



Let's Cook!

Linda Hoskins

Every spring I look forward to two kinds of fruit, strawberries and rhubarb. R. H. Kirchhoff of St. Clair County was kind enough to send these recipes that call for these fruits. Both sound really good and pretty easy to make.

Strawberry Pie

submitted by R. H. Kirchhoff

- 1 1/2 cup water
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch
- 3 pkg. strawberry gelatin
- 1 10 inch baked pie shell strawberries

Mix and cook water, sugar and cornstarch till thickened and clear. Add gelatin, stir until dissolved. Let cool slightly. Arrange berries in pie shell, pour gelatin mixture over berries. Refrigerate until cold. Good served with dollops of Cool Whip.

Rhubarb Crisp

submitted by R. H. Kirchhoff

- 3 cups rhubarb, (fresh of frozen), chopped

- 1/3 cup corn syrup
- 1/3 cup margarine
- 1 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon

Spray 8x8" square baking pan with cooking spray. Place rhubarb in pan. Pour corn syrup evenly over top. Cream margarine and brown sugar. Stir in flour, salt and cinnamon. (will be crumbly). Sprinkle over rhubarb. Bake at 350 degrees 25 to 30 minutes until tender. Cool. Serve with a custard sauce or Cool Whip.

Although most people think of rhubarb as a fruit, it is really a vegetable. However, in 1947 a New York court declared rhubarb a fruit because it's most often cooked as a fruit. It has very tart flavor that most people can't tolerate until sugar has been added to it. When I was growing up, my parents had a rhubarb patch in the back yard. I can remember breaking off a stalk and eating it right there on the spot. Sometimes I would

get a cup of sugar to dip the rhubarb in it. And no I didn't go wash it off before eating, but if it looked dirty, I wiped it off on my shirt. How did we ever survive those days??

Yes it is true that the leaves of rhubarb are poisonous. The leaves are high in oxalic acid which can cause kidney failure. However, you would have to eat around 11 pounds of the leaves to suffer the consequences.

Most people think of rhubarb as a sweet dish, such as pie, cake, crisps, but rhubarb is often used in savory dish, such as braised pork chops.

When shopping for rhubarb, look for plump, firm and crisp stalks. When picking through the stalks, select the darkest red stalks, these are sweeter, but certainly the greenish stalks are fine.

If you have a recipe to share, please send to letscook!@heraldpubs.com or mail to Mascoutah Herald, PO Box C, Mascoutah IL 62258. Thanks and Happy Cooking!

Tourism & Hospitality Leaders Call For State Support, Guidance Amid Covid Recovery

By Tim Kirsininkas
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD - Leaders from the state's tourism and hospitality industry asked legislators for additional support and reopening guidance during a Thursday committee hearing as the state plans next steps for its COVID-19 economic recovery.

Michael Jacobson, President and CEO of the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association, told the House Tourism Committee Thursday that hotels have "been among the hardest hit" segment of the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the industry may not see a full recovery until 2024 at the earliest.

"The situation is certainly looking encouraging, but there's still a lot of work to do in order for the hotel and tourism industry to fully recover," Jacobson said. "This is not going to be a recovery in one or two years, it's going to be a several-year process."

Jacobson said Illinois hotels suffered a loss of \$3.5 billion in revenue and that over 21,000 hotel employees were laid off as a result of the pandemic over the past year.

Jacobson told legislators that allowing events and gatherings to resume in a safe manner as soon as possible and directing federal support dollars to hotels and businesses most impacted by the pandemic would be key to revital-

izing that segment of the economy, which generates billions of dollars in revenue for the state every year.

"Besides keeping our employees and guests healthy and safe, our top priority is simple, getting hotel workers back to work. Our hotels want to get back up and running, but need direct financial support in the short term," Jacobson said.

In addition to short-term financial assistance, Jacobson and industry leaders also said passing limited COVID-19 liability protections for businesses would help hotels and businesses to work toward a full recovery.

However, even with a reopening plan in place, industry leaders said that many questions remain for businesses across the state.

Rob Karr, President and CEO of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, said additional guidance from the state on reopening guidelines would be needed in order for struggling businesses to get back on their feet.

Karr said that while industry leaders welcomed additional flexibility for gatherings under the state's recently announced "bridge phase" to reopening, questions remain over how businesses would effectively enforce capacity guidelines as outlined under the plan.

"We need to maximize our businesses, the theory that you're open and you're doing okay, is just not ac-

curate. No one's businesses were built to survive at 50 percent or even 75 percent occupancy," Karr said.

Under guidelines set forth in the state's bridge phase, vaccinated individuals would not count against a business or venue's capacity restrictions, but Karr questioned how businesses or local authorities would be able to enforce those restrictions.

"Currently, the guidance from the state is businesses each on their own are required to figure out how to prove up whether somebody is fully vaccinated. Respectfully, that's untenable," Karr added.

Jacobson told the committee that a possible alternative would be to base capacity guidelines and mitigations on hospitalization utilization rather than case positivity as more of the state's population is vaccinated.

"This is something that we've seen a big shift in the governor and (Illinois Department of Public Health's) approach in recent weeks, and we are supportive of," Jacobson said.

Derek Blaida, representing the Illinois Restaurant Association, echoed similar concerns for the state's food service industry, which also relies heavily on events and tourism for business.

Blaida said 20 percent of Illinois restaurants are expected to close permanently and that over 124,000 food service jobs have been lost as a result of the pandemic.



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