



CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL SM

Franchisee Associations

Spring 2006

In Remembrance of ELFA President Sandhya U. Patel

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Our association is saddened with the loss of a great leader. ELFA President Sandhya Patel passed away on February 03, 2006. Sandhya had been involved with the Choice Hotels family for the past fourteen years, and with her husband Umesh, owned and operated a three time Gold Award winning Econo Lodge in Ben Lomond, California. She dedicated much of her time by serving the ELFA membership and various lodging association boards. Most recently she was Presi-

dent for ELFA and representative of the Counsel of Inn & Suites for AH&LA. Sandhya created the C.A.R.E. program (Communication, Awareness, Relations, Education) during her leadership tenure for the ELFA membership, a unique acronym to establish a better form of communication with the member licensees. Directors were tasked to represent the interest of the membership and better communicate using this program. Sandhya was a key driver in the success of co-op marketing. She was a pioneer in working with Mid-scale Directors in a harmonious environment. Sandhya was also involved in working closely with CHOC (Choice Hotels Owners Council) in joint task forces and

the success of Fall Regional Meetings.

In 2005 Sandhya was honored by AAHOA as "Woman of the Year" for her achievements and commitment to the lodging industry. She was recognized by different associates throughout her professional carrier as an accomplished business-woman and leader. We celebrate her life as one with many accomplishments. Thank you Sandhya, for deeply touching all of us and giving us the joy of knowing you as a leader, a colleague, a mentor, a dear friend, and a family member. Your spirit will continue to influence us all by way of your many contributions to this association.

By: Mr. Kevin Akash on behalf of the ELFA Board of Directors

How to be right without making other people wrong

What exactly are we trying to accomplish by proving to others that we're right? We might win the argument but ultimately lose the relationship. Perhaps a better, deeper-rooted question is this: Why do we lose sight of success, of our big objective, when we feel challenged or intimidated?

When I prepare to negotiate, provide a service or turn my employees' talent into performance, I know deep down that if I make people feel valuable they will see my input as having value. But in that moment when they are just hands-down, across-the-board dead wrong, I sometimes can't stop myself from letting them know how incredibly wrong they are. When that happens, my ability to influence them vaporizes on the spot, and I'm left dealing with the response I created by making them wrong.

I think this is the most consistently counterproductive thing we do in business and, I suspect, in our personal lives too. It may be the foundation of communication breakdown.

Maybe this behavior is so prevalent because it's part of human nature. Could we be natural born jerks?

(Jerkdom – nature or nurture?) If so, how do we overcome the urge to prove our point at the expense of our business or relationship?

Wynn Solutions studied thousands of top communicators and saw a common behavior among them: the practice of not making people wrong. We decided to find out how they did it.

We discovered that these top communicators lowered their expectations of other people's behavior before meeting with them face to face. It seemed to reduce the tendency to overreact in the heat of the moment. Also, they walked in the door with an agenda of not making the other person wrong and of looking for areas where the other person's knowledge was strong. So when that moment came – when other people made their limited knowledge obvious – top communicators were not so ready to pounce.

This approach may sound a bit condescending to some, but it sure beats dealing with communication issues you create for yourself by having to prove you're the smartest person in the room. It allows you to be right without making others feel wrong.

Garrison Wynn is a nationally known speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the president and founder of Wynn Solutions, specializing in turning talent into performance.

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Econo Lodge Franchisee Associate Announces New President

Leonard Richardson is the new Econo Lodge Franchisee Association President. He has been the Region IV Director for 6 years, and has served as the Association's Secretary for 2 years, and as Vice President under Sandhya Patel.

He and his family have been involved in the industry in some capacity for many years but entered the Choice Hotels family in 1987 with the opening of their Comfort Inn (VA448) and

a Rodeway Inn which they soon converted to an Econo Lodge (VA231). The Comfort Inn has been a Gold Award winning property since opening their doors and the Econo Lodge was an Inn of the Year nominee in 2000. A third property, Econo Lodge Oceanfront (VA051), a property which the family sold just a few months ago, won the Inn of the Year in 2002.

Leonard has been involved in the local Virginia Beach Hotel Motel Association, serving as a member of the

VBHMA Board of Directors for several years. He has since concentrated all his energies on behalf of the ELFA Board of Directors. "I find it an honor to be involved with such a dedicated group of volunteers. We all bring a different perspective, and a different agenda to the process but somehow this board manages to be a very effective advocate for the members we represent. I firmly believe we have made great strides at helping to position our brand, Econo Lodge, towards a stronger, brighter future."

From ELFA President ~ Leonard Richardson

Econo Lodges of America
Franchise Association, Inc.



