



C H O I C E H O T E L S I N T E R N A T I O N A L

SM

Winter 2005

ROA Presidential Address

Franchisee Associations

Greetings in 2006! I would like to wish each of you a very prosperous and successful year.

Last year was the Chinese New Year of the Rooster which was a very aggressive year resulting in increased revenue. This year is the Chinese New Year of the Dog which is representative of loyalty and faithfulness indicating that when we work together the results are extraordinary.

The beginning of a year is sometimes a slow time in our industry. This is a time we can use wisely at our property by refreshing any areas that may need attention such as maintenance, staff training or action plan development in customer satisfaction or marketing.

Customer care and guest satisfaction can be greatly improved when staff is welcoming and accommodating to guests. This may be accomplished by advising staff to personalize their welcome to guests by providing information regarding activities in your local area and promoting a comfortable feeling of home. All property staff from manage-

ment to desk personnel to housekeeping to maintenance should help to create a friendly atmosphere on the property.

We are very excited about our change from ChoiceLink to ChoiceCentral. Hopefully everyone has become familiar with ChoiceCentral and continuing training through Choice Hotels. We look forward to receiving more information regarding this at a session during the Choice Hotels convention in Nashville this May. We are grateful to Janna Morrison, Senior Vice President for Customer Care and Technology, for providing us direction in the area of technology and customer satisfaction. This information gives more knowledge and tools to increase revenue. Janna has worked very hard training her staff to assist us in our efforts.

Everyone should be encouraged to continue promoting the Easy Choice Program that rewards our frequent guests. Also, don't forget about the Triple Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards at this time. The AAA program should always be used as a tool to increase res-

ervations. We are all looking forward to participating in the AAA appreciation week in March and a session on AAA will be offered at the convention. Of course the utilization of e-commerce and Internet reservations will continue to provide us increase reservations.

The development of the new flat fee structure for prospective licensees, new licensees and existing licensees is certainly a big step to increase new property development. When we develop additional properties our marketing and promotional dollars increase and everyone receives benefits from increased promotions. Thank you to Kevin Bradt, Senior Director of Brand Strategy for Rodeway for the introduction of this program.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you this year and I look forward with great anticipation to visiting with each of you in May in the great city of Nashville.

Jim Hu

In Remembrance of Lewis Allen



Mr. Arthur Lewis Allen, ELFA Past President and founder of the Hampton, Virginia hotel management company, Allen Management, died on November 06, 2005. Mr. Allen was a avid supporter of the independent franchisee association, ELFA, and was determined to see that the association remained a vital tool for licensees in their relationship with their franchisor, Choice Hotels International.

Once a very active and vocal fixture at all business meetings and conventions, declining health had limited his ability to attend these functions for the last few years. However, his steady and direct advice was relied on by all who have followed him in leadership roles at ELFA. He was well known for his ability to speak on almost any issue, and never wasted an opportunity to do so. Lew was a friend to us all, and we will miss his gentle friendship and guidance.

Mr. Allen was one of the pioneers for the Econo Lodge brand. He built his first hotel, and the third Econo Lodge in the country, in Hampton, Virginia, back in 1970. Before long, he was the nation's largest Econo Lodge franchisee, and the company he founded continues to operate 18 hotels in Virginia and West Virginia.

By: Leonard Richardson,
ELFA Vice President

The Frontline Equals the Bottom Line

By: Dennis Snow, President, Snow & Associates

Most of us have heard the expression, “The frontline is the bottom line,” as it pertains to a company’s employees. It means that as far as the customer is concerned, a company’s frontline employees are the company. After all, rarely do customers come in contact with the executives of any organization. Those frontline employees are truly the face of the organization. But as leaders, do we perform in a way that is consistent with the *frontline equals bottom line* philosophy? In cases, I think the answer is no.

