



CHECK-IN

Focusing on issues important to all members of the Hospitality Industry

Check This Out

✓ **Montana hoteliers are doing their part to keep their state beautiful.**

When tourists visit certain properties, they are asked to contribute a dollar or two to the **Travelers for Open Land program** which aims to preserve those pristine, wide open spaces for generations of tourists to come. More properties are joining this program which works to increase conservation easements. With millions of tourists visiting the state every year, Montanans could very well keep development in check.

✓ **Want to just hang out on your next trip? At one of the world's most unusual hotels, you can. Just book the Harbour Crane located in Harlingen, The Netherlands,** and you'll be treated to a sky-high bedroom for two, complete with breakfast that arrives via lift, and weather permitting, you can dine on the patio. For more fun, step into the control room and swing the cabin around in a complete circle!

✓ **Here's a great idea that takes customer service to the next level.** Embassy Suites' Requests Upon Arrival online program lets guests order complimentary or paid in-room offerings, services, snacks and beverages before arrival. By completing the online process, guests can have extra pillows, a lighter blanket, candy bars (instead of peanuts), non-alcoholic beverages and more on hand in the room when they arrive.

✓ **Women-only floors in hotels are making a comeback.** Female guests can now enjoy in-room **fresh flowers, makeup mirrors, and plush robes,** plus common areas with complimentary snacks, fashion magazines, and more at many hotels across the country.

Terrific stories from our Territory Managers...

Jerry Rodriguez writes about a very special GM who pays it forward every day with daily acts of kindness: "Late last year, I met

Danny Santiago, General Manager at La Quinta Inn & Suites, Schertz, TX, while the

property was still under construction. He had hired a lot of temporary workers to help put the finishing touches on the property (mainly cleaning and

setup). One thing I noticed is that at the end of each shift, Danny shook every worker's hand or gave him/her a hug and a compliment. I thought this was just a nice gesture and then didn't think too much of it. Later on, however, when I visited the property again and met with Danny, he would excuse himself as employees were punching out and getting ready to leave. To each one, he would offer a firm handshake or a great big hug, along with compliments, like 'thank you for your hard work today, I greatly appreciate it' or 'thank you for giving it your best effort today.' Over and over, I'd hear him say the words 'thank you'. I finally asked Danny if he always did this. He answered yes, he believes in taking care of his employees because they take care of the guests. Danny shared with me that he has little to no turnover, and likes keeping his employees

happy. Some employees even follow him from property to property; in fact, one of his employees who had started with him about 8 years ago is now a GM at a sister property."

As Jerry continues, "It's just amazing how a few kind words or a hug can go such a long way."



Looking to expand your business? **Joe Schneider** writes, "The **Quality Inn in Ledgewood, NJ** tried something new to attract

prospective guests. For the first time, they hosted a Taste of Roxbury, and it was a big success! Sponsored by the Roxbury Chamber of Commerce and the Roxbury Economic Development Committee, more than 20 of the area's best restaurants offered 'tastes' of their menus. Tickets cost \$15 each, and entertainment was also provided. While the attendees indulged in an evening of delectable dining, they could see the beautiful renovations recently completed at the property. More than 500 people showed up, double last year's attendance (which was held at another facility). Now many Taste of Roxbury attendees have booked rooms or events at the Quality Inn, and the hotel is looking forward to hosting the event again next year."

For more ideas and suggestions on attracting new customers, see the next page.



Take charge of bedbugs and stay off this list!

With the recent proliferation of bedbugs, it's no wonder there's now a website that lists properties with reported infestations: www.bedbugregistry.com. Take steps to prevent or eliminate these pests by using helpful products like sprays, steam machines and bedding encasements.

Minimum Guidelines for Eco-Friendly Properties

- ◆ Form an Environmental Committee to develop a Green Plan for energy, water, and solid waste use; monitor electric, gas, water, and waste usage monthly and annually.
- ◆ Replace incandescent lamps with CFLs and install digital thermostats throughout the hotel.
- ◆ Implement a towel and/or linen reuse program.
- ◆ Install low-flow showerheads with a maximum of 2.5 gallons per minute (GPM) and 1.6-gallon toilets in all guest room baths
- ◆ Start a recycling program – including public spaces – to the full extent available in your municipality; document your efforts.
- ◆ Implement a recycling program for hazardous materials through licensed service providers.
- ◆ Purchase Energy Star-labeled appliances and equipment.
- ◆ All office paper products should have 20% or more post consumer recycled content.

Source: www.ahla.com

We Love Hearing From You!

In response to a previously asked question about security measures, **Jeff Mazur, Lake of the Woods Resort, Longwood, FL (lakeofthewoodsresort.net)**, has found cameras do the trick at his property:

"I'm the manager of a small 37-room motel with a banquet facility, just east of Orlando Florida. I have found that the best security devices are cameras which I installed 6 years ago. I can't tell you how many questionable situations we were able to handle by watching the walkways and the parking lot. We have our own IP address, so when I am out of town or out of the country, I can also observe the front desk in real-time video 24/7. I stay on top of what's happening even when I'm 2,000 miles away."