I find myself in the unusual position as your new ELFA President. I say unusual because I am the first unelected President of this Association. My dear friend Sandhya Patel, our fearless leader, passed away on February 3 of this year. She was an inspiration for this board, and we will all miss her very much. Hopefully, we can continue her work with the same sense of purpose and dedication she brought to the job every single day.

Every year, the Spring season brings with it a sense of renewal and revitalization. The Officers and Directors of ELFA hope to bring a renewed sense of thoughtfulness and direction to this venerable organization as well. Choice Hotels

Brand Management has plans for some big changes which this board is considering, and it is our purpose to make sure that our licensee members interests are at the forefront of the discussion.

In 2004, this board was instrumental in organizing a Strategic Plan review for Econo Lodge to make sure we were not losing ground to our competitive set. We included as part of that process a thorough review of our competitors, and a thorough review of our own system. Brand Identity, Marketing messages, Operational organization and regulations were all a part of this review. We were very proud of our work, and it resulted in some significant changes for our brand. But these changes were not just part of the ongoing amenity war between brands, they were instead well thought out reviews of Guest Expectations.

We instituted BreakFAST, larger televisions, premium movie channels, uniform and lobby changes to our Rules and Regulations. Most of these items were already in place in the vast majority of our properties but now they are requirements, because the Guest expects them. The total cost of these items to the individual property owners was very small and resulted in an overall move towards uniformity across the brand.

Now we are in discussions with Brand Management in some more strategic areas, which Choice Hotels is optimistic can provide us with an edge over our competition. The Board is actively studying some of these proposals, but as the details are still being formulated it is difficult for us to take a position for or against them. We are asking that any new proposals include a cost analysis for typical properties, an expectation for a positive return on investment, and a well thought out commitment to a significant and substantial marketing plan to roll out the *NEW* Econo Lodge to the consumer.

Some of the areas under consideration are High Speed Internet Access by means of a wireless lobby hotspot, Choice Advantage PMS mandated for Economy brands, a new amenity package to include shampoo and/or lotion, and the possibility of a Capital Improvement project similar to the exterior renovation project a few years ago. Key components for Choice to gain the endorsement of this board will be our return on investment, cost control and cost sharing measures, and marketing plan commitments.

We fully expect to work in a partnership with Choice Hotels, extending a long tradition of mutual cooperation and respect for each other. The Officers and Directors of the ELFA Board are ever mindful that they are not representing themselves, and are not here to seek personal advantage, but rather to work on what is right with this Brand and move it forward. We look forward to representing the Econo Lodge licensees in these Strategic discussions, to minimize the cost impact as much as possible, and always to continue to move the Brand in a positive direction.

We look forward to seeing everyone at convention in Nashville, and hope you will join us at our Roundtable meetings and General Membership meeting, as well as attending the Econo Lodge Brand corporate meetings. I ask for your support as well, and I promise to represent you as well as I am able. Please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can do for you.

Leonard Richardson

Ph: 757-428-2203

Email: Econooceanfront@aol.com

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CHOICE ANNOUNCES 2006 SED AND LFF RATE PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

Choice Hotels has announced changes to the Employee Discount (SED) and Friends & Family (LFF) rate plans, with the support of the Econo Lodge Franchisee Association (ELFA) and Rodeway Owners Association (ROA). The enhancements are aimed at making the plans more attractive while maintaining the rates as an important employee benefit and a source of incremental business for Choice property owners.

Instead of a single rate (currently \$25 for SED and \$39 for LFF), each plan will have three possible rates. also support the revised plans.

"The newly enhanced tier program is consistent with what other hotel chains offer and will be based upon an individual hotel's average daily rate (ADR) excluding SED and LFF sales during the four seasons of the past 12 months," said Don Brockway, vice president of reservations operations for Choice. "Our programs have been very successful and we want to enhance future availability of this benefit. Most hotel chains offer multiple rates and seasons to provide a reasonable return for participating

hotels while offering an outstanding benefit to employees."

The SED and LFF rates and seasons for the new rates will be auto-loaded into hotel databases and are as follows:

Average Daily Rate	SED	LFF Rate
Up to \$ 63.00	\$25.00	\$39.00
\$63.01 to \$99.99	\$35.00	\$49.00
100.00 and up	\$55.00	\$69.00

"The data and channel management department will load LFF at any hotel that doesn't currently have the program beginning this spring. Once the program is activated, hotel personnel will have full control over availability for rooms at their properties. It is important to note, however, that if a hotel does not meet the minimum availability requirements that will be determined by owner groups, owners and employees of such properties might not be able to make SED or LFF reservations at participating hotels."

