

# **2025 MMBA Annual Conference**

**(Open to Municipal Liquor Operations & Invitees)**



The 2025 MMBA Annual Conference will be held Saturday, April 26 – Tuesday, April 29, at Arrowwood Resort, in Alexandria, Minnesota.

## **Boot Camp (Back by Request)**

For new Municipal Liquor Managers, Assistant Managers, City Administrators, Council Members, and Seasoned Personnel Who Want to Brush Up on Their Knowledge. Boot Camp covers the “basics” of liquor operations. All participants will leave with 12 specific items to improve facility operations!!!

## **Japanese Spirits Tasting and Seminar**

Suntory Global Spirits invites you to a tasting and information seminar regarding their award-winning Japanese spirits. We will explore the history, taste profiles, and sales techniques you can use to help consumers understand this fast-growing and profitable segment of spirits.

## **View from City Hall**

The relationship between City Hall and city employees is crucial for the smooth functioning of local government and the well-being of the community. Sauk Rapids City Administrator Ross Olson and Paynesville City Treasurer Belinda Ludwig will discuss how their cities successfully work with their municipal liquor operation and explore individual issues through audience questions.

## **THC / Cannabis Update**

There is a lot going on in the Minnesota cannabis world. MMBA and Emerald Elements representatives will provide information on municipal cannabis, THC, new product categories and regulatory issues.

## **Category Insights & Analytics to Drive Growth in an Evolving Consumer Landscape**

Johnson Brothers West Region President AJ Atta will lead a discussion on:

- Spirits: Small Sizes = Big Prizes and growing with emerging categories
- Winning with Wine: Targeting top Segments, Formats, & Price Points to elevate category growth
- Hemp THC: Leveraging what we know into how we grow

### **Featured Speaker, Chris Hawkey**

Chris Hawkey's primary role is co-host and producer one of the most successful and highly-rated talk radio shows in the United States. When he's not on the radio, Hawkey takes his talents to the stage singing with multiple bands, including the Fabulous Armadillos.

So many of us battle depression and anxiety on a regular basis or know someone who does. Making it even more difficult is that most fight their "Darkness" in secret. Chris was one of those people until an unlikely scenario led him to bring his battle into the light.

Chris will talk about how going public with his depression helped him with his own mental health issues. He'll also reveal how each of us can help ourselves and those we love to bring our own darkness into the light.

### **Serving Up a Better Memory**

In today's business world, having the ability to remember names and faces, beat absent-mindedness, and recall facts and figures puts you at the head of the pack. In this power-packed session, you'll learn time-tested techniques for recalling names, speaking without notes, and gaining control of your day without the fear of forgetting. When you're skilled in memory all your other skills get better. This program shows how.

Presenter Paul Mellor, author of *Finding the Keys*, was a finalist in the USA Memory Championship, where he recalled the names of over 90 people in less than 15 minutes, remembered in exact order over 100 single-digit numbers after a five-minute study, and recalled the exact order of a shuffled deck of playing cards after less than a three-and-a-half-minute review.

### **Building Community Through Spirits: The Success Story of Moreno's Liquors & the Future of Tequila & Mezcal"**

Mike Mareno is the owner of Moreno's Liquors, Osito's Tap, and MM Imports, a family-owned business that has become a cornerstone of the Little Village community in Chicago. Over the past three years, he has successfully grown his companies, introducing a tequila and mezcal selection that has become the largest in the nation, with over 950 varieties.

"A community-centric approach has made our business not only a commercial success but a hub for cultural exchange and support," he said. "By adapting to the changes and working on more partnerships, we've been able to stay ahead of the market and continue to grow while many others struggle."

Mike will share his story and offer attendees a range of Tequila & Mezcal samples, while offering expert commentary on the products.

### **How to Maximize City Hive**

MMBA Members across the state are having great success utilizing City Hive for their website and e-commerce.

This will not be a sales seminar.

It will be an opportunity to explore and better utilize the program's features.

**There will also be great educational tasting dinners, a Beverage Alcohol Server Training, Vendor Showcase and time to have fun & develop relationships with other attendees & industry representatives.**

**MMBA friend Glen Mason & a special Minnesota Vikings guest will also be there!**