Now here's a subject that's on everyone's minds – how to capture more business in a still-tough market. It's more important now than ever before to target new customer segments and keep previous guests coming back for more.

Melody Gaudette, manager of the Red Roof Inn in Plymouth, NH offers these ideas: "Here are several ways I market my hotel to get more business:

1. Blog on websites that I know my guests frequent, like NASCAR racing, rock climbing, etc.
2. Contact guests who have stayed with us for the last two years.
3. Contact tour directors.
4. Trade services with other local businesses to get our hotel's web link placed on their websites.
5. Offer the hotel's corporate rate to contractors.

"I send either a letter or e-mail introducing myself and the hotel, then offer a discounted rate with a specific code so I can track the responses. (We do not combine the offer with others, so our results are clean.) Using these resources and marketing techniques have been very successful for our business."

Thanks, Jeff and Melody, for your comments!



Bill Pickens
Maintenance Editor

Make CFLs Last Even Longer

You may already know that using CFLs saves about 75% in energy costs when compared to incandescent bulbs. In today's tight economy though, you're no doubt looking for even more cost savings and performance. By following these simple tips from Energy Star (energystar.gov), you'll get the most from your CFLs and reap the benefit in your energy bottom line.

1) Do the twist!

Screw in a CFL by holding the ballast (the white plastic part), not the glass tubing.

2) Don't flip too fast.

You'll maximize the lifetime savings and effectiveness of your



CFLs by keeping them on for 15 minutes or more at a time.

3) Choose 3 for 3.

Only use bulbs labeled as three-way in three-way sockets.

4) Don't dim a non-dimmable.

Only use CFL bulbs labeled as dimmable in fixtures with dimmer switches. (Editor's note: Using non-dimmable CFLs in fixtures with a dimmer switch may actually use more energy, not less, and it can also shorten the life of the bulbs).

5) Check your controls.

Most photocells, motion sensors and electric timers are not designed to work with CFLs. Always check with the manufacturer of the control for compatibility.

6) Give them air.

CFLs are sensitive to extreme temperatures, so place them in open

fixtures if using indoors. Using them in enclosed indoor fixtures can create a hot environment that will reduce the lifetime of your bulbs. Note also that covered reflector bulbs are best used in recessed can lights.

7) Protect them outside.

Protect CFLs from the elements by placing them inside enclosed fixtures if using outdoors. If using in colder climates, check the manufacturer's instructions on the package for optimal operating temperatures.

Check the energystar.gov website for more information. This is a great, free resource with lots of other money-saving ideas that can really benefit your property.

Source: www.energystar.gov





Katie Snider
HR Editor

Human Resources News

Considering Employee Uniforms? Here are the issues...

Many employers require employees to wear uniforms or special clothing while they are at work. There are a number of policy considerations for employers who require uniforms or work clothing.

What is a Uniform? According to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), if an employer merely prescribes a general type of ordinary street clothing to be worn while working and permits variations in details of dress, the garments chosen by the employees would not be considered to be uniforms. For example, if an employer's only instructions to employees regarding their attire are that they wear dark trousers or skirts and dark shoes, these items of clothing would not constitute a uniform. On the other hand, if the employer prescribes a specific type and style of clothing to be worn at work, e.g., a restaurant or hotel requires a tuxedo or skirt and blouse or jacket of a specific or distinctive style, color, and quality, such clothing is considered a uniform. Any article of clothing that identifies a specific employer, by virtue of an emblem or logo, or distinctive color scheme, is a uniform.

States have differing definitions of what constitutes a uniform. For example, Illinois law states that when an employer requires an employee to purchase street clothes either from the employer or from third party designated by the employer, the clothing must be considered a uniform.

Who Pays? Many organizations provide uniforms or required clothing at no cost to the employee. Employers also have the option to purchase distinct uniform parts for employees and then require employees to purchase and wear a certain type or color pant or footwear to complement the company-provided uniform components. An employer may wish to consider providing employees with additional uniform parts as needed. For example, if an employee is required to wear a uniform on a daily basis, multiple parts, such as shirts, might be given to the employee in anticipation of frequent and repeated wear. An employer may provide employees with a clothing allowance so that an employee can purchase special clothing then be reimbursed either fully or partially by the employer.

While most employers consider employee uniforms to be a cost of doing business, the law does permit employers to require employees to pay for the uniforms as long as such payments do not bring employees' wages below minimum wage.

Laundry and Maintenance. The costs of laundering and maintaining uniforms are typically the employees' responsibility. However, if uniforms or work clothing require special (dry) cleaning or fitting, the employer may wish to reimburse the employee for those expenses. According to the FLSA, if a uniform requires special cleaning, other than regular washing with an employee's personal clothing, a uniform maintenance reimbursement must be paid either by reimbursing the exact amount of cleaning or by paying the employee one hour of additional, straight time pay. To find more information about FLSA guidelines, go to www.osha.gov/pls/epub/wageindex.download?p_file=F11211/wh1428.pdf.

Normal replacement of uniforms or special clothing is often assumed by employers, except in instances of employee negligence.