The four seasons for the new SED and LFF program will match those used by the Choice Privileges rewards program and are as follows:

September 15 to November 15

November 16 to March 15

March 16 to May 15

May 16 to September 14

Once rates are established on ADR, no changes can be made to the new rates, which will become effective in early February. Specific dates will be announced in administrative messages, e-mails, ChoiceCentral and *The Times*. If you have additional questions, contact your CHOC, ELFA or ROA or your franchise services director.

By: Donald Brockway
VP, Reservations Operations

Data Security It's Everyone's Business

Protect your good reputation and keep your guests happy

With the explosive growth of identity theft, data security has become more than just important — it's mandatory. MasterCard® and Visa® Operating Regulations now require merchants to store cardholder account information in a secure manner to prevent it from being accessible to criminals.

Your system needs to be compliant with Visa's CISP regulations so your customers can make reservations online or over the phone and be assured their card information is secure.

When your guests check in it's important to follow procedures that will further ensure the security of their data. If you need to check a guest's ID, you shouldn't write down any information such as Driver License number or Social Security number. This type of data could be used to commit identity theft. Normally

there is no need to check a guest's ID as long as the card is signed.

The CARDHOLDER copy of your electronic sales receipts should only display the last four or five digits of the account number. Legislation is being passed which makes this mandatory in a growing number of states.

Keep the MERCHANT copy of your sales receipts in a secure location, and limit their access to select members of your organization. Merchant copies will still display the full card account number in many cases, plus the card expiration date and the cardholder's signature. Information of this nature cannot be allowed to fall into the wrong hands!

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GENE AMMONS, JR., CHA

1966-2006

“These are not shoes you try to fill, but shoes you bronze”

Gene Ammons, Jr. served as the President of the Choice Hotels Owners Council from November 2004 until February 2006. He was a true leader of this organization and brought it through the full Governance review and first time elections of national delegates.

Gene was a third generation hotelier in Fayetteville, NC and owner/operator of the Quality Inn Ambassador, Sleep Inn of Fayetteville, and Fairfield Inn I-95. He began his participation with the

Choice Hotels Owners Council in 1996, serving through the years on the Sleep Committee, Operations & Standards Committee, Bylaws Task Force and Chairman of the Awards Committee. He served as the Vice Chairman of Region 3 in 2001-2003, served as the Region 3 Chairman in 2004 and was elected to serve out the unexpired term of the CHOC Treasurer in 2004. He also served in 1994 as a Presidential Appointee to the Econo Lodge Franchisee Association. His hotels earned one Inn of the Year Award, 28 Gold Hospitality Awards, and one Platinum Hospitality Award.

Not only was Gene dedicated to the Choice Hotels Owners Council, but he

was dedicated to his community serving as the Chairman of the Fayetteville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, as well as a founding board member of the Tourism Development Authority. He was co-owner of Sterling J. Farm in Linden, NC, a 500 acre farm where he raised beef cattle, horses, donkey and hay.

Gene Ammons, Jr. was devoted to his family and was recently elected to serve on the Board of his children's school. Choice Hotels Owners Council thanks the family, his wife Lee J. Ammons, sons Holden and Chase, as well as his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gene Ammons for sharing Gene's many talents, skills and leadership with the organization

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Choice Hotels Successfully Completes AAA Appreciation Days Activities

Two hundred volunteers. One thousand offices. Nearly 8,600 agents, counselors and managers in the U.S. and 10,000 kits of materials distributed. Those were the numbers when the week was complete.

From March 13-17, Choice field associates and franchisees hosted AAA Appreciation Days by hitting the road to say "thank you" to AAA agents and counselors for generating more than \$200 million of revenue for Choice in 2005.

Included in the list of volunteers were ELFA members Ross Almo, Mahendra Patel and Poovin Pillay and ROA member Bruce Faltin.

The AAA Appreciation Week objectives included:

Strengthening AAA agents' loyalty to Choice with a "thank you" gift of LFF rates for a stay at a Choice hotel during March 17 through May 15.

Increasing business from AAA agents by promoting the spring promotions for the economy and midscale brands.

Drive incremental business during competitive spring season with customized agent and counselor booking incentives.

In addition to the office visits, Allan Lockhart-Kane, vice president, intermediary marketing and worldwide sales, and Caroline Racine, director, intermediary marketing and worldwide sales, promoted the AAA Appreciation Days during their participation in the AAA/CAA Eastern Conference attended by CEOs, presidents and other key club delegates of clubs east of the Mississippi. Heavy emphasis was placed on promoting Appreciation Days to the 200+ attendees during a Choice sponsored breakfast event and through in-room gifts and customized materials.

"The AAA Appreciation Days program was undeniably a success," said Lockhart-Kane. "The AAA offices and headquarter clubs were extremely positive about our visits, and agents and counselors seemed to appreciate our LFF "thank you" gift and gas card booking incentives."

