

THE
MUNICIPAL
LIQUOR STORE

Volume 72, Number 5, 2013/2014

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
MINNESOTA BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION
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How to Increase Your Share of the Marketplace Pie

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DIRECTORS

BRENDA VISNOVEC
(President)
Lakeville Liquor
20195 Holyoke Ave.
Lakeville, MN 55044
952-985-4901

MICHAEL FRIESEN
(Vice President)
Hawley Liquor
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Hawley, MN 56549
218-483-4747

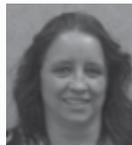
NANCY DRUMSTA
(Sec./Treas.)
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Delano, MN 55328
763-972-0578

CATHY PLETTA
Kasson Liquor
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Kasson, MN 55944
507-634-7618

SHELLY L. DILLON
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Callaway, MN 56521
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Edina, MN 55435
952-903-5732

CANDICE WOODS
Liquor Hutch
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320-587-2762



ON THE COVER

Often, the statistical information you see in trade publication articles is given utilizing a pie chart.

When you look at a pie chart about where customers shop, think of the favorite pie grandmother always made for you. It was very delicious, and baked it especially for you.

Yes, grandmother had a slice, and so did Mom and Dad. But, the majority of the pie was for you.

Unfortunately, today you now have a little brother or sister, perhaps several, and now even the cousins want to have a piece of your pie.

Business today is much the same as grandmother's pie. It was, and still is, very desirable. But, a growing number of competitors think what you sell is one of the best pies to be a part of.

See Page 7 for ways you can get a bigger slice or a second helping of that delicious pie.

GARY BUYSSE
Rogers Liquor
22350 South Diamond Lake Road
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MMBA President's Message



Brenda Visnovec
President

Well congratulations everyone! We made it through another year and another holiday season!

Now my current beau would not appreciate hearing this, but I told an employee last week the holiday season in the retail liquor business is much like a new relationship! When it first arrives, it seems refreshing, exciting and new..... But give it about a month and it make's your head hurt and you just can't wait for it to go away!!

Cheers to moving on to the New Year!

I'm going to set myself Ten New Year Business Resolutions and suggest as manager's you do the same. Hopefully mine lasts longer than my exercise program did!

1. I am going to be much more prompt at responding to emails and telephone. Ironically, it's the people who are my closest allies and friends in the industry who I abuse the most. I assume we communicate so often I will get back to them next time we speak, and it never works out that way!
2. I'm going to come up with a new plan or idea that will not only benefit our liquor operation but the city as a whole. A new promotion or a means in which we can do something unique and different. Something that speaks of community value.
3. I'm going to stop and make sure employees understand how much I appreciate them. A simple thank you or conversation with the individuals who continually work hard to make us look so good is a pretty small investment of my time.

4. Realize vendors are our partners, but just like your spouse, you don't always need to listen or agree with them. Work with them in order to find balance in inventory selection and promotions.
5. Discard the clutter!! I have become a paper hoarder and I've heard the first step to recovery is to confess.

I keep everything in the belief I will need it "someday". Well in today's world with scanners and hard drives, why do I save paper copies? Scan it and file it to my computer.

6. Relates to #5 – Clean up and reorganize my computer files!!!
7. Discover a new avenue in which to make a speech or presentation. This was one of my biggest hurdles to overcome in my career! Public speaking made me nauseous! My hands would shake, my knees would rattle. I have by no means perfected public speaking, but I am now much more comfortable in front of council, or at meetings. It's a quality I believe always needs more practice!
8. Find other ways to make the consumer loyal to our operation! Whether this is through email promotions, Facebook, club

memberships or other means. They say it costs 13 times more to gain a new customer then to retain one!

9. Mentor, coach and succeed! I believe hierarchy is incredibly important, but the individual who is your direct support should know or be exposed to all of the knowledge you have. Why do so many managers feel the need to stock the beer cooler, or work the deliveries, but they will not share their knowledge or wisdom with their direct supports. Knowledge is power, make sure you share it!
10. Lastly, I want my career not to be the excuse my exercise program failed. I believe as managers and directors, we need to balance our life and work properly. Ensure that your job is done and your time is in, but then take some time out to smell the roses. Or at least a good Cabernet!!

Finally, if you need a means in which to learn more about managing an effective operation, MMBA Boot Camp is just around the corner! It's a great avenue for new managers to learn about municipal operations, or for those more seasoned, a time to refocus and establish some new goals.