Damage, Loss or Failure to Return Uniforms. To determine what an employer may do if an employee loses, damages, or fails to return a uniform, both federal and state laws must be examined. On the federal side, the FLSA allows an employer to deduct from employee wages to recover uniform costs, unless the deduction brings the employee's hourly pay below the minimum wage of \$5.85 per hour or \$8.78 per hour for overtime wages. For detailed information, see the Department of Labor's Fact Sheet #16: Deductions from Wages for Uniforms and Other Facilities Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) at www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/whd/whdfs16.htm.

Source: Amy Wangerin, SPHR, Human Resources Director, HR Digest, MRA-The Management Association, Inc., January 2008

Think and L.E.A.R.N.

- L – Listen to guests when they explain problems or issues**
- E – Empathize with guests so they feel cared for and understood**
- A – Apologize to guests when they experience a difficult situation**
- R – Respond to guests about issues in a timely manner**
- N – Notify the appropriate person to help fix the issue and to help prevent the problem in the future**



Send us your ideas – we'll send you \$25!

What have you done for a guest (or guests) that really goes "above and beyond?"

E-mail or fax us & include your full name, property name, and address.

2009 Calendar

Trade shows and conventions are a fantastic way to find out what's new and what's happening in the industry. Here are some events scheduled for the coming months.

Resort Hotel Association 23rd Annual Conference

July 10 - 13; Woodstock, VT; www.resorthotelinsurance.com

Destination Marketing Association – 95th Annual Convention

July 28 - 30; Atlanta, GA; www.destinationmarketing.org

78th Semi-Annual CHART Hospitality Training Conference

July 25 - 29; Cleveland, OH; www.chart.org

STR Inaugural Hotel Data Conference

Aug. 4 - Aug. 5; Nashville, TN; www.hoteldataconference.com

HSMIA's Affordable Meetings Exhibition & Conference

Aug. 23 - Aug. 26; Washington, D.C.; www.hsmia.org

Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo

Aug. 30 - Sept. 1; San Diego, CA; www.westernfoodexpo.com

HFTP Annual Convention & Trade Show 2009

Sept. 16 - 19; Las Vegas, NV; www.hftp.org

AH&LA Fall Conference

Nov. 6 - 10; New York, NY; www.ahla.com

International Hotel/Motel & Restaurant Show

Nov. 7 - 10; New York, NY; www.ihmrs.com

Quick Quote

There is no moment of delight in any pilgrimage like the beginning of it.

— Charles Dudley Warner

✓ Check Out

We hope you've enjoyed this issue.

Your feedback, suggestions, stories, and ideas make our newsletter interesting and useful. Please take a moment to jot down your thoughts and send them to us.

E-Mail: check-in@americanhotel.com

Mail:

American Hotel Register Company
Attention: Check-In
100 South Milwaukee Ave.
Vernon Hills, IL 60061

Fax: 847-743-1083

Please note: Submitted photos and information are not returnable. Submissions may be edited for space and clarity.

Check-In is published four times a year by American Hotel Register Company.

Editor: Lynda Jeppesen

 **american**
HOTEL REGISTER COMPANY
Hospitality Experts Since 1865



Jim Leahy

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

In the last newsletter, I promised to continue my list of strategies to help you survive and thrive when faced with the uncertainties and disappointments of life. This is part two of four parts.

9) If your family or friends tell you that you are subject to bursts of anger over trivial things, deal with it. It's probably ancient stuff you haven't let go of. Forgive abundantly every old memory of pain and every incident, every past hurt that comes to mind. Heal yourself of that old pain and anger by forgiving yourself. In moments of pain or feelings of unworthiness, forgive yourself with the words "I forgive you." And mean it! LET GO!!

10) Do you spend your time and money in ways that match your values? Is your lifestyle consistent with the person you strive to be? Name your values! Make changes where appropriate.

11) If you still blame your parents or past events for what you've become, STOP. Take ownership of creating your present and future. What you are today and what you will be tomorrow is now your choice.

12) Be conscious of your attitudes and acknowledge them: attitudes about a "loving" God, about men, about women, about alcohol, money, death, foul language, aging, TV, work, minorities, the meaning of life and a thousand other things. Decide to change any attitudes that are no longer valid or helpful. Too often our unconscious attitudes keep us locked into the "selves" that we chose to be in our teen years. I sometimes meet people in their 50's who seem to think and speak like 18 year olds. They haven't achieved the wisdom, maturity, patience, or tolerance which usually comes with age. I suspect they refuse to re-examine old attitudes and learn from their life experiences. As we change our attitudes, we change our responses to people and to life. By updating our attitudes, we find that we change the person who we are.

13) Seek to be alive each moment. Live in the present! When life is over, be able to look back knowing that you have lived well, achieved success in whatever arena you have chosen, and became a man or woman of love, of happiness, of service, and generosity.

The list will be continued in our next newsletter.

Love,

Jim

The list will be continued in our next newsletter. If you can't wait, go to www.americanhotel.com ▶ Check-In.

Read Check-In online at www.americanhotel.com ▶ Check-In