I was pondering this issue recently while I sat eating in a TGI Fridays restaurant. As I was observing the employees, the reality of the situation hit me for the first time. These servers, bus boys, etc. are the most important people in the company. I knew this intellectually (I’ve talked about it for years), but the **true-ness** of it hit me at that moment. These employees are typically the lowest paid in the organization, treated as expendable, often treated in a condescending manner, and yet they are the most important people in the company. If these employees fail in their duties, it makes no difference how smart the Sr. VP of Marketing is. The transaction between the customer and the company (the frontline employee) can so easily crash and burn. This is true in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, banks, grocery stores or any other industry/ organization. Executives can call in sick, but if the truck drivers for a distribution center don’t show up one day, now there is a situation. When they do their jobs with pride and enthusiasm, the likelihood of company success is exponentially increased. When they do their jobs with boredom and skepticism, the greatest technology systems in the world won’t help.

We should treat our frontline employees like the stars that they are. We should honor them for the work that they do because they are the ones that make the world turn. All

our strategies, visions and corporate goals are only as good as the execution of those plans, and execution ultimately comes down to frontline people doing things. Theirs is the most honest work of all. The customer was either happy or she wasn’t, the delivery happened on time or it not, the cooler was either stocked or not, the food was either hot or it was not. The frontline doesn’t need a report in a binder to know how things are going. The score is real time for them. I think what is missing in business today is knowing the importance of frontline at a **gut level**. Most of us know that we should say the frontline is the bottom line, but I don’t think it often shines through in our actions. If it did, we would be having pizza parties regularly, pitching in to help when things are busy, taking employees to lunch regularly to ask what can be improved. We would hold celebrations all the time. We would say thank you every opportunity. Think about those times in your personal life when you were grateful for something that someone did. I mean truly grateful. Remember how sincere and heartfelt your appreciation was toward that person? Can you remember the last time you showed that level of appreciation to an employee or group of employees in your organization?

The need to be appreciated is one of the strongest needs of all. When employees work hard all day, doing the real work of the company, being treated with honor isn’t too much to ask. Asking me to clock in and clock out says something about how you feel about my honor. Giving keys for the supply cabinets only to managers and above says something about how you feel about my honor. Having a lavish holiday party for executive team while giving me a \$2.00 tree ornament says something about how you feel about my contributions. Walking by the reception desk, the loading dock, or the stockroom without acknowledging employees, taking a moment to see

how things are going, or just saying thanks, are all behaviors that tell employees what management really thinks. Is it any wonder that turnover in frontline positions is so ridiculously high?

When my wife and I were both working, we had a housekeeper, Val, who cleaned our house once a week. She was truly an excellent housekeeper and would clean even the hardest to reach areas. Debbie (my wife) sincerely appreciated the extra effort and would always show her appreciation. My wife and Val became good friends. One time Val mentioned that although she cleaned a lot of houses, Debbie was the only one who appreciated those extra touches and actually **showed** appreciation. What is important to note is that Debbie didn’t say thank you to get Val to do the extras. Debbie thanked Val because she did the extras. Val, however, said that she wanted to do more because of the appreciation. It was simply a sincere cycle of performance and appreciation. Saying thank you to people who work hard is simply the right thing to do. And usually when we do the right thing, we get the right thing in return. Not always, but usually.

You know who the frontline employees are in your own organization. I challenge you to take a hard look at the level of appreciation that you show to those frontline employees. Do they know that you appreciate them? How do they know that you appreciate them?

About the Author:

Dennis Snow is the president of Snow & Associates, Inc. Dennis worked with the Walt Disney World Company for twenty years and now consults with organizations around the world helping them achieve their customer service goals. He is the author of the book, “Unleashing Excellence – The Complete Guide to Ultimate Customer Service.” His website can be found at www.snowassociates.com.

Introducing Choicemarkit.com

Introducing Choicemarkit.com . . . the easy online resource for your marketing needs.

We are excited and pleased to announce the launch of Phase I for the choicemarkit.com toolkit! In an effort to provide you with the most up-to-date tools to increase your business through advertising, Choice Hotels launched a user-friendly online program in early January. The eMarketing Toolkit is a comprehensive online resource for logos and images, as well as a convenient step-by-step system to help you create your own ads and collateral projects. It is an online system that allows you to easily customize print and web ads, plus give you access to a wide variety of logos, photos and graphics. The online program is divided into two segments:

e-Library: Find the correct graphic element for your project – whether for print or electronic media, such as the Internet or emails.

e-Studio: With the help of handy templates, you'll be able to create ads for print or electronic media in a snap. Save and revise your projects for future use.

