

**Thomas L. “Tom” Sponseller  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
The Hospitality Association of South Carolina**

Tom Sponseller, who grew up in Greenville, South Carolina attending public schools, began his career in the hospitality industry during high school by working in the fast food industry.

A graduate of The Citadel in Charleston and Tom served as an officer in the United States Air Force and also graduated from the University of North Carolina School Of Business Executive Institute. He is married with three adult children, all of which have worked in the hospitality industry.

Tom spent 18 years with Canteen Corporation, a contract feeding company, as a regional manager for the Midlands of South Carolina. His duties included not only feeding people at work, but also operating the outdoor food concessions for the University of South Carolina Athletic Department. This included Carolina soccer, baseball, softball and football at South Carolina’s largest stadium - Williams-Brice Stadium.

Tom joined the South Carolina Restaurant Association in 1990 as their executive director and helped facilitate the merger with the South Carolina Hotel & Motel Association into the South Carolina Hospitality Association in January 1992. He has served as the principal lobbyist and spokesman for our state’s hospitality and tourism industry for the past twenty-one years.

In 1999, he led the effort to establish a new non-profit statewide educational foundation to develop the state’s only nationally certified high school-to-career program in restaurant and hotel tourism management; college scholarships; and professional development of the state’s largest industry. The high school program has grown from seven high schools in the fall of 2001 to 74 high schools across the state today and is the Department of Education’s approved curriculum for culinary arts and hospitality and tourism.

Tom is a past president of the Cayce West Columbia Rotary Club, past chairman of the Atlantic Carolinas Vending Exposition, and past president of the South Carolina Automatic Merchandising Association. He is past president of the International Society of Hotel Association Executives and a past board member of the International Society of Restaurant Association Executives, and currently serves on the Board of the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute.