



**2026 HEAT Conference
Corpus Christi, Texas
November 1 – 4, 2026**

Sunday, November 1, 2026

12:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Registration

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

ServSafe exam

Fee: \$60 per person

1:00 pm – 2:45 pm

What's the Big Deal – Pickles with Tasting

Presented by: Elena Doerie

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Bring Customer Service Skills to Life with Lone Star Customer Service Training

Speaker: Debbie Wieland, THLA

Give your students the employability skills employers are looking for! Discover THLA's Lone Star Customer Service Training & Certification, an engaging, ready-to-use program designed to build the customer service, communication, professionalism, problem-solving, and workplace skills students need to succeed.

During this session, you'll explore the five interactive training modules and learn how Lone Star Customer Service can support Texas Employability Skills TEKS while bringing real-world hospitality scenarios into your classroom. See how this turnkey program can help students build confidence, strengthen professional behaviors, and prepare for success in hospitality—and virtually any career where serving and working with others matters.

Come ready to discover practical resources you can take back to your classroom and start using with your students!

3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Growing Careers: Exploring Opportunities in Agriculture, Hospitality, and Business

Speaker: John Rivenburgh. Past Chair of Texas Wine Growers Association, Owner of RVB Wines

Careers in agriculture today span far more than production— from vineyard management, enology, and laboratory science to business, marketing, hospitality, sales, tourism, compliance, and entrepreneurship, attendees will gain insight into the diverse career pathways that support a dynamic agricultural industry and the wide range of skills employers are seeking.

Evening

Dinner on own

Monday, November 2, 2026

8:00 am – 3:30 pm

Registration

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast on own
7:30 am – 8:30 am	HEAT Board Meeting
9:00am – 9:45 am	AI Session A focus on illustrating how to detect and remove AI hallucinations from students' work and connect with students when teaching. <i>Speaker:</i> Cristian Morosan, PhD, CHE, CHTP ~ Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership, University of Houston
9:45 am – 10:30 am	Culinary Math – An intro <i>Presenter:</i> David Uminski, Hotel Management Program Director, Associate Professor, St. Philip's College OR Fold, Create & Engage: Bringing Housekeeping Skills to Live <i>Presenter:</i> Jill Greer, Hospitality & Tourism Teacher, Texas City High School Turn an everyday hotel essential into an engaging, hands-on learning experience! In this interactive session, educators will explore the art and technique of professional towel folding while connecting the activity to housekeeping operations, attention to detail, presentation standards, guest experience, and service excellence. Participants will practice a variety of towel-folding techniques and discover how to transform this skill into a highly engaging classroom activity that reinforces hospitality concepts and gives students an opportunity to learn by doing. Walk away with practical techniques, classroom implementation ideas, and a fun way to introduce students to the important role housekeeping plays in creating an exceptional guest experience.
10:30 am – 10:45 am	Break
10:45 am – 11:30 am	<i>Come ready to roll up your sleeves, get creative, and take a hands-on activity back to your classroom that students will remember!</i> Legal or Not? Hospitality Employment Law in the Real World <i>Presenter:</i> Jackson Olensky, THLA Can a manager ask that in an interview? Can an employee be disciplined for that? What happens when workplace decisions cross a legal line? Put your knowledge to the test in this interactive Hospitality Employment Law session built around real-world workplace scenarios. Participants will examine situations hospitality managers and employees may encounter and determine: Is it legal or not? Along the way, you'll strengthen your understanding of employment law while exploring how legal requirements influence hiring, supervision, workplace policies, and day-to-day management decisions. Best of all, you'll leave with an engaging, classroom-ready lesson plan that turns employment law into an interactive learning experience for your

students—building critical thinking, workplace awareness, and career readiness while bringing real-world hospitality management into the classroom.

11:30 am – 12:15 pm

ServSuccess CRP: Turning Students into Certified Restaurant Pros

Presenter: Maggie Braunscheidel, National Restaurant Association Senior Academic Representative

Join the National Restaurant Association for an overview of ServSuccess: Certified Restaurant Professional (CRP) program and how you can use it to prepare your students for real-world success.

In this session, you'll learn:

- How to incorporate ServSuccess into your program
- Key program components
- Student prerequisites
- Testing

The goal is to support career readiness and helps students earn a recognized, industry-valued credential!

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Lunch

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Exhibits

Support HEAT Partners during the exhibits and learn about new products and opportunities.

1:45 pm – 3:45 pm

Pasta Making Class

Instructors: Jasmine Anderson and Patrice Green, Aldine ISD

Limited to 25 participants

Cost: \$60

Learn how to turn simple, affordable ingredients into a hands-on, multi-day pasta lab for your culinary classroom. This session will demonstrate fresh pasta-making techniques while showcasing ways to maximize limited funds, reduce food waste, and keep students engaged throughout multiple lab days. Teachers will leave with practical strategies for creating meaningful, budget-friendly culinary experiences.