It's so easy! Just login and follow the simple instructions. You'll find what you need and create your projects in no time at all! To access the site follow the simple steps listed below:

- Step 1 – Access your username and password in the email sent on 12-30-05

- Step 2 – Visit www.choicemarkit.com
<<http://www.choicemarkit.com/>>

- Step 3 – Login utilizing your username and password

- Step 4 – Follow the simple instructions outlined in the web site

In future phases, we will be adding template materials that all licensees can use, such as stationery and rack card templates.

Please look for additional communications that will provide details concerning WebEx training seminars for you on how to effectively and efficiently utilize the on-line program.

The Importance of Brand Continuity

There is a reason guests tend to pay a premium to stay at a nationally recognized branded hotel rather than an independent. "They know they can expect the same room type and amenity level at each location, thus creating a feeling of familiarity and trust," said Christian Moritz, director of Brand Strategy. "It is critical that all guest touch-points within each property have strong continuity with each other and consistently reflect the brand positioning," said Moritz.

Brands such as Apple, Mountain Dew, Nike and Motorola have all prospered over time not just because they threaded a consistent brand position into all areas of the consumer experience, but because management sensed changes and adapted to the market. Today, all

of those brands represent something very different than where they started, yet all are perceived as fresh and relevant.

"In order to deliver on its position as the premier economy segment hotel for value-oriented travelers, Econo Lodge needs to continue to update and advance its offerings in efforts to capture incremental occupancy while making sure those offerings create a Return On Investment for the franchisee," said Kevin Bradt, Senior Director of Brand Strategy.

In 2006 the Econo Lodge brand team will research several modernization initiatives, in efforts to drive an increase in occupancy – a focal point of the Econo Lodge multi year strategic plan. The fo-

cus of the research will include technology, amenities & services and enhanced curb appeal. An update on the status of these initiatives will be provided at Convention in May and Fall Regionals.

By: Christian Moritz
Director Brand Strategy

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New ELFA Director Region VII



Poovin Pillay (CHA) is ELFA Regional Director VII. He was educated in Africa. Prior to being in the USA, he owned a trucking business and hotels as investment properties. Once in the USA, he purchased and operated an independent motel. This sparked an incredible interest in the hospitality industry for him. Poovin then moved his business interests from Africa and invested in multiple properties here in the USA. He sees being part of ELFA as an excellent medium for resolving issues and conveying grievances at grassroot levels with the franchisor. He is currently an active member of the Lions Club and AAHOA. He looks forward to working with owners of existing Econolodge properties and conveying their needs in a satisfactory manner to Choice.

What Do All Hotels Have In Common?



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The power of saying thank you

Being in the hospitality business we should not find our selves not expressing appreciation. Studies have found that nearly five out of every 10 people don't always say thanks- that remembering to do so is a sales point of difference. It goes a long way toward forging the relationships that can turn into opportunities.

Saying thanks to employees has several benefits. You build staff loyalty (and we all know how much turnover can cost in time, money and stress). And, you increase productivity, which leads to greater customer satisfaction.

I have found that the majority of dissatisfied customers don't bother to complain. They simply spend their money elsewhere. That means complaints are a valuable gift in providing a heads up about where to focus. A customer who complains still wants to do business with you, if you can make things right. So thank them for giving you that feedback. Don't underestimate the power of saying thanks!