By: Caroline Racine, director,
intermediary marketing &
worldwide sales

Rodeway Inn Year-End Performance Caps Record Year for Choice's Budget Brand Hotel

When Choice Hotels International closed the books on 2005, it closed the books on a record-breaking year of growth for the Rodeway Inn brand. A total of 75 new Rodeway Inn hotel contracts were executed in 2005, marking the best year ever for the brand according to Ron Burgett, vice president franchise sales and development for Choice Hotels.

Of the 75 contracts, 43 were executed following a franchisee fee restructuring initiative. And as if that figure weren't impressive enough, those 43 deals were six more than the 37 contracts executed for the brand in all of 2004.

"The exponential growth of Rodeway Inn properties in 2005 is a testament not only to the hard work of the hotel's sales development team and hard work by Kevin Bradt, senior director of brand strategy for the Choice Hotels economy brands, but also the realization by hotel developers of the value of the Rodeway Inn brand," Burgett said. "Rodeway Inn hotels ranked first in



percentage growth of new properties for Choice for 2005 with a 103 percent increase in deals signed during 2005 compared to 2004."

Choice Hotels began 2005 with 164 Rodeway Inn properties and ended the year with 180 open hotels representing more than 11,000 rooms across North America, a nearly 10 percent net online opening increase in Rodeway Inn properties compared to 2004.

Reservation contribution for Rodeway Inn hotels also rose during 2005.

By : Christina Goldie, director
Development marketing



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So register today and find out how easy and fun it can be to Unlock the SAFE and Reap the Rewards.

Thank you again for being a trusted and valued partner.

Visit us at the Choice Convention Marketplace Booth # 440

George Oelschig
President & CEO
Safemark Systems

Sales Training Tips for Today's Multitasking Caller

Of the many changes the hospitality industry has endured in the past decade or two, perhaps the biggest changes of all can be observed in the calls being fielded by our sales, front-desk and reservations sales teams. One obvious change is that callers generally are much better informed, having done their research online at our Web site and others before placing their call. As a result, we have had to train those who field sales and reservations calls to be much more informed regarding the smallest of details regarding our destination, location and facilities versus just being familiar with room types.

But an even bigger challenge we need to address in sales training these days is how to deal with today's multitasking callers. Whether calling about business, leisure or a group/function, callers these days seem more distracted than ever, and it appears to be getting worse.

From what I recall during my stint as a front-desk reservations agent, and eventually sales manager in the early 1980s, fielding telephone sales calls in the hotel business has never been easy, but at least we could count on the inquiry caller's full attention once they dialed our number. Of course that was also back in the era when the telephone was the device that hung on the wall in the kitchen or that sat on the end table in the living room and still was attached by a phone cord to the wall. Today's commonly heard phrase, "Honey, where's the phone?" had never been uttered yet, and we never had to dig the cordless out of the sofa cushions following an exhaustive 10-minute search of our home. In terms of selling over the telephone, it was a lot easier to sell to someone who was at least listening to and focusing on the conversation their hotel salesperson was having with them.

Today, one just never knows what they might hear in the background while fielding hotel sales and reservations inquiries. With the freedom extended by cordless phones in our homes, cell phones when we're out, headsets so we can talk with our hands and voice over Internet protocol, people are talking on the phone in just about every location imaginable!

Salespeople today are never surprised to hear background noises like aircraft boarding announcements, waiters offering another round and the sound of running water, although in the last instance they always hope it is just someone doing their dishes. Not to mention, today's sales agents still have to deal with the same old-time challenges like barking dogs, screaming children

and spouses saying "Honey, honey, ask them about..."

There basically are two approaches salespeople today can take in managing calls placed by these multitaskers. One is to continue to let these callers and their lack of respect annoy and disgust or accept the new reality and do whatever we can on our end to make the best of the sales opportunity at hand. Because the use of personal technology devices seems to be expanding worldwide rather than going away, perhaps it's time to address this issue with the sales team instead of allowing the staff's annoyances to fester. Here are some training tips for your next sales meeting:

- Command attention with your opening greeting. A clear, charismatic opening will grab the attention of the caller early on and make him or her want to engage while listening to you.
- Paraphrase and recap the caller's stated needs. Showing callers that you are giving them your full attention fosters the same level of respect from them. Nearly every call begins with a stated need and reason for calling such as: "We need to be in the area for a wedding on May 20 and are bringing our two children." A personalized replay will immediately convey your genuine interest in assisting and show that you respect their individuality.
- Assume control of the call by asking permission to take the lead. After paraphrasing their stated needs, use a statement of transition to turn the tides and take lead for the rest of the call. "All right then Mr. Perez, if I can get a few more details I can research the best options for you right now. ..."
- Ask direct questions to "check in" during the call. By checking in regularly with questions such as "How does that sound?" and "Which of those would you prefer?" you'll encourage the caller to continue to listen actively to avoid missing anything. Be especially sure to ask these questions if you are not hearing "verbal nods" from your caller such as "oh, I see," "OK" and "aah."
- Bring the caller into the "picture." When describing your "product" for the caller, to help them picture in their minds what you are describing by using the word "you" when describing benefits. Rather than saying laundry-listing a bunch of "we haves," captivate their attention by

switching to "you can enjoy," "you can take advantage of," and "you can benefit from."