Happy New Year's to all!

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*Based Nielsen MPLS Liquor Beer Brand Report 2012



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How to Increase Your Share of the Marketplace Pie

By MMBA Conference Presenter
Tom Shay

Often, the statistical information you see in articles in trade publications is given to you utilizing a pie chart.

For example, using a pie chart, the writer may show you the results of a survey taken to ask consumers where they shop.

Many times, the pie chart is accompanied by a second pie chart that indicates how the pie was divided several years earlier.

There are two changes that you will frequently observe when looking at the changes over a period of years.

The first is to see which types of businesses have gained in percentage share as compared to those types of businesses that have lost a part of the market.

The other change is that there are one or two new groups of retailers that now have entered the market and own a percentage of the overall trade.

When you look at the pie chart, think of the favorite pie grandmother always made for you. It was very delicious, and she had baked it especially for you.

Yes, grandmother had a slice, and so did Mom and Dad. But, the majority of the pie was for you.

Unfortunately, today you now have a little brother or sister, perhaps several, and now even the cousins are wanting to have a piece of your pie.

Business today is much the same as grandmother's pie. It was, and still is, very desirable. But, a growing number of competitors think that what you sell

is one of the best pies to be a part of.

Are these retailers your competitors? If a dollar that could be spent in your store is spent in another store, then you most definitely have a competitor.

It does not matter why the other retailers have begun to offer what you have sold for years. The important question is, "What are you going to do about it?"

The number of potential customers has not increased as significantly as has the number of choices of places for the customer to shop.

Fortunately for you, as the number of retailers increases, the focus of the competition has frequently been price.

A study gives us reason to be excited. In a study of 20,000 consumers, the five greatest demands in order of importance were:

- Have inventory on hand
- Save my time
- Sell value to me
- Have attractive visual merchandising
- Have qualified help available.

Where is price in this equation? We do not know, but this survey does indicate there are at least five more important things to the customer.

Try taking this five step approach to increasing your market share:

First, visit the competitors to see how they operate. How is their merchandise displayed? What product categories do they specialize in? Be knowledgeable of what they are doing and do take note of their prices.

Second, take special note of what they do not do. Do they have extended hours? What do they have a small

selection of that you have a superior selection of? Do they offer additional services? What accessory items do they sell? In short, look for their weaknesses.

Thirdly, look for success stories of retailers not in your trade area. Trade magazines are an excellent place to start your search. Call or visit other businesses and ask for ideas that they have tried.

Your fourth step should be to establish a plan, schedule, and budget to implement any additions and changes to your business.

You may be adding new products, a specialty selection, or just rearranging your sales floor. Are products grouped according to how a customer selects them or are they arranged according to some manufacturer's plan-o-gram?

Regarding the usage and enjoyment of the products you sell, someone has to educate these customers. Don't you want it to be you?

The fifth step is to begin to promote.

Note that promotion and advertising are definitely not the same thing. An example of an excellent promotion by a business is to find a non-profit organization and become an active part of their efforts.

Research shows that customers change their opinion of a business in a positive manner because of the participation of the business in the community.

Grandmother's pie was always delicious; that is why we wanted a bigger slice or a second helping. Your business should be the same way - looking for more.

You Are a Community Asset

On November 20 a non-descript male entered Rogers Wines and Spirits, made a quick walk through and left, apparently not finding the titillating item or price point he was seeking.

He was the first potential customer of the day and the professional (homage to Daryl Rosen) noticed the vehicle he was driving as he left the parking lot.

She had made a quick perusal of the shelves prior to starting her day so it was apparent to her that prior to his stealthy departure our “friend and customer” had gotten a really great five finger discount on a E&J VSOP traveler.

The following day Kim (we’ll call her Kim since that’s her name) approached me in the back room to explain the occurrence of the previous day.

She asked me to search the previous day’s video in an attempt to capture a clear image of our discount shopper so his heavenly visage could be distributed amongst the staff for obvious reasons.

We then walked back out to the showroom floor - Kim to the counter to assist the newly arriving consumer and me to my office.

Imagine our mutual surprise when we learned the first customer of the previous day had returned to “shop” again!

He was still in the entry, making a quick exit when Karen (we’ll call her Karen since that’s her name) informed us another bottle of E&J VSOP was missing!

Events such as this remind me that municipal liquor isn’t all about the money.