By: Katen Patel, ELFA

Region IX Director

A Dozen Operating Tips

1. Consider a small sign adjacent to any inroom sprinkler heads as a reminder to guests not to hang ANYTHING from the sprinkler heads; include it on any hotel information the guest receives at check-in, or any in-room directories or amenity listings.
2. To get the fried smell out of a guest room after they have been cooking, boil a cup of water with a couple of teaspoons of vinegar in the room, turn on ceiling fans to spread the smell of vinegar. If smell still lingers, use full strength vinegar on rag and wing around the room.
3. Scheduling workers for the Holidays (everyone wants to have family time). Solution: schedule "all hands on deck" but for only half shifts so no one works more than 4 hrs unless they want to.
4. If your local community collects a "hotel tax" from your guests to support tourism, check to see how the funds are being used. As a hotel owner or GM, you may be able to influence the use of those valuable \$\$.
5. Compact fluorescent light bulbs in lobby "can lights" can cool off a hot lobby (and save electric cost) in the summer.
6. If your self sticking tiles are loose, use a hair dryer to loosen completely, then use the hair dryer on the back side facing the glue and re attach to the floor. Put something heavy on top.
7. Place ice cubes in a metal pan and then place that pan directly on top of the wax. After a few minutes, move the pan and whack the wax with a hammer, pick up the pieces. Repeat as necessary to remove wax; afterward use dry cleaning solvent on a clean rag and scrub to remove any residue.
8. To get rid of the burnt popcorn smell from your microwave take a lemon cut it up put it in a microwave safe bowl with 1 cup water and some cloves, heat in microwave till boiling then let set for a couple hours.
9. To take away mildew odor, put some fresh coffee grounds in some cups and place around the room. Odor will disappear.
10. To get rid of second hand cigarette smoke, take vinegar or ammonia pour into cups and place around room. If this doesn't work, you may need to wash walls.
11. Scuff marks on walls? Easy solutions "pencil eraser, Mr. Clean Magic eraser or Rubber maids new roll-on paint applicator."
12. To eliminate smoke odors in rooms. For those who don't own ionizers try Zep's aerosol Smoke Eliminator.

Work Space: A Worksite Wellness Column

Stress: Perhaps There's Always More to Say!

Let's face it there is nothing consistent in life but change. For most of us, to succeed in an unpredictable world that morphs with every new day, working and living under a variety of pressures has become the norm, rather than the exception. As a result, stress has become one of the top, multi-faceted issues we face and sometimes co-create. Recent statistics indicate that the annual cost of stress and stress-related diseases in the United States exceed \$100 billion.

However, the best news is, stress should not be avoided entirely, because a certain amount is necessary for optimum health, performance, and well-being; as long as we learn to "work with it" for our greatest good— not against it. With the key being, of course, our "reaction" to it! I've always loved that tip from the 7dwarfs, " Whistle While You Work"

Stress 101:

Dr. Hans Selye, one of the foremost authorities on stress defined it as "the mental, emotional, and physiological response of the body to any situation that is new, threatening, frightening, or exciting. The body's response to stress has been the same ever since humans arrived on the planet. Stress prepares the organism to react to the stress causing event, also called Stressor. It is further broken down into two reactions: Eustress: Positive stress where health and performance continue to improve, even as stress increases; and Distress: Negative stress which is

unpleasant or harmful in nature, under which and performance begin to deteriorate. Lastly, Fight or Flight is the response of the physiological body, preparing it to take action, by stimulating the vital defense systems.

Statistics and definitions aside, the upshot of stress is that it's a very relative, individual, matter. Given the nature of my work, I have been privileged listener to many a stressful tale. Dealing with our emotions is not like rearranging a sock drawer. The bottom line is that most of us know intuitively, what best to "reduce" our stress levels. Personally, I don't think stress can be ultimately, "controlled". To me that would be like trying to hold back the tides, as stressors will always be around us.

Here are a few parting thoughts and ideas:

1. Take stock in what you're doing right with regard to your personal health and wellness.
2. Dig even deeper and live more authentically, as time waits for no one. Look with a curious and critical eye on all of your involvements. Ask yourself, " Are they still serving me, or are there other things I'd rather or ought to be doing"? {i.e. assess where your hypothetical "boat" is leaking}
3. Engage what Brian Like seaward, PHD calls, "Muscles of the Soul". Compassion, courage, creativity, faith, forgiveness, patience, humor, resiliency, among others.
4. Know that grace often comes to us in seemingly irrational and unforeseen events; it's in these times that we

must find a way to humbly bow to the hidden wisdom of the universe. 5. Reflect on the fact, that often the greatest problem in communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished! 6. Work on not living in "911" emergency mode, by "emerging and seeing" in the moment, what course of action is the best use of your time and energy, and lastly, 7. For fast acting relief, try slowing down! (Lily Tomlin)

If you or your organization is ready to have a "stress reduction sampler" delivered to your doorstep ~ Call me at 802-446-2499 to talk about the many options to take your employee, { as humorist Sandy Queen} would say, from "burnout to blastoff"!



