

Billions in revenue breaks records

March is the animal twofer: in like a lion, out like a lamb. It's the two-headed beast that characterizes our big news this month - the [lodging sector in Maine broke a billion](#) for the first time last year. Restaurants and hotels both shattered records by pulling in a combined \$3.8 billion in revenue (see growth chart in this issue).

Lion or lamb?

No doubt, these are strong numbers and 2018 is off to a good start, but concerns about labor availability continue to dog the industry.

To address this issue our ongoing focus is on education and workforce development. Alongside our partners at the University of Southern Maine and Maine Community College System, we are blazing a path for the next successful generation of hoteliers and restaurateurs.

Speaking of the next gen, our Lewiston Prostart team is on to Providence for the finals. Did you catch [the 207 segment?](#)

We look forward to seeing everyone at the MeRA Awards Banquet on March 27 followed by the Restaurant and Lodging Expo the next day.

We have some enterprising new exhibitors such as Bixby and Co. (see new member profile below) and a strong lineup of industry talks. Read on for the seminar breakdown in this issue as well as a surprise addition to our awards.

Stoke the fire and pour another cup as you peruse our March newsletter.

Kathleen Pierce
Director of Member Experience

Lewiston wins Prostart competition. On to Providence!





Congratulations to Lewiston Regional Technical Center's all-female team for wining the Maine ProStart Invitational.

Now they advance to the National Prostart Invitational (April, 27 - 29 in Providence R.I.) to compete against the best teams across the country. None of this would be possible without generous [donations from our sponsors](#).

The team went through the drill 30 times to pull off the wining meal: grilled pork chop with fig, citrus and balsamic compote, paired with sautéed brussel sprouts, sweet potatoes filled with goat cheese and pecans.

"These kids will move up in the field. Some day you'll see them as chefs and sou chefs," said their chef instructor Dan Caron. "These are top-notch students."

At the nationals they vie for scholarship money to further their careers in the restaurant and foodservice industry. We hear they are harvesting their own pig for this one!

Kudos to the other teams that competed this year: Runner up Northern Penobscot Tech Region III in Lincoln, Portland Arts & Technology School, Capital Area Technical Center in Augusta and Waldo County Technical Center.

While Northern Penobscot Tech Region III didn't win the cooking competition, they will represent Maine in the restaurant management category.

Let's go Maine!

New Member Spotlight: Bixby and Co.





Founder Kate McAleer in her Rockland chocolate factory.

You call yourself a "craft candy entrepreneur." How did you get that title?

A reporter at some point referred to me as a candy entrepreneur. I added craft as a way to further exemplify what we do at Bixby & Co.

What is bean-to-bar chocolate?

Sourcing cacao beans and making chocolate directly from the bean through to the end product. Most chocolate is made by large, global chocolate companies who source cacao beans in mass quantities and make chocolate or chocolate byproducts at a large, industrial level. As a bean to bar, craft chocolate maker, I seek, much like a craft brewer, to create chocolate crafted with care and close attention to ingredients.

What does chocolate offer to chefs?

Our chef chocolate is our single origin bean-to-bar in bulk quantities. It offers chefs a local chocolate option with differentiated terroir and flavor profiles.

Chocolate is an amazing ingredient and can function in numerous different capacities. We have cacao nibs - the roasted winnowed bean that is chocolate before chocolate - is the fruit in its purest form. Nutty, sometimes bitter - it is a great way to deliver some chocolate flavor with a crunch.

Why did you join the Association?

We joined the Maine Restaurant Association intending to grow the awareness of our craft chocolate and how it can be used in restaurants. We are more known for our retail products, but we are excited to provide chefs with a locally made, high quality chocolate.

Awards Banquet Bonanza



Cheryl Rust of Le Garage in Wiscasset took top honors last year.

The ultimate MeRA awards ceremony goes out on a high note on March 27.

This time next year we will be HospitalityMaine. As a final tribute, we've invited back former chefs and restaurateurs of the year to honor their contributions in building the industry and keeping it strong.

They join a new generation of restaurant leaders who will be celebrated.

At an upbeat dinner at Holiday Inn by The Bay, past winners will walk the restaurant "red carpet" in style. Who is returning? What will they be wearing? You don't want to miss our parade of restaurant royalty!

Tickets (\$85 or \$630 for a table) include dinner and a chef's reception. [Order here](#), call 207.623.2178 or email events@mainerestaurant.com. See you there!

Expo seminars



Make headlines, and attract the right customers

Need to increase public awareness in the media and on social media?

Join Angie Helton and Kristel Hayes from Northeast Media Associates for insider tips on how to get more positive



Angie Helton

attention for your property or restaurant.

Helton founded [Northeast Media Associates](#), a multimedia public relations firm, in 2006. Through the use of media channels including traditional press releases, television, radio, video production, and social media outlets, she and her team have been successful in consistently meeting and exceeding the unique PR goals of her clientele. 11 a.m.



Tracy Davis

The power of design: Ambiance drives business

Tracy Davis, renowned interior designer and founder of [Urban Dwellings](#), a leading New England design firm, shares insights on how smart design can reflect current trends while respecting the architectural integrity of the building and history of the space.