Our insurance providers recognize this and award us with lower rates for higher levels of coverage.

More law enforcement agencies recognize this and increasingly include us as partners.

The Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome recognizes this and respects our intentions.

Our legislators recognize this and listen when we speak.

My staff recognized customer service does not begin and end at the “point of purchase.” (If you’re not familiar with this concept, you may need a server training. Call me.)

Kim was observant and noticed the customer, the vehicle and the theft. On the subsequent day this information proved itself to be invaluable!

The well stocked shelves were an obvious indicator that something was missing and the night staff should be

commended for that.

Kim communicated the previous day’s events to Karen via an incident log, which alerted Karen to check the shelf on the second attempted theft.

The story ended this way....

The customer was stopped in the parking lot, returned the bottle, parked his pickup and was apprehended by the Roger’s Police.

He was homeless, had no money to pay for the previous day’s theft and was charged with second degree DWI. This was his third DWI in ten years and he registered a respectable .26!

Due to an alert, professional staff we protected a city asset and removed a serious threat from our highways.

Represent your city proudly! You are a community asset.

Gary Buysse
Rogers Wine & Spirits

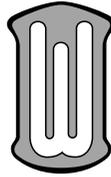
Pricing Thoughts

By Jon Taffer

- Price is only an issue when a customer doesn’t have a positive reaction to an experience.
- “Absolute value is a simple price comparison, whereas perceived value is the result of your quality, experience and business dynamics.
- Pricing has a great deal to do with perceived value. Perceived value (a REACTION) beats absolute value every time.
- The exact science of pricing is in covering costs and making a profit. The art of pricing is finding the sweet spot, the magic number that suits the experience

you offer and meets the expectations of your market.

- Every business owner needs to ask themselves, “What do I need to do to delight a customer and win his or her loyalty?” The answer will never be about price, even though spending habits have changed.
- Nobody leaves a great bar and talks about the prices. They only leave a lousy bar and talk about the prices.
- Raise your bar to match your prices - don’t lower your prices to match your bar! Don’t be cheaper - be better!
- Effective cost control only succeeds when management is engaged.



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LEONARD KREUSCH

Ellendale Liquor on the Upswing

By Al Strain, Faribault Daily News

Though the Ellendale Municipal Liquor store recorded a loss for the second straight year in 2012, officials are predicting the store will produce a profit in 2013.

During a special meeting before the Ellendale City Council, liquor store manager Pete Paulson discussed the finances of the liquor store.

A meeting is required by the state if any municipal liquor store records a loss in two years of a three-year period.

In 2012, the liquor store recorded a loss of \$2,443. That figure climbed to \$13,893 after depreciation. Though it was a loss, 2012 was an improvement over 2011, when the liquor store lost \$26,250.

“We lost a lot of money in 2011,” said city council member Dean Reiter. “It’s still a loss but it was certainly what we had, given the improvements that we’ve put into it.”

In 2011, the report from the state auditor’s office showed Ellendale ranked 200th out of the 208 Minnesota municipal liquor stores when it came to

net profits.

The liquor store began serving food in 2012 as a way to help the business make more money.

“We had a few expenses related to opening the kitchen still in (the 2012 report),” Paulson said. “We didn’t have those this year.”

As for this year, things have been looking up for the liquor store fund.

Through the end of November, the liquor store recorded nearly \$364,815 in revenues with \$358,321 in total disbursements. That means the liquor store is showing a \$6,494 profit through the first 11 months of this year.

Food sales have accounted for nearly \$68,000 of the revenues at the liquor store. City Clerk Lee Ann Hojberg said the store has about \$36,000 in the bank through the end of November.

“Everything is reconciled. All the checks are in and everything is totally in at this point as of Nov. 30,” Hojberg said.

Ellendale Mayor Roger Swearingen was pleased with the progress the

liquor store’s finance has made in the last two years.

“We’re gaining. We’re making money,” Swearingen said. “We have documentation showing we are progressing forward and making the best possible progress we can at this point.”

The nearly \$6,500 profit comes in a year when the liquor store fund paid for everything related to the annual Ellendale Days Celebration, Paulson said.

Paulson also discussed the possibility of discontinuing selling on-sale liquor in the restaurant on Sundays, at least partly.

In November 2012, Ellendale voters approved an ordinance that allowed the Grill to sell on-sale liquor on Sundays. The off-sale liquor still cannot be sold, per state law. Paulson reported that most Sundays haven’t brought a lot of liquor sales.

“I definitely think it’s not what we should be doing on Sunday,” Paulson said. “We’re not making money on Sundays.”

Paulson said Sundays in the fall, when football has been on, have been better, but for the most part it has not been a profitable day.

“I’m guessing when we look at it, it will be an overall loss on Sunday,” Paulson said.

Paulson said he’d like to bring more hard numbers back to the council during the first part of 2014 to evaluate if the Grill should be open on Sundays. Other options include closing the restaurant on Sundays or being open seasonally.

Wine Club Success in Longville

The MMBA Office received the following note:

It was brought to my attention that people in town were looking for something to do on the week nights and that a wine club was mentioned once or twice.

So I asked Kate, our wine expert here

in the store, if she would take on the major part of this project.

Last night was the first one and with barely any advertising we sold 137 bottles of wine at a 40% mark-up(50% if they didn't buy a case).

*Nancy Raines
Longville Lakes Bottle Shop*

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Tax on Non-Alcohol Products

At a recent MMBA Regional Meeting a member asked about taxing fruit juices.

According to the Minnesota Department of Revenue:

Soft drinks

Soft drinks are taxable. The exemption for food products does not apply to soft drinks.

“Soft drinks” means nonalcoholic beverages in liquid form that contain natural or artificial sweeteners.

“Sweeteners” includes corn syrup, dextrose, invert sugar, sucrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, molasses, evaporated cane juice, rice syrup, barley malt, honey, and artificial sweeteners.

Soft drinks do not include beverages that contain milk or milk products; soy, rice, or similar milk substitutes; or greater than 50 percent vegetable or fruit juice by volume.

Product labels should be reviewed to determine if the product falls within the guidelines of a taxable soft drink.

Taxable soft drinks include:

- bottled or canned water that contains sweeteners
- coffee and tea drinks that contain sweeteners
- fruit ades, drinks, or nectars that contain sweeteners and have 50 percent or less fruit juice or no fruit juice percent shown on label
- nonalcoholic beer or near beer, such as O’Doul’s and Sharps (contains barley malt, a sweetener)
- Pedialyte
- sports drinks (Gatorade, Powerade, etc.)
- soda pop
- sparkling Catawba juice containing sweeteners and 50 percent or less fruit juice

Examples of nontaxable items:

- apple cider
- beverage powders or concentrates

- bottled or canned water that does not contain sweeteners
- coffee or tea beans, grounds, leaves, or powders
- nutritional drinks that contain milk or milk substitutes
- Frappuccino® (contains milk)
- fruit or vegetable juices that contain more than 50 percent juice by volume even if they contain sweeteners
- milk and drinks that contain milk

Bottled water

Unsweetened bottled water sold in any size container is exempt because it is a food product. This includes carbonated or non-carbonated water or flavored water if no sweetener is added. Delivery charges for non-taxable water are also exempt.

Bottled water is still taxable when sold through a vending machine or when the seller provides eating utensils.

Internet Policy

Recently, a member, concerned about employees using the Internet, asked for a sample policy to address the situation.

Here is a good example from Brooklyn Center:

Information Technology Policy 3.10 Internet

The Internet is available to users for research, education, and communications directly related to the mission, charter, or work tasks of the City.

Users must follow copyright laws regarding protected commercial software or intellectual property.

Users of the Internet should minimize unnecessary network traffic that might interfere with the ability of others to make effective use of this shared network resource.

Use of the Internet through City computers may be revoked at any time for abusive conduct.

Users are responsible for adhering to City standards when browsing the

Internet. Failure to adhere puts the City and the individual at risk for legal or financial liabilities, potential embarrassment and other consequences.

The City retains the right to use management software to monitor end user activity. This software may monitor and limit Internet activity in order to ensure the most efficient use of this valuable resource.

Before publishing to a publicly viewable web site, content must be approved by the designated department contact.

Texas Hold'em Summary

By Patrick McCormack, Minnesota House Research

Texas Hold'em

Texas Hold'em is an increasingly popular form of poker in which each player is dealt two cards and there are five common cards. In 2005, the legislature enacted a law authorizing Texas Hold'em tournaments that are conducted according to certain requirements.

Does Minnesota prohibit all forms of betting?

Minnesota law generally prohibits betting and the operation of any location where betting is permitted or promoted.

