



# Member Update

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By Tony Burton • Jan 26, 2026

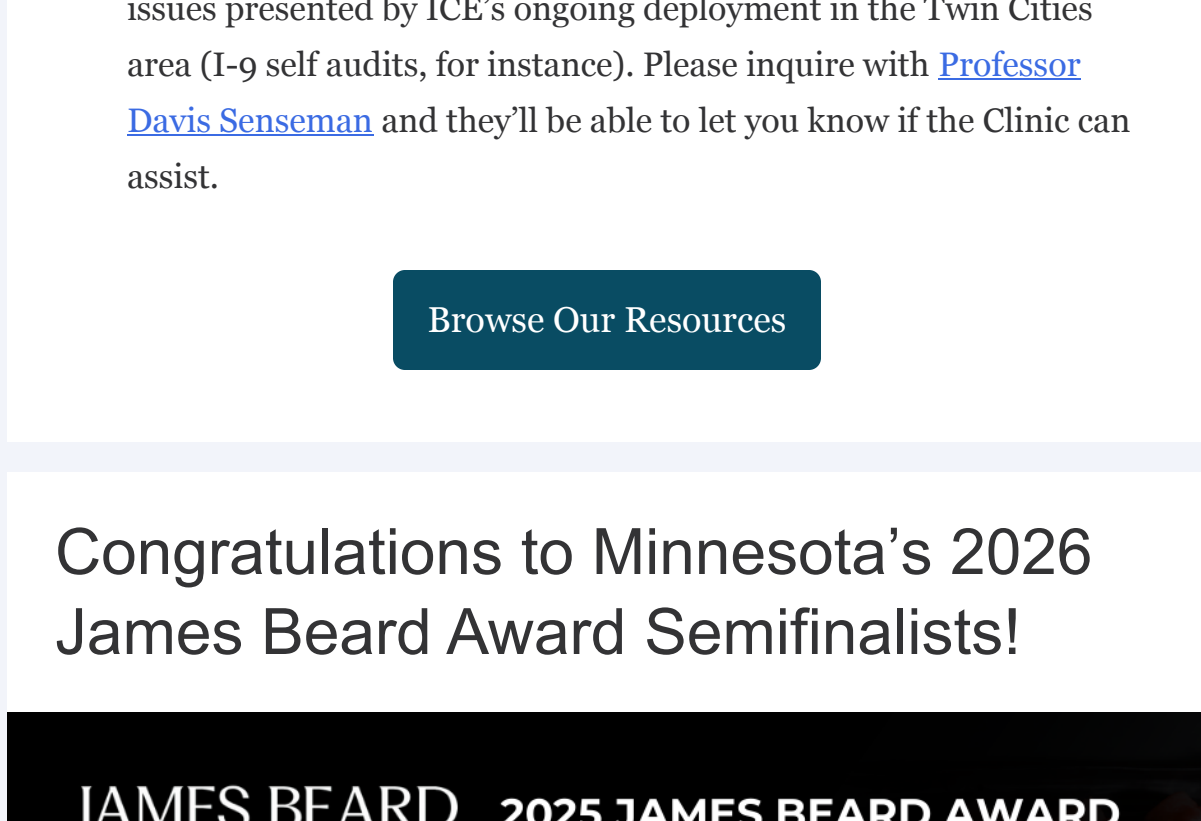
Smart Brevity® count: 3 mins...860 words

## In today's January 26, 2026 Update:

- **Immigration Resources Available:** Stay Proactive During Immigration Operations
- **Congratulations Are In Order:** Minnesotan Operators Highlighted as [2026 James Beard Awards Semifinalists](#)
- **New Guidance on Break Laws:** Stay In Compliance
- **2026 Advocacy Opportunities:** [Registration Now Live](#) for 2026 Advocacy Opportunities
- **Tell Us Your Story:** [Share Your Paid Leave Experience](#)
- **Minnesota STR Data - December 2025 Summary:** Log Into [Member Portal](#) for More Insights
- **ServSafe Offerings:** Find A Class Near You
- **In the News**

Is your organization interested in sponsorship? [Email us](#) to learn more.