- Make it easy for them to secure the opportunity. As with any sales inquiry, the main objective is to end the call with a confirmed booking. However, if the inquiry caller is driving on an interstate or on board an aircraft that is about to shut its boarding doors, it's sometimes just not possible to get a credit card to seal the deal. So make it easy for them to "secure" the reservation or group booking by offering a "courtesy hold" for a limited period of time, especially when doing so has no down-side for the hotel (such as when they are calling for dates well in advance or when they are calling about a reservation for tonight and it is obvious the hotel still will have plenty of rooms.)

Like everything else in the profession of sales, there are no across-the-board solutions or magic formulas. But if you use techniques such as these and make a concerted effort to do your best to accept the circumstances of the overstuffed, overscheduled lives our guests lead, you can be assured of capturing more than your market share in any sales arena.

Douglas Kennedy

A link to my website: www.douglaskennedy.com



The following copy: "Originally published in www.hotelmotel.com "

Economy Brands Summer Media

What would your guests do if they won a million dollars? Well, here's their chance to find out. This summer, the Econo Lodge® and Rodeway Inn® brands are inviting consumers to visit choicehotels.com to enter the Key-to-a-Million Sweepstakes. One lucky winner will win \$50,000 and have the opportunity to pick one of 20 hotel keys to win \$1 million dollars. This original summer promotion is designed to generate excitement and awareness of the Econo Lodge and Rodeway Inn brands.

As always, Choice has planned an extensive and exciting integrated media plan to support the Econo Lodge and Rodeway Inn brands summer promotion. We are running advertisements on national radio networks including Westwood One, ABC Radio stations, Dial Communications-Global Media, Premiere Radio Networks and the syndicated Tom Joyner radio show. We are also maintaining a

presence in national print publications and online.

To ensure we appeal to our target audience, we purchased a mixture of sports and general entertainment radio programming. A good example is Westwood One, where our ads appear on CBS News Max, CBS Mix Weekend, NBC Lite FM, Charles Osgood, Tom Martino, Radio Factor with Bill O'Reily, NHL Conference Finals and the Stanley Cup.

With ABC Radio Networks, we air on popular programs such as ABC Prime Reach, ABC Music, Sean Hannity, ABC Information Weekend, Decades and Regular Season Major League Baseball (MLB), all of which are guaranteed to appeal to our audience.

As an exciting part of the advertising buy with Premiere Radio Networks, we are a co-sponsor of the CMA Music

Festival (formerly "FanFair") this summer. As a sponsor, we will give away two tickets to the festival including airfare for two and accommodations at an Econo Lodge or Rodeway Inn hotel. To promote the giveaway and the economy brands, we plan to air radio spots and on-air mentions on Foxworthy Countdown. Our ads will also be featured on programming such as Fox News Radio Network, Big D & Bubba, Delilah, Steve Harvey Show, Out of Bounds and News track.

Additional advertising with Dial Communications-Global Media will be featured on NewsTalk Weekday, D-G Country Network, D-G Weekend Music, John Tesh, the Laura Ingraham Show and Dr. Joy Browne, and with Jones Media America on Lia and the NASCAR Busch Series.

In addition to radio, we are running national print advertising in *USA Today*, *Budget Travel*, *Inside Flyer* and *Southwest Spirit* along with specific market ads in *Business Travel News*, *Travel Agent*, *Travel Weekly* and *Federal Times*. We also advertise on websites including Frommers and CNNMoney.com, and we target key intermediary segments through govexec.com and travelweekly.com, among others.

The variety of radio programming, national print and online venues allows us not only to generate excitement surrounding the national summer promotion with an integrated media approach, but also to communicate directly to our core target audience.

Be sure to check out your summer promotion kits, which will arrive during the week of May 15th. For more information, contact the promotion hotline at 301.592.6334.

By: Kelli Peter

Manager, North American Advertising



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Presidential Address From the Rodeway Owners Association

Springtime greetings to each of you. It is my pleasure to keep you updated through this newsletter.

First of all, I wish to pay respect to two of our esteemed colleagues who passed away recently.