Lisa Marie Donohue, MA, LMT,

Directory/Catalyst, The Hands on Health Network, Thrive Center of the Green Mountains

A Look at Choice Hotels' Newest Brand: Suburban Extended Stay

As you most likely know by now, last September Choice Hotels added another economy brand to its portfolio. The newest chain, however, is economy with a twist.

Suburban Extended Stay Hotels is a chain of almost 70 locations, mostly in the Southeast, whose hotels offer all the comforts of home at a price that's sure to please the economy traveler. This new chain is a great compliment not only to Choice's two existing economy brands, but also to Choice's existing extended stay brand, MainStay Suites, which falls under the mid-scale category.

As part of the acquisition, Suburban's president and chief executive

officer, Kevin J. Lewis, joined Choice as Vice President, Extended Stay, with responsibility for the MainStay Suites and Suburban brands.

"The Suburban franchisees, who also were the owners of the company, are excited about the opportunity to join Choice and to build upon our success," said Lewis. "Working together, we believe we can truly maximize both brand's outstanding potential."

Each Suburban Extended Stay Hotel features king-or queen-sized rooms or rooms with two double beds; on-site washers and dryers, and weekly housekeeping services. Every room has a full

kitchen complete with 2-burner cook top, microwave, refrigerator, coffee maker, cookware and utensils. Other amenities include free cable TV including premium movie channels, HBO and ESPN and convenient personal dataports and voicemail.

While the brand's hotels are happy to accommodate short-term, transient travelers, the majority of Suburban brand guests will be long-term travelers (defined as anyone staying 5 consecutive nights or longer) looking for a temporary 'home away from home.'

By: Robin Ferrier
Manager, Corporate Communications

Choice Hotels International

ChoiceCentral – Maximizing the Possibilities

As you know, ChoiceLink for Windows was officially retired on December 31, 2005. Close to 800 hotels all across the United States are now using ChoiceCentral and Message Center to manage their Choice CRS inventory and rates and to access their reservation information. Thanks to your superior cooperation, we achieved this goal on time and on target.

Now that you've been converted, what should you be doing to maximize your use of the site? What kinds of questions have you been calling into the support center? This article will attempt to give you some insight to both these questions.

First and foremost, follow these 4.5 simple tips to make sure you are taking full advantage of the site.

1. Add the following "to-do" to your shift checklists: "Access ChoiceCentral and the Message Center each hour to retrieve and print any new central reservations bookings. Log-in to ChoiceCentral and look for **Notifications** at the top of the center column. If you have new messages, retrieve and print them."
2. Review your inventory on a daily basis. Make certain that your hotel inventory and booking restrictions are set properly. Once a reservation is booked, it is your responsibility to accommodate the guest and honor the terms of the reservation.
- View your hotel inventory in your property management system. Update Choice's inventory as required.

- If you need to, set minimum length of stay (MLOS) restrictions to encourage maximize your revenue yield. This is a great tool to use when your demand is high for more than one day and you want to more effectively manage the guest's stay pattern.
 - Set your inventory carefully.
3. Each week, access and review your travel agent invoice using Invoice Review. Update invoice items as required based on the guest's actual stay data. The invoice should be reviewed and updated by Friday.
 4. When needed, review and respond to your guest complaints and compliments using Customer Relations Response. Guests who lodge a complaint should receive a written response within 48 hours. Respond online to the customer relations department so that they know the issue is resolved.
 - 4.5 Check your GM email account daily. Read or print out important messages and keep your inbox clean.

Property Support has been helping all our hotels internationally through this transition. Your questions have mostly been related to making the change and most are property specific, but there are a few things we can all learn from their collective experience.