1:45 pm – 2:30 pm

Beyond Behavior: Classroom Management for High-Impact Hospitality & Culinary Programs

Speaker: Lindy Hutton, Lead Culinary Arts Instructor, Cedar Park High School

Effective classroom management in a Hospitality or Culinary Arts program goes far beyond keeping students on task—it creates the foundation for rigorous instruction, safe learning environments, professional expectations, and workforce readiness.

Join experienced Culinary Arts educator Lindy Hutton for a practical session focused on managing the unique challenges of CTE classrooms, where students move between traditional instruction and fast-paced, hands-on lab experiences. Explore proven strategies for establishing expectations, building student accountability, managing kitchen and service activities, promoting safety and teamwork, and addressing behavior before it disrupts learning.

Discover how intentional classroom systems can help students develop the professionalism, communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and personal responsibility expected in today's hospitality workplace.

Whether you are a new teacher building your classroom systems or an experienced educator looking for fresh strategies, you'll leave with practical tools, proven approaches, and ideas you can immediately put to work in your classroom and lab.

2:30 pm – 3:15 pm

More Than an Association: THLA Resources That Bring Hospitality Education to Life

Speaker: Debbie Wieland, Education Outreach & Foundation Director, Texas Hotel & Lodging Association

Are you taking advantage of everything THLA offers hospitality educators and their students? Come discover the growing collection of classroom resources, student experiences, professional development, and industry connections designed to help you build a stronger, more engaging hospitality program.

Get an inside look at THLA's latest education initiatives, including the THLA Education Partnership Google Folder, filled with ready-to-use instructional resources; Lone Star Customer Service Training & Certification; the Future Hotel & Tourism Professionals (FHTP) CTSO; Groundhog Job Shadow Day; THLA Hotel Summer Camp; and the THLA Hotel Short Course.

Learn how these programs can help you connect classroom instruction to authentic industry experiences, strengthen employability skills, increase student engagement, and expose students to the incredible range of careers and advancement opportunities available in hospitality.

Whether you're building a new program or looking for fresh ways to take an established program to the next level, you'll leave with resources, opportunities, and connections you can put to work immediately—for both you and your students.

3:15 pm - 3:30 pm

Break

3:30 pm –4:15 pm

What Would You Do? Navigating Real-World Legal Issues in Hotels

Speaker: Scott Joslove, President & CEO, Texas Hotel & Lodging Association

What happens when a guest arrives with a service animal? How should hotel staff respond to an intoxicated guest? When can a hotel say “no”—and when could that decision create a legal problem?

Step into the complex world of hotel law and operations with Scott Joslove, President & CEO of the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association. Using real-world hotel situations, Scott will break down the laws, regulations, and operational considerations that influence how hotel professionals respond to challenging guest interactions and make sound decisions.

Explore topics ranging from service animals and guest rights to intoxicated guests and other situations hotel employees may encounter on the job. You'll gain a deeper understanding of not only what hotels can and cannot do, but why—giving

you valuable industry knowledge and authentic scenarios to bring back to your students.

Leave with a new perspective on hotel operations and plenty of “What would you do?” scenarios that can spark critical thinking, classroom discussion, and real-world problem solving with your students.

4:15 pm – 5:00 pm

The Secret Life of a Hotel: Careers Beyond the Front Desk

There’s a whole world of careers happening behind the scenes of a hotel—and many of your students have no idea they exist!

Go beyond the front desk, housekeeping, and food & beverage to uncover the high-skill, high-opportunity careers that keep a hotel operating, profitable, safe, sustainable, and connected. Explore career pathways in revenue management, engineering, security, human resources, sustainability, technology, sales, finance, and more—and discover how professionals across these departments work together to create an exceptional guest experience.

You’ll gain a deeper understanding of the skills, education, technology, and career pathways connected to these often-overlooked roles, along with ideas for expanding your students’ perceptions of what a career in hospitality can look like.

Leave ready to introduce your students to the “secret life” happening behind every hotel door and a world of career possibilities they may never have considered.

OR

Stay Sharp Culinary Demonstration

Speaker: Jason Avelson, Culinary School Specialist, Zwilling J.A. Henckels, LLC

Join Chef Jason Avelson CEC, CCE, CCA from Zwilling J.A. Henckels for a short presentation on the new programs available in Texas for hospitality educators and a culinary demonstration.

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

HEAT Reception

Evening

Dinner on Own

Tuesday, November 3, 2026

7:30 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast on own

8:30 am – 9:15 am

TEA Update: What Hospitality Educators Need to Know

Speaker: Erica Bates, M.Ed., Statewide CTE Coordinator at the Texas Education Agency (TEA)

Stay ahead of the changes shaping Hospitality & Tourism education in Texas! Join Erica for an informative and timely update on the latest Texas Education Agency Career and Technical Education (CTE) initiatives, programs of study, TEKS, and other developments impacting the Hospitality & Tourism Career Cluster.