## ICE Operations in Minnesota: Potential Pro-Bono Resources Available

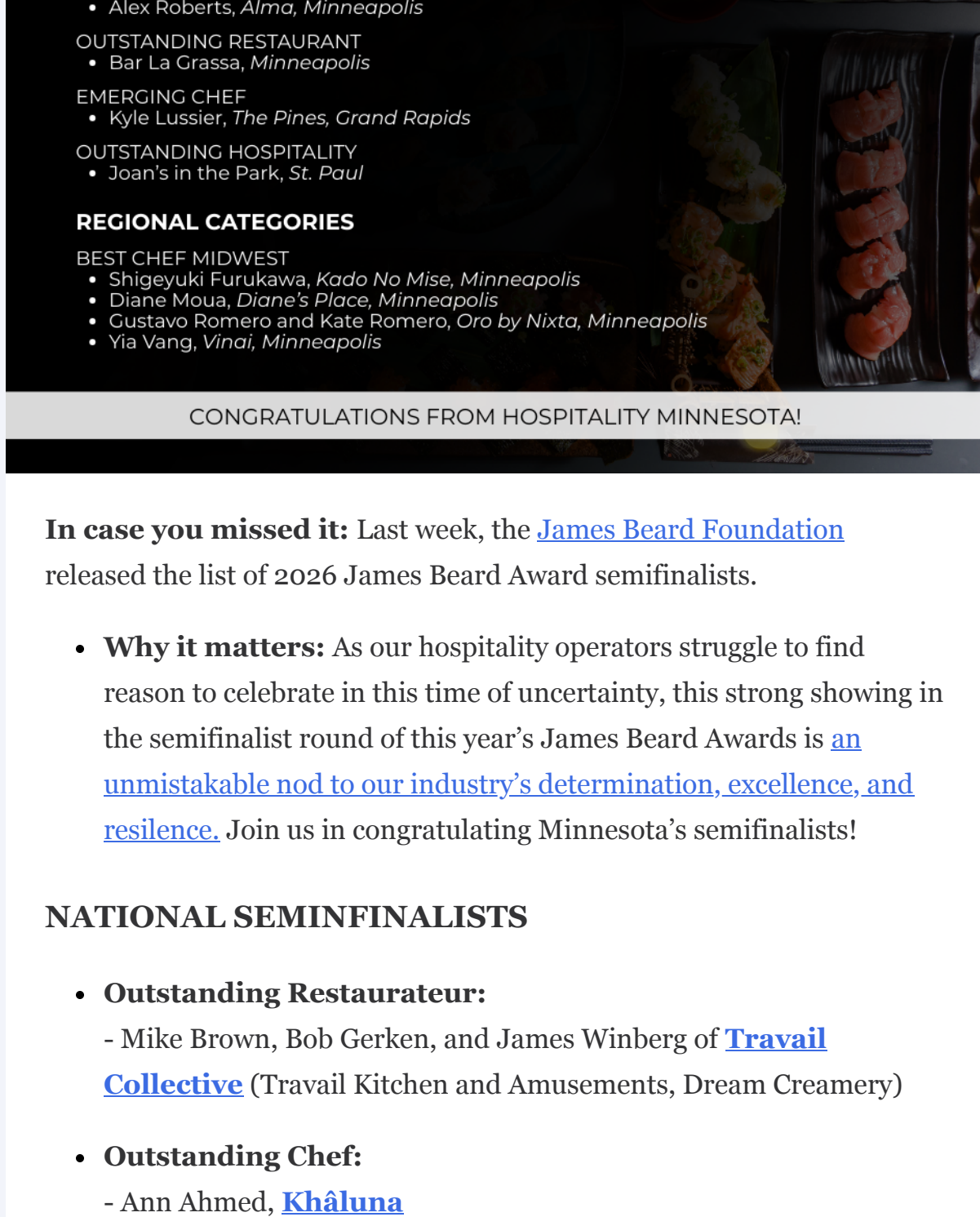


**The big picture:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations continue to be active in Minnesota, creating significant uncertainty and concern for hospitality employers and their teams.

- **New resource opportunity:** Mitchell Hamline's Business Law Clinic may be able to offer restaurants pro bono legal assistance with issues presented by ICE's ongoing deployment in the Twin Cities area (I-9 self audits, for instance). Please inquire with [Professor Davis Senseman](#) and they'll be able to let you know if the Clinic can assist.

