



## Arkansas Hospitality Association News Release

For Immediate Release  
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# Arkansas is Out of This World Vendor Showcase Set for September 12-15

Little Rock — The 72nd Annual Arkansas Hospitality Association Vendor Showcase & Convention and related events will be held from September 12-15. This year's show will have many special events including two exciting culinary competitions, a bartending competition on the center floor, first annual STAR Institute educational sessions, a gala dinner, and the annual golf showcase. This year it will also feature Arkansas breweries and a Star of the Bar competition on the center floor. The theme of the show is Arkansas is Out of This World.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Arkansas Chefs' Culinary Classic Competition will be held Tuesday, September 13 at 6:30pm at the Statehouse Convention Center. This competition is open to the public at a ticket cost of \$45 a person. The competition includes the chance for event attendees to sample some of Arkansas's finest chefs' scrumptious entries as they compete in soup/salad, appetizer, entrée and dessert categories. Special wine and beer tasting will be provided, as well as a silent auction that benefits hospitality students. An after party will be held following the awards ceremony at the Marriott Lobby Bar.

The Arkansas Iron Chef Competition will begin Wednesday at 11:30am and will feature Arkansas chefs that will put their skills to the test as they race against the clock to create dazzling and tasty dishes. There will be additional competition heats Wednesday afternoon and Thursday on the floor of the convention.

The Arkansas Bartending Competition, *Star of the Bar*, will be center stage on the showroom floor on Wednesday at 12:00pm for the first year. Bartenders from across the state will compete head to head in two different competitions. The competition is sponsored by Jim Beam, the Marriott hotel and Pulaski Technical College Culinary Arts & Hospitality Management Institute.

The first annual, STAR Institute (Strategic, Training & Retention) will be held at the Convention Center on Wednesday and Thursday morning before the doors of the show open. The Arkansas Hospitality

Association is partnering with the Arkansas Small Business & Technology Development Center to host four different sessions for the industry to receive training and industry hours.

The Star Gala Dinner on Wednesday evening will begin with a reception at the DoubleTree at 6 p.m. There will be dinner to follow in the Grand Ballroom of the hotel. The evening includes entertainment, recognition of the industry, and installation of new AHA officers.

The largest hospitality industry event in Arkansas, the annual AHA showcase provides an opportunity for vendors from across the United States to present the latest in food products, equipment, furniture and other items that could be valuable to hospitality industry leaders. Vendors will showcase their goods and services for the benefit of hundreds of hospitality industry owners, managers, employers and guests.

In addition to the vendor exhibits, the showcase features an array of activities, including

- The AHA Annual Golf Showcase at War Memorial Golf Course on Monday, September 12.
- Parks & Tourism Marketing Plan to be presented Thursday morning in the Wally Allen Ballroom, and;
- The Hospitality Games, lighthearted competitions giving hospitality industry employees an opportunity to show off their skills at bed-making, table service and more.

This showcase is open to all owners, managers, operators and employees of restaurants, hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, travel attractions, tourism organizations and other hospitality-industry related businesses. The show is also open to the public, with tickets available at the door for a small fee (No one under 18 admitted).

Limited booths are still available to those who are interested in marketing their organization's products, services, and attractions. Please reserve your booths today by contacting Amy Moorehead at 501-376-2323.

Go to <http://www.arhospitality.org/events/trade-show/> for more information and to register, or call 501-376-2323.

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*The **Arkansas Hospitality Association** is the official voice of the restaurant, lodging, travel and tourism industries in the state, representing the Arkansas Restaurant Association, the Arkansas Lodging Association and the Arkansas Travel Council.*

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