



**HEALTH**

**D.C. paid leave vote will go forward**

It's been debated for a year, and it looks like the D.C. Council has the votes to approve one of the most generous paid family leave bills in the country. How will it affect your business? **TINA REED, 12**

**MONEY & TECH**

**Cvent deal is done. What now?**

With its private equity deal closed, CEO Reggie Aggarwal says he's staying on board to lead Cvent's merger with a Texas competitor. **ANDY MEDICI, 14**

**REAL ESTATE INC.**

**Fannie Mae HQ has a new owner**

Roadside Development teams up with a Japanese partner to buy the venerable Wisconsin Avenue NW headquarters. Next up: Come up with a plan. **MICHAEL NEUBAUER, 18**

**EXECUTIVE PROFILE**

## Eat, drink and play



Mike Cordero, here in Barley Mac in Rosslyn, wants to take one of his concepts national.

JOANNE S. LAWTON / STAFF



**EXECUTIVE PROFILE**

**YOU'D LOVE THIS CEO'S LIFE** 38

**W**hen it comes to Northern Virginia eateries, Mike Cordero is prolific. His Macnac Hospitality group operates six spots – including A-Town Bar & Grill, Barley Mac, Don Tito and Don Taco – with another two on the way in Arlington in 2017. The chef and restaurateur is also doing a cookbook, wine label and habanero hot sauce line, begging the question – when does this guy relax?

**Any chances of a D.C. expansion?** Yes, we're actually looking to expand into D.C. Usually, brokers and landlords call me and I go look at the location and the demographics and think about what might fit the area. If the location is AAA, one of the best, I might create a new concept. Right now, I think Northern Virginia is getting tapped out, every [concept] is pretty much covered.

**Why did you start your own wine label?** It's been a passion and something I've had on the back burner for years. I pulled the trigger this year after finding the right winery, a vineyard in California. I'm doing a Pinot Noir, Merlot and Chardonnay, giving guests a great wine and bang for their buck. I'm always looking for that \$100 taste at \$10. We are weeks away from the wine coming into the area. It'll start selling at my restaurants but the plan is to sell to other places as well.

**You're also working on a cookbook:** I'm creating it on my own, with recipes from my background of 40 years being a chef. It has pastas, Latin, some Caribbean. I'm hoping to sell it online and in my restaurants.

**First step into the restaurant business:** At 13, I landed a spot in a pizza joint two blocks from

**THE BASICS**

**Mike Cordero**  
 President, Macnac Hospitality  
**Age:** 57  
**Education:** Attended Stockton State College (now Stockton University)  
**Family:** Girlfriend, Yvette; two sons and a daughter  
**First job:** Shining shoes at 9 years old for 25 cents

Yankee Stadium. I was too young to work, but the owner said, "Hey, nobody checks on us at night." So I worked at night and eventually became a pizza chef. The owner started a company called Italian Delight, and I opened my first restaurant with them and took it across the country. I had 42 restaurants from Florida to New Hampshire at 29 years old. In 1990, the company got an offer we couldn't refuse and we sold to Sbarro.

**Biggest current challenge:** Bringing up other young players and employees so that we can grow. If I'm going to grow this business by myself, it would be impossible. I'm trying to be a mentor.

**Next big goal:** To take one of my concepts nationwide. I think Don Taco would be a good concept for that. It's very unique and very simple to operate if I wanted to franchise. People are looking for a bang for their buck these days, with good service, atmosphere and good food. Here you can get all that and a taco for \$2.75. It's a concept that fits any demographic.

**Best business decision:** Taking on partnerships in

order for me to grow. I had always felt that I had to be 100 percent owner and 100 percent present, but I realized taking on partnerships was helping my employees be successful and letting us grow faster. I don't mind having a small piece of a bigger pie.

**Personality in high school:** I was well-rounded. I was always the joker and wanted to have the last word. What really helped me to stay in school was sports. I played baseball, and that's what helped me. I hated school, but I loved to play.

**Almost pro:** I got signed by the Seattle Mariners to play single A ball for two years. I was 20 and played center field in something called the Caribbean League. But I blew out my knee.

**Favorite teams:** I'm a diehard New Yorker and a Yankees fan. I probably didn't miss a single game from 1973-1975. I'm New York Giants all the way, but I learned that when my team isn't playing the D.C. teams, I'll cheer for the Caps or the Nationals.

**Favorite hobby:** Golf. I've had the pleasure to play a lot of great courses like Congressional Country Club. I play at Old Hickory in Woodbridge a lot. I've only learned in the last five years. I wish I would have learned 20 years ago.

**Favorite place outside of D.C.:** Italy. I love Capri. I think it should be one of the Seven Wonders of the World. You just go and surround yourself by water. It's an amazing place.

— Interview by Emily Van Zandt

Read the full interview  
[www.washingtonbusinessjournal.com](http://www.washingtonbusinessjournal.com)