A "bet" occurs when parties agree that one party will give another party money, property, or some other benefit in the event of an outcome that is dependent upon chance, even if the outcome is also dependent upon an element of skill.

Over time, Minnesota has established a number of statutory exceptions to the general prohibition of betting. For example, Minnesota law authorizes the operation of a state lottery, bets on horse races at licensed racetracks, and private social bets that are not part of or incidental to organized, commercialized, or systematic gambling.

Minnesota also allows gambling on some social skill games (e.g., cribbage, bridge, gin) and social dice games (e.g., "shake-a-day," "3-2-1," "who buys"), provided that they meet certain conditions.

When are card tournaments legal?

Minnesota permits gambling in

certain card tournaments, as long as the tournaments do not provide any direct financial benefit to the promoter or organizer and the value of all prizes awarded in a tournament does not exceed \$200.

Until June 2005, only ten card games were permitted under these circumstances: cribbage, skat, sheephead, bridge, euchre, pinochle, gin, 500, smear, and whist. However, as of June 4, 2005, Texas Hold'em tournaments and contests are also permitted, subject to the restrictions described below.

Gambling in tournaments consisting of any other social skill game is illegal in Minnesota.

When are Texas Hold'em tournaments legal?

Texas Hold'em tournaments are subject to the same restrictions as other social skill game tournaments in Minnesota. However, there are additional legal requirements for Texas Hold'em tournaments that do not apply to other social skill game tournaments.

Can players be charged to participate in a Texas Hold'em tournament?

Players in Texas Hold'em tournaments cannot be charged any fee or be required to give any consideration (something of value) as a condition of participation. In other words, players must be able to participate in a Texas Hold'em tournament for free.

Can prizes be awarded in a Texas Hold'em tournament?

Prizes can be awarded in Texas Hold'em tournaments. However, as is the case with tournaments involving other social skill games, the value of all prizes awarded in a single tournament

cannot exceed \$200.

With respect to Texas Hold'em, the law further specifies that the value of all prizes awarded to an individual winner of a tournament at a single location may not exceed \$200 per day.

Is there an age requirement to play Texas Hold'em ?

To participate in a Texas Hold'em tournament or contest, a player must be at least 18 years old.

Can players with disabilities participate in Texas Hold'em tournaments?

Minnesota law requires the organizer or promoter of any Texas Hold'em tournament to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made for players with disabilities.

In addition to making other accommodations to tournament tables and cards, a tournament organizer or promoter has to make sure that Braille cards are available for blind players and that the cards visible to the entire table are announced.

Who regulates Texas Hold'em tournaments?

The Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division (AGED), Department of Public Safety, in conjunction with local law enforcement authorities, has jurisdiction over Texas Hold'em tournaments and other social skill game tournaments.