[Browse Our Resources](#)

## Congratulations to Minnesota's 2026 James Beard Award Semifinalists!



**JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION 2025 JAMES BEARD AWARD SEMIFINALISTS MINNESOTA**

**NATIONAL CATEGORIES**

- OUTSTANDING RESTAURATEUR
  - Mike Brown, Bob Gerken, and James Winberg, *Travail Collective (Travail Kitchen & Amusements, Dream Creamery, etc.), Robbinsdale*
- OUTSTANDING CHEF
  - Ann Ahmed, *Khāluna, Minneapolis*
  - Alex Roberts, *Alma, Minneapolis*
- OUTSTANDING RESTAURANT
  - Bar La Grassa, *Minneapolis*
- EMERGING CHEF
  - Kyle Lussier, *The Pines, Grand Rapids*
- OUTSTANDING HOSPITALITY
  - Joan's in the Park, *St. Paul*

**REGIONAL CATEGORIES**

- BEST CHEF MIDWEST
  - Shigeyuki Furukawa, *Kado No Mise, Minneapolis*
  - Diane Moua, *Diane's Place, Minneapolis*
  - Gustavo Romero and Kate Romero, *Oro by Nixta, Minneapolis*
  - Yia Vang, *Vinai, Minneapolis*

CONGRATULATIONS FROM HOSPITALITY MINNESOTA!

**In case you missed it:** Last week, the [James Beard Foundation](#) released the list of 2026 James Beard Award semifinalists.

- **Why it matters:** As our hospitality operators struggle to find reason to celebrate in this time of uncertainty, this strong showing in the semifinalist round of this year's James Beard Awards is [an unmistakable nod to our industry's determination, excellence, and resilience](#). Join us in congratulating Minnesota's semifinalists!

### NATIONAL SEMIFINALISTS

- **Outstanding Restaurateur:**
  - Mike Brown, Bob Gerken, and James Winberg of [Travail Collective](#) (Travail Kitchen and Amusements, Dream Creamery)
- **Outstanding Chef:**
  - Ann Ahmed, [Khāluna](#)
  - Alex Roberts, [Alma: Cafe, Hotel & Restaurant](#)
- **Outstanding Restaurant:**
  - [Bar La Grassa](#)
- **Emerging Chef:**
  - Kyle Lussier, The Pines Grand Rapids
- **Outstanding Hospitality:**
  - [Joan's in the Park](#)

### REGIONAL SEMIFINALISTS

- **Best Chef Midwest:**
    - Shigeyuki Furukawa, [Kado no Mise](#)
    - Diane Moua, [Diane's Place](#)
    - Gustavo Romero and Kate Romero, [Oro by Nixta](#)
    - Yia Vang, [Vinai MN](#)
- [Read the Announcement](#)

## Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) Offers Updated Guidance for Work Breaks