Learn what’s changing, what’s coming next, and—most importantly—what it means for you, your students, and your hospitality program. Walk away with a clearer understanding of statewide CTE priorities and how they may impact

classroom instruction, student opportunities, and preparation for the hospitality workforce.

If you teach Hospitality & Tourism in Texas, this is an update you won't want to miss!

9:15 am – 10:00 am

Discover a Career That Goes Beyond the Desk: Exploring Texas Travel & Tourism Careers

Speaker: Erika Boyd, Texas Travel Alliance President & CEO

Do your students think careers in travel and tourism (hospitality) mean working in a frontline position forever? Think again. This engaging, industry-led session pulls back the curtain on one of Texas's largest and fastest-growing economic sectors — a \$201.8 billion industry supporting 1.3 million jobs, or 1 in every 11 positions in the state.

Erika Boyd, President & CEO of the Texas Travel Alliance, will take educators on a journey through the full landscape of career possibilities in travel and tourism — from guest-facing roles and behind-the-scenes operations to high-level executive leadership. Educators will discover how professionals in marketing, animal care, revenue management, event planning, and more all call this industry home.

Perfect for educators in hospitality, business, marketing, and career and technical education programs, this session aligns real workforce data with actionable next steps — including internships, certifications, student memberships, and scholarship opportunities through the Texas Tourism Foundation.

You will leave knowing:

- The scale and economic impact of travel and tourism in Texas
- The diverse career pathways available at every education level for your students
- How to get started today through education, experience, and networking

10:00 am – 10:15

Break

10:15 am – 11:30 am

Who Sets the Hotel Room Rate? Revenue Management & Distribution Channels

Speaker: Stephen Cunningham

Why does the same hotel room cost \$159 one night and \$399 the next? Who decides when rates should increase—or when it's time to offer a deal? And what actually happens when a guest books through Expedia, Hotels.com, Priceline, or another third-party site?

Take a behind-the-scenes look at revenue management, one of the most analytical and technology-driven career fields in the hotel industry. Discover how hotels use data, demand forecasting, occupancy trends, pricing strategies, and market conditions to determine room rates and maximize revenue.

You'll also explore hotel distribution channels and learn how reservations make their way from consumers to hotels through brand websites, online travel agencies (OTAs), and other booking platforms.

Leave with a stronger understanding of the business strategy, technology, and critical-thinking skills behind every hotel room sold—plus real-world concepts you can use to introduce students to an exciting hospitality career they may never have considered.

11:45 am – 1:15 pm

Awards Lunch

1:30 pm – 2:15 pm

Texas Restaurant Association Update

Presenter: TBD TRA

2:15 pm – 4:30 pm

Create, Learn & Inspire: Cake Palette Painting Workshop

Presented by Cynthia Benavides, Owner/Instructor, Cake Craft Shoppe

Limited to 25

Cost: \$60

Turn buttercream into art in this immersive, hands-on cake decorating workshop designed especially for educators! Participants will work on dummy cakes while learning to use palette knives, brushes, and piping techniques to create dimensional buttercream florals and beautiful fall-inspired designs.

Led by cake decorating expert Cynthia Benavides, this workshop goes beyond creating a beautiful cake. You'll explore techniques that can be translated into engaging culinary lessons while reinforcing precision, creativity, design principles, fine-motor skills, technique development, and attention to detail.

Whether you're new to cake decorating or ready to expand your existing skills, the workshop is designed to challenge and inspire at multiple experience levels. You'll leave with new technical skills, classroom-ready inspiration, and your own decorated cake creation to showcase!

Space is limited to just 25 participants—reserve your spot and get ready to create!

2:15 pm – 3:00pm

Hospitality Session

Presenter: David Uminski, Hotel Management Program Director, Associate Professor, St. Philip's College

3:00 pm – 3:45 pm

TBD

3:45 pm – 4:30 pm

TBD

Evening

Dinner on own

Wednesday, November 4, 2026

7:30 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast on own

9:00am – 11:00 am

Beyond the Classroom: Explore Hospitality & Tourism Career Pathways

End the HEAT Conference by stepping out of the meeting room and into the industry! Choose from a variety of behind-the-scenes tours of Corpus Christi hotels, attractions, and special event venues and experience hospitality and tourism operations firsthand.

Connect what you've learned throughout the conference to real-world workplaces as you explore operations, career pathways, workplace environments, and the wide range of professionals required to create exceptional guest and visitor experiences. Along the way, discover careers your students may never have considered and gain valuable insight into the skills, education, and experiences that can help them succeed.

Select the tour that best matches your interests—or the career opportunities you want to explore for your students—and return to your classroom with real-world examples, industry knowledge, and new ideas for connecting students to hospitality and tourism careers.

Finish the conference where hospitality education comes to life—in the industry itself!

11:15am

Conference Concludes