The designer behind The Francis Hotel in Portland and the Inn at Cuckolds Lighthouse explores global trends that impact both big and small design in hospitality. 12 p.m.

Managing Employer Liability for Sexual Harassment

Harassment awareness is peaking. The #MeToo movement and a dramatic increase in sexual harassment claims pose potential risks against which you should be prepared.

Lawyer Katy Rand of Pierce Atwood presents an overview of the law, and will discuss common misperceptions about sexual harassment claims as well as current trends.

Attendees gain understanding of the ways in which their businesses can be vulnerable to claims of sexual harassment, and how to manage the risk and negative publicity that accompanies such claims. 1 p.m.





Katy Rand

Each restaurant and hotel member receives two free tickets, associate members can purchase tickets for \$15 each, and non-exhibiting allied members are excluded. [Register here.](#)

**MAINE HOSPITALITY PERFORMANCE
INDEX FOR LAST THREE YEARS**

SALES IN MILLIONS

4000

3500

 **RESTAURANT REVENUE**

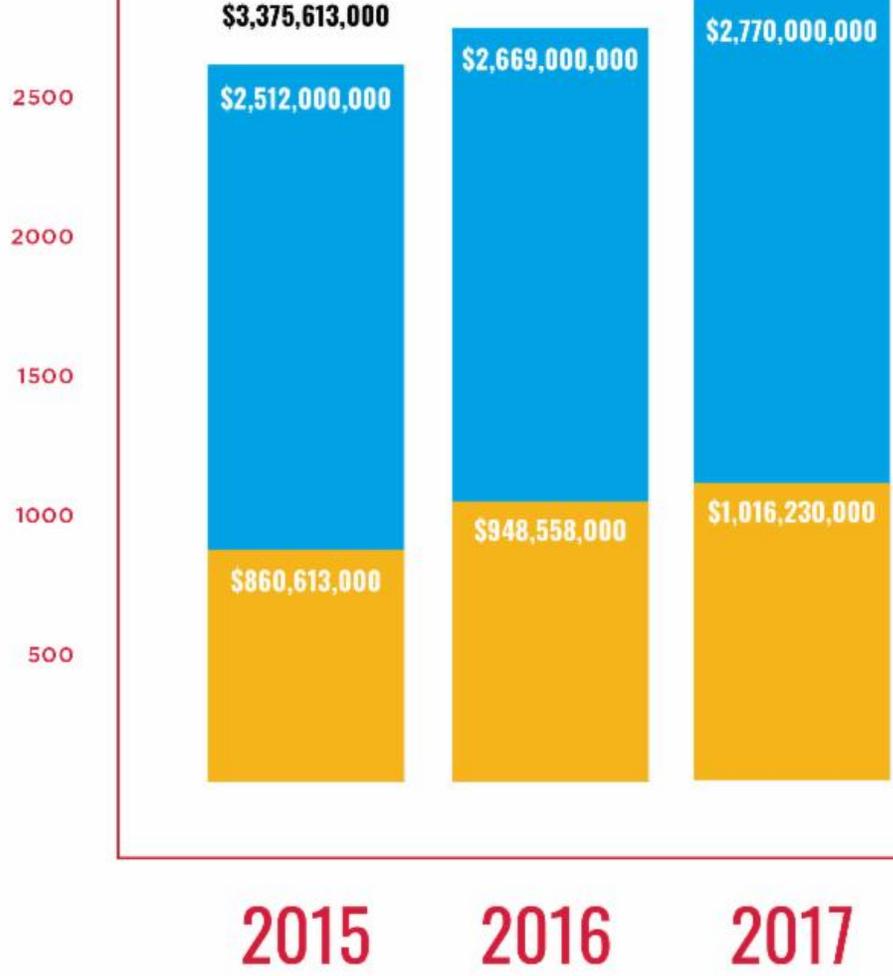
 **LODGING REVENUE**

\$3,617,558,000

+7%

\$3,786,230,000

+4.5%



* Source Maine Office of Policy and Management

Legislative Lowdown

Greg Dugal's bi-weekly e-report puts you in the know.



March edition highlights:

* H2B Visa update

* Rockland and South Portland dig in on short term rentals

* Overview of Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development department bills

[Maine Hospitality Legislative Report](#)

MediaWatch

Pine Tree State tourism spending continues to break records, according to [Maine Public this week](#). "The strength of Maine as a destination is unbounded by anything," our CEO Steve Hewins [tells The Press Herald](#).

The Penobscot Bay Pilot digs into the [seasonal schedule shifts of the Midcoast restaurant scene](#).

Homer Simpson's dream comes true: Congdon's Doughnuts in Wells adds a [beer garden to its food truck park](#) this spring.

Biddeford's nascent dining scene is perking up. The [Press Herald has the lowdown](#) on the downtown cafes and restaurants thriving in this former mill town.

Old Port Magazine interviews the family behind Portland's iconic floating restaurant - DiMillo's - in [All Hands on Deck](#).