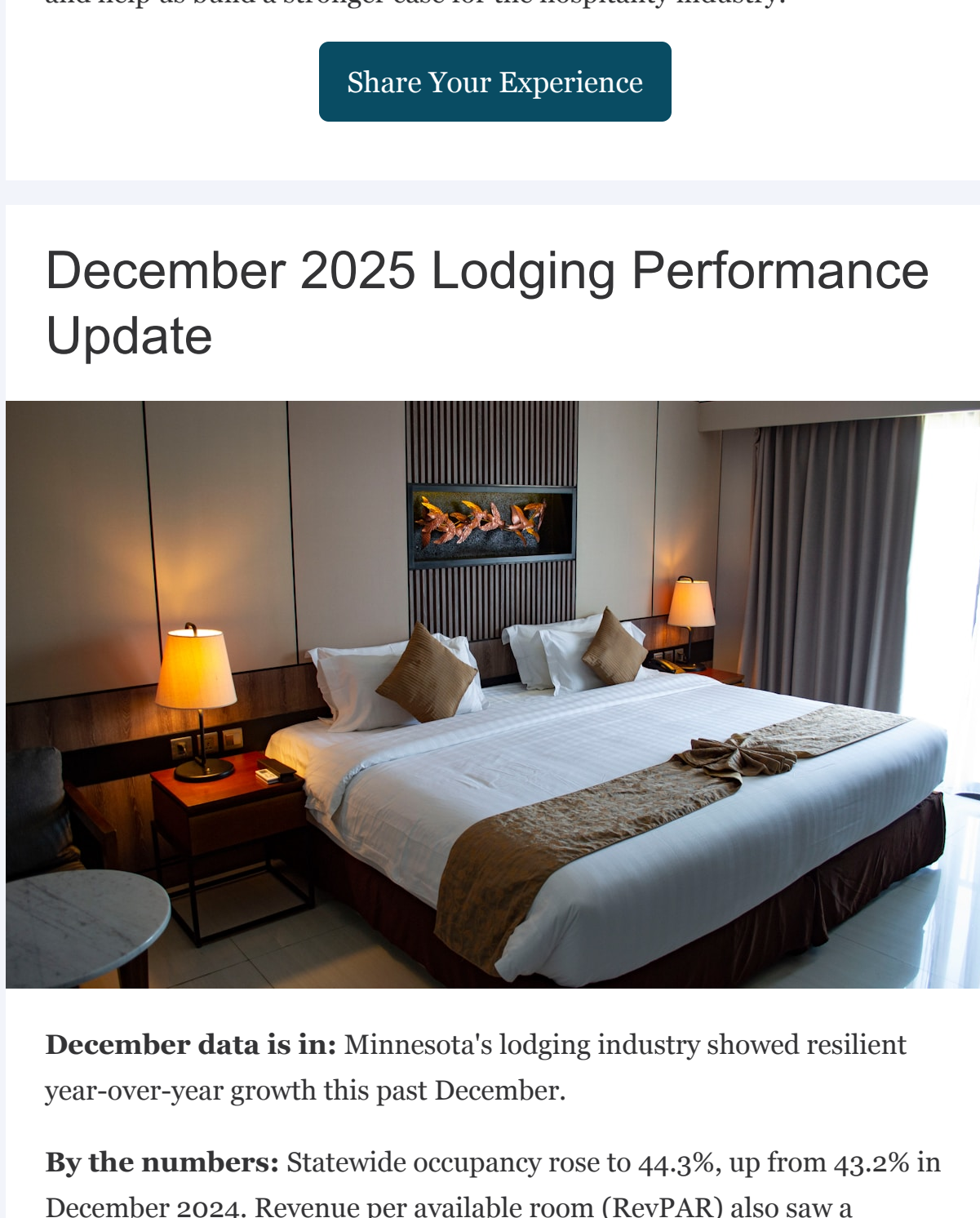


**DLI Guidance available:** Operators with questions about the new Work Break and Rest Period laws DLI has created [this page](#) as first stop to find general guidance and answers.

**Take a look!** Contact [Ryan](#) if want to talk through follow up questions that are unique to your business.

[Access DLI Guidance](#)

## REGISTER NOW for All Key 2026 Advocacy Opportunities



**Attention advocates:** As of today, registrations for all three of our key 2026 advocacy opportunities are LIVE.

- **ALL MINNESOTA OPERATORS:** [2026 Day at the Capitol | April 8, 2026 in Saint Paul](#)
- **RESTAURANT OPERATORS:** [Restaurants Act Public Affairs Conference | March 10-12, 2026 in Washington D.C.](#)
- **LODGING OPERATORS:** [Hotels on the Hill | May 12-23, 2026 in Washington D.C.](#)

## Your Perspective is Needed: Share Your Paid Leave Experience



**m MINNESOTA PAID LEAVE**

**We need your data.** Hospitality Minnesota is collecting member feedback on the state's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program to shape our advocacy strategy for the 2026 legislative session.