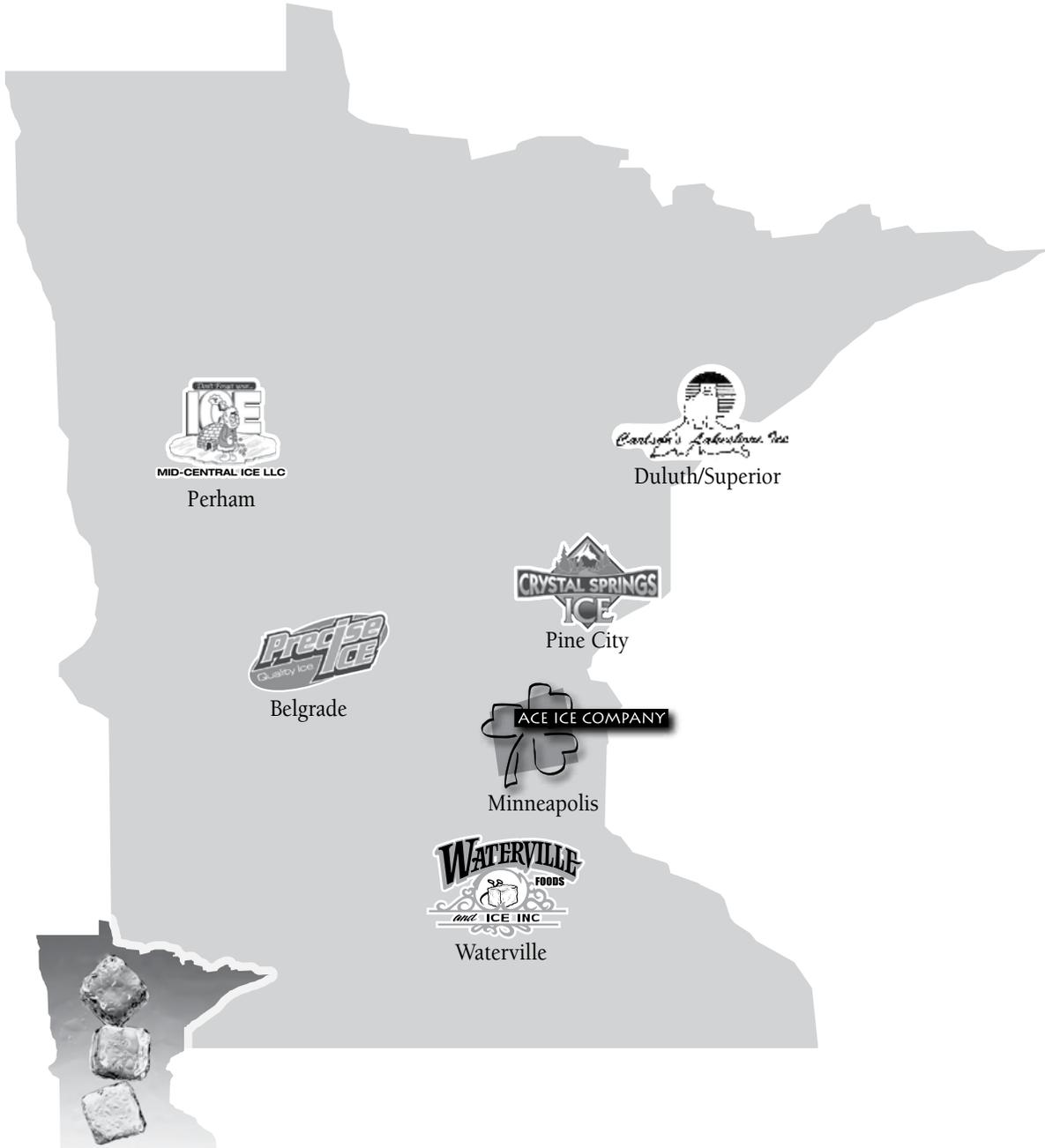
The Gambling Control Board has no jurisdiction over these tournaments.

It is appropriate to contact a local county attorney with questions about the conduct of Texas Hold'em tournaments.

Regardless where you are, we've got you covered.

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Mama snowman
was cutting carrots
for a soup for the
dinner of her kids
and husband.

Soon he came up
to her
and guess what he
said?

“Honey! Have you
seen my nose?”

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2014 MMBA Boot Camp Schedule of Events **(Subject to Change)**

(Important Note: Dress for ALL Events is Casual)

Monday, February 18, 2014

1 PM – 2:30 PM = How to Better Utilize Computer Inventory Control Systems

1 PM – 2:30 PM = Beverage Alcohol Server Training

3 PM – 5 PM = Personnel Management 101, Laura Kushner, League of Minnesota Cities

5 PM – 7 PM = Resort Cocktail Reception

8 PM – 10 PM = Social Event

Tuesday, February 19, 2014

7 AM = Breakfast

8:00 AM – 8:40 AM = Welcome, Basics of Municipal Liquor General Session & Who Needs Jon Taffer

8:40 AM – 9:00 AM = Complementary Responsibilities of City Councils & City Management Staff

9:10 AM – 10:10 AM = Review of Individual Facilities Breakout

9:10 AM – 10:10 AM = City Officials Roundtable Breakout

10:15 AM – 10:25 AM = Financial Statements, Pricing & Inventory Control General Session

10:30 AM – 11:45 PM = Financial Statements, Pricing & Inventory Control General Session

& Setting of 3 Goals Breakouts

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM = Lunch

1:10 PM – 1:20 PM = Shelf Set, Traffic Flow, Specials, POS, Vendor Services General Session

1:25 PM – 2:40 PM = Shelf Set, Traffic Flow, Specials, POS, Vendor Services

& Setting of 3 Goals Breakouts

2:50 PM – 3:00 PM = Security, Theft, Internal Controls General Session

3:05 PM – 4:20 PM = Security, Theft, Internal Controls & Setting of 3 Goals Breakouts

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM = Reception

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM = How to Conduct a Wine Event Dinner featuring Ste. Michelle Wine Estates

