almy & Grimm. The Lancaster, Pa., attorney specializes in wage and hour issues.

If your budget can't handle the additional strain of raising wages throughout your work force, look for non-monetary compensation, such as preferable scheduling assignments, Athey recommends.

- If you use outside contracts for payroll administration, make sure the vendor knows about every employee who will receive an increase, Athey says.

- Let your lawmakers know how the law affects you.

## About the Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act sets standards for minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping and child labor, etc. The standards affect more than 100 million full- and part-time workers.

The act generally applies to businesses that make at least \$500,000 a year and engage in interstate commerce. Some employees of businesses that make less than \$500,000 annually might be covered by the law because those employees are individually engaged in interstate commerce.

For example, a restaurant worker who handles credit card transactions could be covered by the law, while other co-workers aren't, says Peter Kilgore, general counsel, National Restaurant Association. Credit card transactions involve interstate commerce, according to the Department of Labor.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

# Behind the Apron: Long-Time Waitress Creates Industry Tribute

## Feature Film Portrays Servers as Caring, Smart, Human

*Patti DiVita, a waitress for almost 25 years, wrote, cast, produced, directed and financed "Did I Say Thousand Island?," a movie about the restaurant industry. She says she created the feature film so viewers would have more respect for servers. Find out more at [www.didisaythousandisland.com](http://www.didisaythousandisland.com).*



Patti DiVita

of famous people — George Burns, for one — when I worked at Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tenn. But the truly interesting customers are those who interact with you, those with whom you have a bond for the time you are together. I've kept in touch with customers over the years, and it's kind of neat. I love to make people smile when they walk out the restaurant door. Half the time, I walk them out.

**REAL-LIFE DEPICTION:** I made the movie because I was sick of being portrayed as someone I am not. In many types of media — not just movies — servers are portrayed as less than human, stupid or indifferent. But we are smart, and we care about our customers

and want to please them. Why else would we work so hard? You get a great feeling when customers leave and show appreciation for what you've done: made their dining experience wonderful. No money can replace that.

**NAME GAME:** The movie title came to me in the middle of the night. When telling customers the salad dressings available, you say, "We have bleu cheese, peppercorn ranch, honey mustard and raspberry vinaigrette." They say, "Oh, just give me the Thousand Island." You immediately think, "Did I say Thousand Island?" I tested this out on a few servers, so I knew I had the right title.

**WORLD'S AN OYSTER:** I shopped my movie at the National Restaurant Association 2007 Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show,

and people seemed excited about it. I was trying to get the word out that the movie existed and see who could help me. One of them is Federation of Dining Room Professionals founder Bernard Martinage. He's working with me to turn the movie into a shorter, educational piece for industry workers. I'm really excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.

**REAL JOB:** I hope restaurant people embrace the movie and enjoy it as a tribute to what and who we are, and the lifestyle we enjoy. And I hope they share it with others. There's nothing wrong with being a server if you love it. Don't listen to those who ask, "When are you going to get a 'real' job?" It is a real job. And it's a really hard job.

—As told to Pamela Lessard

**JOB CHOSE ME:** I was studying industrial/organizational psychology at the University of Illinois when I got a job at the Round Barn Banquet Center in Champaign, Ill. I fell in love with waitressing — everything about it. It wasn't just about making good money. Real restaurant people — the people who stick with the job for life — are a lot of fun.

**LASTING BONDS:** I waited on a lot