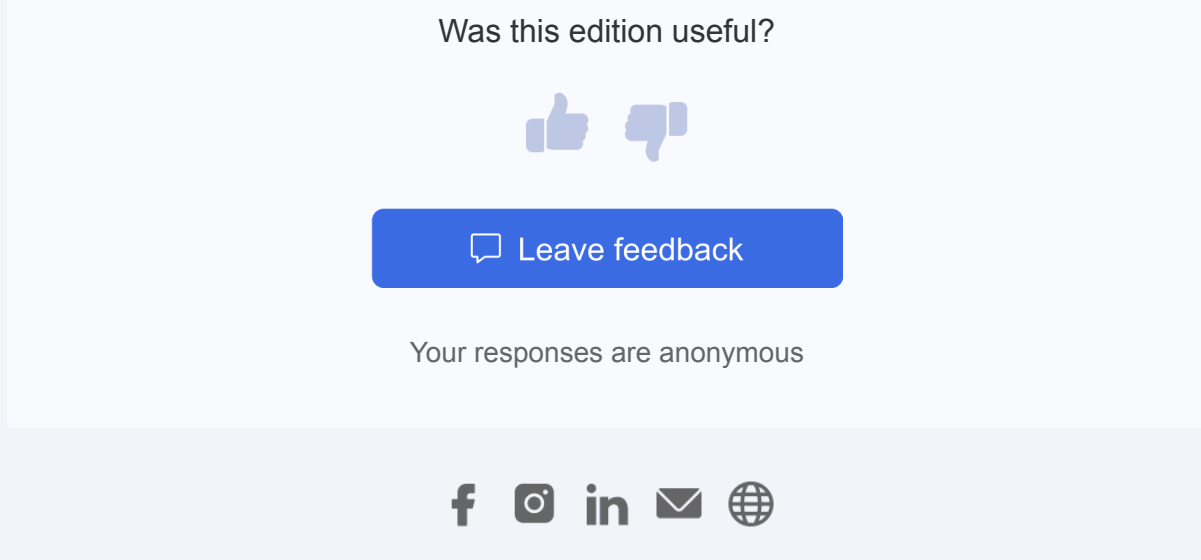
**The big picture:** Legislators need to hear more than just "it's difficult"—they need specific data on:

- Expected administrative burdens.
- The financial impact of the 0.88% and 0.66% premiums.
- Staffing challenges related to the 20-week maximum leave.

**Go deeper:** Take a few minutes out of your day to share your experience and help us build a stronger case for the hospitality industry.

[Share Your Experience](#)

## December 2025 Lodging Performance Update



**December data is in:** Minnesota's lodging industry showed resilient year-over-year growth this past December.

**By the numbers:** Statewide occupancy rose to 44.3%, up from 43.2% in December 2024. Revenue per available room (RevPAR) also saw a healthy climb to \$53.67, compared to \$52.29 the previous year.

- Market Highlights:**
- **Bloomington** led the state with a 55.0% occupancy rate and a RevPAR of \$69.54.
  - **Duluth** commanded the highest Average Daily Rate (ADR) in the state at \$151.53.
  - **Rochester** saw a significant jump in occupancy, reaching **50.9%** compared to 44.9% last December.
  - **Minneapolis - St. Paul** markets remained steady, with Minneapolis at 46.3% occupancy and St. Paul at 46.3%.

**Unlock more data:** Hospitality Minnesota members can access years of detailed STR historical data and regional performance trends through our [Member Portal](#).

- **Data is a reason to join!** Stay ahead of the curve with deeper insights tailored to your market. Not a member? [Join today](#) to access these vital industry benchmarks!

## ServSafe Classes Near You



**BUILD YOUR RESUME:**

**MINNESOTA SERVSaFETM CERTIFICATION CLASSES**

**NOW AVAILABLE**

**Did you know:** Minnesota law requires at least one certified food manager on staff at nearly every food establishment.

[Check our Event Calendar](#) for upcoming ServSafe classes!

- [Mankato - January 27](#)
- [Minneapolis - January 27](#)
- [Fridley - January 28](#)
- [WEBINAR: Alcohol Public Policy Trends & Mitigating the Risks - January 29](#)
  - ServSafe Alcohol training is temporarily discounted by 20% during the month of January. Please visit [www.ServSafe.com](#) and use the promo code "SERVTUP" at check-out to receive your discount.

## In the News

- [Glam Doll Donuts to close for 2 days after Alex Pretti killing](#) | Bring Me The News
- [Minnesota State Patrol responds to anti-ICE protest at Minneapolis hotel](#) | Kare 11

## See you back here next week!

To learn more about us, visit our website: [hospitalityminnesota.com](#)

[Members can log into the member portal here.](#)

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