

2026 MMBA Annual Conference

(Open to Municipal Liquor Operations & Invitees)



Cragun's
RESORT ON GULL LAKE

The 2026 MMBA Annual Conference will be held Saturday, April 18 – Tuesday, April 21, at Cragun's Resort, in Brainerd, Minnesota.

Anoka Cannabis Update

Here from the Anoka Cannabis management team about Minnesota's first municipal cannabis retail store.

Featured Speaker Mike Max: Inside the 2020 Riots, How it Changed the World and My Life

WCCO Television sports director Mike Max is making a return visit to the conference!

Mike was on the front lines for nine days of the George Floyd riots in 2020 with what many consider the greatest reporting performance in the history of the Minnesota media. He learned we are all fighting for our own version of justice.

Overcoming the Fear of Public Speaking

Municipal liquor managers and other public employees are often required to speak to various sized groups: Councils, public, facility events, staff meetings etc. For many the response is APPREHENSION & FEAR.

If you find it hard to even say your name when the pressure is on, you're not alone. Speaker Sara Cross will explore how to recalibrate the internal chaos scrambling your mind to create a focused, meaningful presentation you can deliver... and enjoy it!

The EH, B, C's of Canadian Whisky

Led by 375 Park Avenue Spirits, take a deep dive into the Canadian Whisky category including a certification quiz at the end of the presentation. It is an incredibly innovative, yet highly misunderstood, spirit category.

Making Wine FUN Again

Wine is currently a very challenging sales category, so it's time to go back to the basics and make wine FUN again.

Led by sommelier Leslee Miller, this session goes beyond the typical region, category etc. tasting. It is based on her appearances on KMSP's The Jason Show where she has paired wine with Halloween Candy, State Fair foods and more.

Real World Employee Retention Strategies for City Run Retail Leaders

City-owned liquor stores aren't just a revenue source; they're a public trust. But in today's shifting landscape of THC-infused products, workforce shortages, and private-sector pay competition, the challenge isn't just staffing; it's creating a culture where employees want to stay, grow, and serve with pride.

This program, led by award winning speaker Lisa Ryan, is designed to help MMBA members retain talent, build engaged teams, and navigate the evolving realities of municipal retail. It addresses how to lead effectively, even when traditional incentives like bonuses or gift cards are off the table.

Women's Leadership Breakfast - ALL are invited!!!! (Men, you must eat!)

Based on successful Beverage Alcohol Retailer Conference events, this session brings together representatives from across the industry to talk about equal representation, mentoring opportunities, challenges in the workplace and more.

Strengthening Public Service: Workforce Challenges

Tracking the challenges in local government workforces, and in direct response to concerns raised by their members, the Association of Minnesota Counties and the League of Minnesota Cities partnered with the Citizens League to develop a relevant policy project concerning workforce challenges in the public sector.

The determined goal was to research and explore recruitment and retention challenges and opportunities facing local governments statewide and develop recommendations and solutions to support a robust and thriving public workforce.

The Citizens League is pleased to share their methods and findings in this report.

Demystifying Sake

Sake, saké, or saki, also referred to as Japanese rice wine, is an alcohol beverage of Japanese origin made by fermenting rice that has been polished to remove the bran. Despite the name Japanese rice wine, sake, and indeed any East Asian rice wine, is produced by a brewing process more akin to that of beer and not wine.

A sake and pizza pairing presented by New France Wines will highlight the versatility of this product.

The Essentials of Marketing

Ready to build a solid marketing foundation that drives results? This seminar will equip you with the core principles and practical strategies you need to succeed.

Former 3M executive and mentor / facilitator at MB Mentors Pauline Allison will focus on the 6 Pillars of Marketing Success: Product, People, Positioning, Price, Place, and Promotion.

On and Off Sale Breakout Roundtables

Back by popular demand, separate on and off sale breakout roundtables will explore specific issues of participants. Bring your questions and share your successes.

<p>There will also be a Knob Creek barrel selection, MMBA Annual Meeting & Elections, great educational tasting dinners, a Beverage Alcohol Server Training, Vendor Showcase and time to have fun & develop relationships with other attendees & industry representatives.</p>