Gene Ammons, Jr. was president of the Choice Hotels Owners Council and a great leader in our Choice family. Gene worked exceptionally hard to be inclusive of all associations and to always share any credit and achievement as a team. His respect for others and their opinions was always a comment to describe his interactions. Our condolences go to his wife, Lee, and their two sons Holden and Chase.

Sandhya Patel was the president of the Econo Lodge Franchisee Association and leader in her community and the Asian American Hotel Owners Association. She was unfailing in her dedication to her work, family and community and very active and involved in spite of her health issues. We applaud her contributions and send condolences to her devoted family, husband, Umesh, daughter Hetal and sons Anuj and Bijal.

We do have some great news for our licensees. Our Rodeway system has increased substantially since the restructuring of the flat rate. Of the 75 contracts executed in 2005, 43 were executed after the restructure. Kevin Bradht, Senior Director of Brand Strategy, indicated that our properties have increased from 164 to 182 and will increase to 200 properties by the end of 2006.

Thanks to his team's strategies and efforts of Rodeway Inn, once a sleeping giant, is now awakening and continuing to expand. This property growth will certainly give our Rodeway more power in the market providing increased awareness of Rodeway. With properties on the

increase, we certainly want to keep our focus on the quality of our property by emphasizing our Great value and guest satisfaction continuing to provide consistent good service.

Our "Choice Room" will continue to assist in our Rodeway identification. The Rodeway property should consist of at least 10% Choice Rooms or a minimum of 5 rooms. The Choice Room, which offers a coffee maker, light bulbs of at least 100 watts, display alarm clock, full length mirror, hand held hair dryer, iron and ironing board will continue to attract repeat customers. Micro-fridges are under consideration to further enhance our "Choice Room's" quality. The keyword for our continental breakfast should continue to be "fresh", as in fresh coffee, fresh orange juice, and fresh donuts. The EA\$Y Choice Program also identifies Rodeway uniquely by encouraging guests to return with frequency. We need to continue to emphasize this program. I am personally very excited about the new ChoiceAdvantage property management system. The system is a well controlled reservations system that monitors overbooking, underbooking and maximizes room revenue. My property has already experienced an increased ADR and Rev Par in just two months use of this system.

My front desk loves the benefits and ease of operation of ChoiceAdvantage. I encourage all of you to seize the opportunity to implement this system as soon as possible. We extend our gratitude to Janna Morrison, and Christopher Yellen for providing us the staff and resources to facilitate this system.

I hope all of you have the Dates of May 17-19 marked to attend the Choice Annual Convention to be held in Nashville. The convention is a wonderful time to renew friendships or make new ones, engage in

informative education sessions with topics covering guest satisfaction, AAA, ChoiceAdvantage, rules and regulations and marketing. You will enjoy participating in the general membership meeting, the reception and dinner. The entire program allows us time to exchange our ideas to develop our individual properties. I look forward to seeing you in Music City USA and encourage you to click on the convention link at ChoiceCentral.com to register if you have not already done so.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome Neil Bhakta as a new Board of Director member from our western Region IV. If you need to contact Neil his number is 760-522-0441.

Other region directors are as follows:

Northeast Region I
(DC, DE, CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, WV, VT)

Matt Philbin
781-284-3663

Southeast Region II
(AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN)

Kay Collier-Pittman
865-453-2526

Central Region III
(AK, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, MT, ND, NE, OH, OR, SD, WA, WI)

Bruce Faltin,
VP/Acting Director
208-376-2700

**We currently have a vacancy in:
Central Region III**

If you have an interest in this vacancy please contact either Jim Hu or Ross Almo.

Jimmy Hu ~ President
210-223-2951

Ross Almo ~
Executive Director ROA and ELFA
802- 786-2260

Jimmy Hu, ROA President

In Front of the Water Cooler, with Bob

Robert Thompson, ELFA Region VI Co-op Director, Massena, NY

Good Morning all, spring is around the bend and we are all gearing up for another, hopefully, busy summer. I've been sitting around burning the old midnight oil trying to figure out how to drive government business in my off peak seasons and even in, blasphemous, during my peak season. I came to the sad conclusion that if I don't or won't offer both then they will go to my competitors, which makes them happy but doesn't do a thing for me or my bottom line, and we all know that's what it's all about. Word of advice to all of you newcomers or even experienced people when dealing with government and trying to get a government contract, make it a weekly habit to check for contracts being offered in your area. I know it sounds difficult but it really isn't and I'll even give you the e-mail address and several others you might not know about, but I'm getting ahead of myself so here goes. The first thing you must do is register to get any government contracts, you can do this by going to www.ccr.gov, to register you must use your Dunn and Bradstreet number, just call Dunns. It takes ap-