Wednesday, February 20, 2014

7 AM = Breakfast

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM = Minnesota Liquor Law

9:00 AM – 9:45 AM = Effective Employee Training

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM = Break

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM = Personnel, Customer Service, Scheduling General Session

11:00 AM = Wrap Up / Home

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Beam Global Spirits & Wine

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Address: 3601 W. 76th Street Suite 20
Edina, MN 55435
(952) 830-1131
(952) 830-0123
(612) 961-147
justin.ashton@beamglobal.com
www.beamglobal.com

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Address: 16101 W 78th Street
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nboyer@deliexpress.com
deliexpress.com

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Contact: Jon Chance
Address: 248 Cynet Pl
Orono MN 55356
612-718-6862
(952) 285-6862
jon.chance@millercors.com
www.millercors.com

Minnesota Independent Ice Manufacturers Association

Contact: Steve Kelly
Address: 2900 5th Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN 55408
(612) 824-9600
(612) 824-1974
steven@sharmrockgroup.net
www.aiceice.com

National Alcohol Beverage Control Association

Contact: Jim Sgueo
Address: 4401 Ford Avenue #700
Alexandria, VA 22302-1473
703-578-4200
703-820-3551
jim.sgueo@nabca.org
www.nabca.org

Ste. Michelle Wine Estates

Contact: Randy Dobratz
Address: 16540 Hyland Court
Lakeville, MN 55044
(952) 250-9837
(952) 891-1560
randy.dobratz@smwe.com
www.smwe.com

Trinchero Family Estates

Contact: Terri Uitermarkt
Address: Minnesota District Manager
17800 Firebird Court
Farmington, MN 55024
(952) 432-2661
(952) 421-2681
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tuitermarkt@tfewines.com
www.tfewines.com

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Contact: Jon Stelley
Address: 1654 Marthaler Lane
W. St. Paul, MN 55118
(651) 455-0410 ext. 213 - office
(651) 455-7799
jon.stelley@arcticglacierinc.com
www.arcticglacierinc.com

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Contact: Jeff Van Schoick
Address: 5552 Queen Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55410
(612) 760-2313
jvanschoick@pabst.com
www.pabst.com

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Contact: Jeff Lange
Address: 6531 106th Ave North
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(763) 428-1048
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jlange@bacardi.com
www.bacardi.com

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Contact: Mike Feldhege
Address: 219 Red River Ave N
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(320) 266-5714
mfeldhege@coldspringbrewingco.com

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Address: 701 Decatur Ave. N
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(612) 275-9900
(763) 253-0481
http://daileydata.com/

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Contact: Matt Larson
Address: 3653 Lincoln St NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418
(612) 760-5289
(952) 435-7216
matt.larson@diageo.com
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Cell: (612) 353-7918
Fax: (612) 824-4670
chris.gotziaman@diageo.com
www.diageo.com

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Contact: Brandon Colpitts
Phone: (612) 840-4272
Address: 629 2th Ave NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418
Email: Brandon.Colpitts@ejgallo.com

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Contact: Mike Bamonti
Address: 701 Industrial Blvd. NE
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www.jytaylorco.com

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Address: 1999 Shepard Rd
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www.johnsonbrothers.com

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Contact: Mike Juszcak
Address: 2928 Dean Parkway, Suite 51
Minneapolis, MN 55416
(612) 920-5433
(952) 881-7797
mike@lifemediacinc.com
www.lifemediacinc.com

LPA Retail Systems, Inc.

Contact: Derek Crockett
Address: 11799 County Rd 11, Suite 280
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 215-3851
Phone: Derek.Crockett@LPAretail.com

Majestic Fine Wines

Contact: Allison Quam
Address: 4026 Vincent Ave N,
Minneapolis, MN 55412
612.619.1848
Cell: allison.quam@majesticfinewines.com
www.majesticfinewines.com

Mike's Hard Lemonade

Contact: Nichi Mason
Phone: (952) 898-5576
cell: (612) 850-4988
Fax: (952) 898-4083
Email: nmason@mikeshardlemonade.com
www.mikeshard.com

Palm Bay International

Contact: Dominic M. Giuliani
Address: (612) 850-4988
Phone: 763-607-2556
Email: dgiuliani@palmbay.com
www.palmbay.com