Industry Trends

Optional housekeeping is now a thing. [Hotels across the country](#) offer perks to guests who decline maid service. Reasons? Privacy and the environment, the New York Times reports.

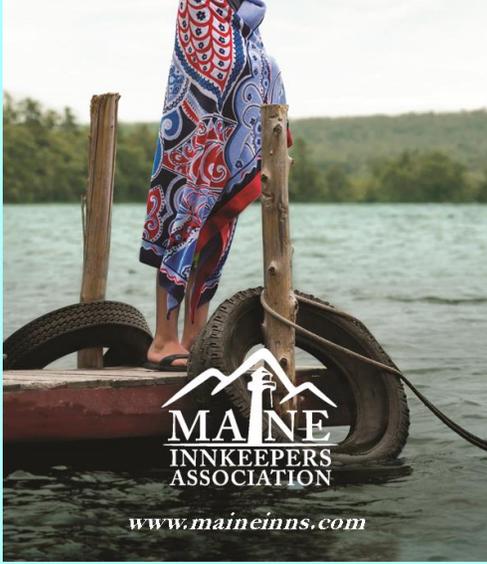
Brunch is back in a big way says [The Boston Globe](#). Nationwide, brunch service grew 22 percent over a five-year period, according to the NPD Group. In 2012, restaurants served brunch to 878 million patrons. In 2017, that number grew to more than 1 billion.

New lodging guide out this month



Just in time for the spring thaw, get your hands on our hot, new hotel guide.

Arriving via post in late March, each MeIA member receives one copy with a postcard



Members receive one copy with a postcard to order more (free of charge) to display in your lobby.

We distribute 100,000 brochures across locations throughout the Northeast and Eastern Canada.

This handy travel guide is the pocket portal to a perfect Maine adventure.

Membership Meter ... See who joined us in the last month





Holly and Paul Ayoob of Maine Coast Roast in Biddeford.

Please Welcome

Trade Winds Inn

Maine Coast Roast

Stress Free Moose Pub

East Commerce Solutions Inc.

Mousam Valley Mushrooms

Residence Inn Bangor

Camden National Bank

**Waterstone Properties
Group**

The Garage BBQ

Member on the move

Ted and Jill Hugger, owners of Cod Cove Inn in Edgecomb, purchased the Cedar Crest Inn in Camden last month. The Route 1 inn has welcomed guests since 1918 and the pair plan to carry that tradition forward.



"The inn has earned a solid reputation among travelers to the midcoast region," said Ted, in a nod to former owners Stephen Liberty and Bill Hahn.

Since acquiring the Cod Cove Inn in 2013, the Huggers have welcomed BoothBay Harbor guests with comfortable accommodations.

The 37-room Cedar Crest is a perfect complement to their Edgecomb property.

"Many of our Cod Cove Inn guests explore the Boothbay Peninsula for a few days and then continue on to the Camden area. The Cedar Crest Inn will allow us to offer two-inn accommodation packages as they travel the midcoast," says Ted.

The [Cedar Crest Inn](#) opens for the 2018 season on May 11.

Scholarship deadline approaching

Know a student looking to run a hotel someday, or a chef in the making?

We are accepting submission for the Maine Innkeepers Education Foundation annual scholarship until April 6.

Open to any Maine student (any age) pursuing a career in the lodging or foodservice field or any family members of Lodging or Allied members, their employees or their families pursuing a non-hospitality career.

Applicants may be graduates of accredited high schools, high school students, post secondary students, or children of employees of the Maine Innkeepers Association member properties, including allied members. Preference will be given to applicants who are employees or family members of active or allied member properties.

[Download the application here](#)

Upcoming events

Eggs & Issues

What: Putting Portland on the food map with Steve Hewins, David Turin, Steve DiMillo, Josh Berry and Michelle Corry.

When: March 14, 7 to 9 a.m.

Where: Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland

Tickets: [Click here](#) (Members receive a discount with the code *foodie*)

Maine Restaurant Association Annual Awards Banquet

What: Our celebration of the industry

When: Tuesday, March 27, 5 to 9 p.m.

Where: Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland

Tickets: mainerestaurant.com

Maine Restaurant & Lodging Expo 2018

What: The biggest statewide hospitality trade show

When: Wednesday, March 28, 2018, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: Cross Insurance Arena, Portland

More details: www.mainerestaurant.com

Spring seminar: Employee retention strategies

What: Learn to engage, retain and optimize a workplace culture to build a competitive advantage for your hotel or restaurant.

When: April 11, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: Maple Hill Farm Bed & Breakfast Inn and Conference Center, Hallowell.

Tickets: www.maineinns.com/events

Hospitality for Habitat

What: An inn program to raise money for Habitat for Humanity during the shoulder season.

When: April 16 to May 24

For more info: [Click here](#)

MERA and MEIA Scholarship dinner

What: Celebration of 2018 scholars

When: June 11

Where: 16 Bay View, Camden

ServSafe Classes

Wednesday, March 28, 2018 - Westbrook

Thursday, March 29, 2018 - Augusta



| send feedback, tips, and suggestions to kathleen@mainerestaurant.com |

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Maine Restaurant Association is on Instagram, follow us here 