proximately 25 minutes to complete the form. Once your registered you will receive an e-mail back in approximately 2 weeks either accepting your application or telling you what you have to fix to complete your registration. Secondly I highly recommend you go to the following email address: www.sba.gov/size/sizeable2002.html to determine if your company qualifies for any special consideration in the government contracting realm. These include, but are not limited to: if the owner is a minority, (women, disabled veteran, veteran), if you do meet these criteria you are placed at the head of the line for contracts. If you are a veteran of the United States military and disabled or even honorably discharged please go to the following address and register for even more government contracts, www.vetbiz.gov. This sight is run by the United States Veterans Administration and is to be used by veterans only, but still offers a chance at government contracts. Another good sight that you may use is the main government contract sight: www.fedbizopps.gov. I highly recommend you visit this sight weekly and review con-

tracts being let in your area. Once you spot a likely contract, apply, don't wait for them to come to you because it probably will never happen. The following web sites are ones that I have discovered and all have contracts out for bid. If you get lost and need help call Choice Hotels Int'l and ask for the office of government contracting and they will and can help...Here are some other email contacts for your records that you can peruse at your leisure:

PTAC-Procurement Technical Assistant Center-www.dla.mil/db/procurem.html

SBDC-Small Business Development Center-www.sba.gov/sbdc/sbdcnear/html

OSDBU-Office of Small and Disadvantage Business Utilization-www.osbdu.gov/listofmembers/html

Well that's all I have for this issue, I hope it helps, if not, don't blame me, just shoot the messenger. I hope to see everyone in Nashville, look for the old, fat, bald guy who denies everything!!!!

The Final Paycheck

Employers often have questions about how to handle the final paycheck for an employee. Some states have rules for when the employee is to receive their final check. For example, in Texas, the final check must be issued within 6 calendar days if the separation is involuntary and the 6th day falls on a day the business is normally open. If the work separation is voluntary, the employee can be paid on the next regularly scheduled payday. Another issue is whether the employer can take special deductions out of the last paycheck. I've had several questions on whether the employer can deduct training costs, uniforms or loans on the final check. Other issues are recovering cash drawer shortages or the value of missing equipment. One problem for employers is the US Dept of Labor rule which requires the employee receive no less than \$5.15/hour for regular hours and time and a half for overtime hours. A few states have minimum wage requirements above \$5.15. For example, Illinois is currently \$6.50/hour, Florida \$6.15, and Wisconsin \$5.70. The employer is unable to take a special deduction from any check that brings the paid wages below the minimum wage. Thus, the employer is sometimes unable to recover all their costs when a termination occurs. Most states and most PEO companies require a written authorization form signed by the employee prior to any payroll deductions. In the absence of a written deduc-

tion form, the employee would usually win if they were to make a wage claim to their state or to the DOL. If uncertain about the rules for the final paycheck, contact your PEO directly, or call your state labor department office.

Written by Ronald Rice of Diamond Corporate Services, Inc. Mr. Rice is an outsourcing consultant who helps franchise owners handle payroll, human resources, medical insurance and workers compensation through employee outsourcing programs. Out-

sourcing can help an owner increase their buying power. For further information, call him at 512-431-7620 or send an email to ron@peosales.com.

Disclaimer: Anyone reading this material should not rely on it as a substitute for specific legal advice. This material is not written by attorneys, is not intended as legal advice, nor should it be used as legal advice regarding employment law or specific policy recommendations

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Rodeway Inn: The Next Step to a Bright Future

We are off and running toward another exciting year in development. Although the growth of the Rodeway Inn brand will continue to be a top priority, we are making a concentrated effort to take a more strategic approach. Weren't not just piling up new contracts. We're adding properties in areas of the country where we need the product the most.

As we formulated our 2006 strategic development plan, we knew that this year we needed to focus on positive growth. It's not just about adding units; it's about growing the brand.

This means we'll be looking to build the right hotel in the right market with the right franchise partner. We all know that choosing the right brand is essential to a hotel's success.

As is choosing the right location. We want to find locations where we can maximize reservations delivery and profitability for the hotels. We also want to make sure we're continuing to provide the best possible market position for our current franchisees, which is why Choice continues to believe in its fair impact policy, which works to ensure not only the continued success of existing properties, but also success for new properties entering the system.

As you know, 2005 was a record year for the Rodeway Inn brand with 75 executed contracts, and as the momentum for Rodeway growth builds, we should all expect continued success.

Choice Hotels as a company is committed to seeing our franchisees succeed, because when our franchisees succeed, Choice succeeds.

It truly is about putting the right brand in the right location with the right franchisee!

For more information on Rodeway Inn and our development efforts, please feel free to call me at the Choice Headquarters at 301-592-6154.