Paustis Wine Company

Contact: Cody Olson
Address: 17300 Medina Rd, Suite 100
Plymouth, MN 55447
763-550-9545
Email: colson@paustiswine.com

Pernod Ricard USA

Contact: Will Arend
Address: 16280 Grinnell Avenue
Lakeville MN 55044
(612) 802-6774
will.arend@pernod-ricard-usa.com
www.pernod-ricard-usa.com

Retail Information Technology

Contact: Rick Feuling
Address: 1001 2nd Street South, Suite 100
Sartell MN 56377
(320) 230-2282
Cell: (320) 761-6423
Fax: (320) 230-1796
Email: rick@rite.us
www.rite.us

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Contact: Chris Morton
Address: 701 Industrial Blvd. NE, Suite B
Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 217-5197
(612) 217-5196
cmorton@southernwine.com

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Address: P.O. Box 149
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Email: sales@stanmorganassoc.com
www.stanmorganassoc.com

Total Register Systems

Contact: Brian Anderson
Address: 4215 Louisiana Avenue
New Hope, MN 55428
(763) 537-1906
(763) 537-1504
banderson@trs-pos.com
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Contact: Jennifer Vucinovich
Address: 101 East Fifth Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 466-8750
Fax: (651) 466-8910
jennifer.vucinovich@usbank.com
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Vinocopia

Contact: Marion Dauner
Address: 6636 Cedar Avenue South #300
Minneapolis, MN 55423
(612) 455-4000
(612) 455-4001
Cell: (612) 532-0406
marion@vinocopia.com
www.vinocopia.com

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Contact: Tony Baldwin
Address: 4300 MarketPointe Drive, Suite 600
Bloomington MN 55435
(952) 830-7353
(952) 830-3048
tony_baldwin@wellsfargo.com

Wirtz Beverage Group

Contact: Brad Redenius
Address: 489 N. Prior Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 646-7821
Brad.Redenius@wirtzbev.com
(651) 646-1497
www.wirtzbeveragegroup.com/
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Address: 25503 Russell Road
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(866) 629-6267
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Address: 2200 Florida Avenue South
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(320) 252-6441
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www.bernicks.com

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Address: 3360 Chelsea Road West
PO Box 336
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(763) 295-3347
(763) 295-4947
nick@dahlh.com

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Contact: Len Sage
Address: 8200 So. Humbolt Ave., Suite 302
Minneapolis, MN 55431
(952) 835-4505
(952) 835-4461
l.sage@dakotawww.com
www.dakotawww.com

Summit Brewing

Contact: Mark Stutrud
Address: 910 Montreal Circle
St. Paul MN 55102
(651) 265-7800
(651) 265-7801
mstutrud@summitbrewing.com

The Wine Company

Contact: Chris McDonnell
Address: 425 Minnehaha Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55103
(651) 487-1212
chris@thewinecompany.net
www.thewinecompany.net

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Address: 23 SE 4th Street #217
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(612) 353-6014
liam@2gingerswhiskey.com
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Address: 411 Main Street, Suite 303
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(651) 222-3296
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Address: 421 Mill Street West
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(507) 263-8400
john@cannonriverwinery.com
www.cannonriverwinery.com

Carlos Creek Winery

Contact: Tamara Bredeson
Address: 6893 County Road 34 NW
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(320) 846-5443
(320) 846-7191
tami@carloscreekwinery.com
www.carloscreekwinery.com

CNH Architects

Contact: Wayne Hilbert
Address: 7300 West 147th Street #504
Apple Valley, MN 55124
(952) 431-4433
whilbert@cnharch.com
www.cnharch.com

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Contact: Bob Thompson
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Contact: Paul Shuster
Address: 35295 State 64
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(218) 224-3535
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Fax: (507) 376-5951
Email: hagenm@frontiernet.net

Locher Brothers, Inc.

Contact: Tim Jonsky
Address: 18098 35th Avenue
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Address: RR2 Hwy 40 East
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dbergerson@madisonbottling.com
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(320) 766-1797
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www.stantec.com

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Address: P.O. Box 120
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jackstevenson@thorpedistributing.com
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Tushie Montgomery Architects

Contact: Gary Tushie
Address: 7645 Lyndale Ave. So., Suite 100
Minneapolis, MN 55423
(612) 861-9636
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gary@tmarchitects.com
www.tmiarchitects.com

Z Wines USA

Contact: Roy Goslin
Address: 1762 35th Avenue North
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(763) 745-0620
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