By Ron Burgett, Vice President,
Franchise Sales and Development

We'll see you there.

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CHOICE SETS SIGHTS FOR SUCCESS WITH ITS SPORTS SWEEPSTAKES PROMOTIONS

Choice Hotels once again will offer its Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and Little League Baseball (LLB) sweepstakes, designed to increase bookings and raise awareness for Choice brand hotels.

The Little League Baseball sweepstakes runs April 7-July 1, 2006, and offers a Grand Prize of a trip for four to attend the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, from August 24-28, 2006. The Grand Prize package includes roundtrip airfare; 5 day/4 night hotel accommodations at a Choice hotel, tickets to the Series and \$1,000 in spending money. First and second place winners will receive cash value coupons redeemable for stays at most Choice hotels in the U.S.

The LPGA promotion, called "The

Choice Hotels Points of the Game Sweepstakes," runs April 15-October 1, 2006, and offers a Grand Prize package of a trip for two to the ADT Championship at the Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida, from November 16-19, 2006. The package includes roundtrip airfare, 5 days/4 nights hotel accommodations at a Choice hotel; tickets to the Championship; a set of PING golf clubs; 2 golf lessons by an LPGA Teaching and Club Professional member and \$1,000 spending money.

Choice is the Official Hotel Partner of Little League Baseball and will promote the LLB Sweepstakes via choicehotels.com/littleleague and choicesportstravel.com, ChoiceCentral, e-mail blasts to Little League Baseball & Softball partici-

pants/parents and mentions in multiple Choice "e-Road" newsletters.

Choice is also the Official Hotel Partner of the LPGA and will promote the LPGA Sweepstakes with promotional pages on choicehotels.com/lpga and choicesportstravel.com; a custom publication inserted into the May/June issue of *Golf For Women Magazine*; full-page print ads in *Golf Digest* and *Golf World*; email blasts by the LPGA; a 30-second television spot on ESPN, ESPN2 and The Golf Channel; ChoiceCentral and mentions in multiple Choice "e-Road" newsletters.

Promotional materials for both sweepstakes will encourage sports enthusiasts to book stays at Choice hotels and to enter the sweepstakes

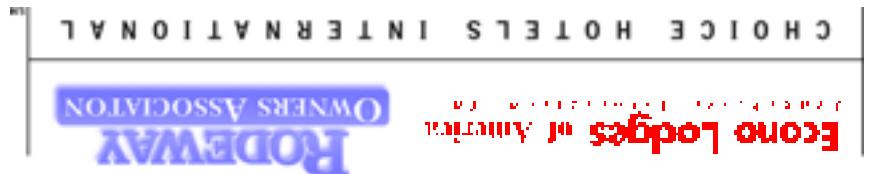
online at choicehotels.com/littleleague or choicehotels.com/lpga.

Complete Official Rules and Regulations for the LLB sweepstakes will be available after April 7 at choicehotels.com/littleleague. Complete Official Rules and Regulations for the LPGA sweepstakes will be available after April 15 at choicehotels.com/lpga. Make sure to promote both sweepstakes at your hotel and encourage cyber-savvy guests and sports fans to log on for a chance to win.

By: Karen Krupka

Manager, Sports Marketing

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Visit the ELFA ~ ROA Booth at Convention

ELFA and ROA Members will once again have a place to gather and trade information concerning association business. Additionally, we will have some valuable resources available to our members which, if utilized, can assist our members in raising their Guest Satisfaction (GIS) scores. One of the goals of ELFA and ROA is to help our membership achieve award winning status at their properties. As Choice moves our Progressive Awards program to be heavily weighted by Guest Satisfaction scores, and away from paperwork and administrative functions, our properties need to make sure that the guest is our primary focus. These resources can help the owner/manager achieve that goal.

We will be distributing an Em-

ployee Handbook, a Preventive Maintenance Handbook, and an In-Room Guest Directory. All three of these documents will be distributed on CD's and are in Word format. They were designed to be used as templates for our members, and can be easily changed to suit each individual property's respective needs.

These resources will hopefully be beneficial to our members. They were intended to be used as guides by the individual operators. ELFA is supplying these documents as tools to assist our members manage their properties, but in no way requires their use in part or in full. Since every state and city has it's own employment and regulatory laws and policies, those authorities should be consulted prior to adopt-

ing these or any other manuals, to your property.

Also, while visiting the booth, members will have the opportunity to share their questions and concerns about Economy Brands issues, and to submit their ideas for the Board to consider. We want to hear from you all, but more important would love to have your assistance. We have committees and co-op work which could all use your brain power. If you would like to volunteer your time and expertise, we need to hear from you. So, everyone, please come to the ELFA/ROC Booth and say hello!

Booth # 630