1. Keep your anti-virus software, spyware and firewall protection up to date. Performance

of the site can be adversely affected by spyware and other applications that may be loaded on your PC as you browse other sites. More and more, these kinds of protection are critical. Norton and Symantec are two great PC protection software companies that have complete suites of software designed to keep your computer running at its best.

2. Avoid the temptation to download and install lots of games or other "freeware" applications from the Internet – at least on your primary, business computer. You rely on your computer and your Internet browser for your connection to Choice. Don't put this link at jeopardy.
3. Make sure the appropriate employees have access to the site – that should always include more than one person. Checking the site regularly for messages is everyone's job.
4. Post the name and number of your Internet Service Provider (ISP) at the desk or make that information available to your staff. If your connection to the Internet is interrupted, your staff needs to know where to turn for help. Similarly, if your hardware is covered under a manufacturer's warranty, have that contact information available.

Choice's CRS is a powerful tool for your hotel. Most likely, it is one of the primary reasons you chose to affiliate your hotel with the Econo Lodge brand. Together, we can help you maximize its possibilities.

By: Christopher Yellen

VP, Property Systems and Performance Services

Progressive Award Program Enhancements Will Recognize Hotels For Superior Guest Satisfaction

The enhanced Choice Hotels International Progressive Awards Program is set to recognize the top performers in each brand this summer, according to Bill Clegg, regional vice president for franchise services. A Customer Relations score component has been added as a criteria of the awards for Econo Lodge and Rodeway brands, furthering the movement toward greater use of guest feedback in the quality assurance process across all Choice brands.

“The goal of Choice’s Progressive Awards Program has always been to identify and recognize those Choice Hotels International properties that deliver exceptional levels of customer service and the highest standards of hospitality, resulting in increased guest retention and brand loyalty,” said Clegg. “Customer Relations and quality assurance data we’re collecting clearly shows us which hotels are doing the best job in these areas, and the program has been enhanced to use that data in determining which hotels will receive awards.”

The new program features three

distinct awards: the *Choice Achievement Award*, the *Choice Gold Hospitality Award*, and the *Choice Preferred Platinum Award*.

Awards will be based on a snapshot of individual hotels’ performance as of June 30, 2006. Based on the June 30th data review, the top 20% of each brand will be recognized for their outstanding performance in each of three categories, including Cleanliness, Maintenance & Capital Improvements, and Customer Relations.

Each hotel scoring in the top 20% of its brand in any single category will receive a *Choice Achievement Award*. Hotels that earn *Choice Achievement Awards* in all categories will be honored with the *Choice Gold Hospitality Award*. Hotels that earn the *Choice Gold Hospitality Award* will be highlighted in the Choice Hotels *Travel & Vacation Directory*, Choice Hotels e-directory, and the hotel’s e-Brochure. In addition, recipients of the Choice Gold Hospitality Award will be recognized at the Association Regional Meetings.

Those hotels that demonstrate the ultimate standards of hospitality and quality within their brand will earn Choice Hotels’ most prestigious award, the *Choice Preferred Platinum Award*. These “cream of the crop” hotels will have earned *Choice Achievement Awards* in all categories, and score in the top 5% of their brand in Customer Relations complaints per 1,000 rooms rented,

“FSDs review each hotel’s performance metrics during property assist visits, and they are more than willing to work with hotels to develop action plans and provide resource materials to help hotel staff increase the hotel’s performance,” said Clegg.

For more information on the Progressive Awards Program or your hotel’s performance data, please contact your FSD or the Choice Hotels Franchise Services Help Desk at 888-463-3716.

By: Bill Clegg, Regional VP
Franchise Services

WHAT MAKES A PROPERTY SAFE

A security program in a motel is paramount. Owners and managers should keep in mind that it is much better to prevent a security problem than to be faced with one. Although it is fairly impossible to prevent all crimes from happening, the following list indicates general areas that should be included in the security program:

1. Staff screening (cost is minimal-check with your local Chamber)
2. Security cameras that record all events.
3. Room attendants should direct all guests without keys to the front desk.

4. Control of persons on premises.
5. Emergency procedures should be clearly defined.
6. Sufficient exterior lighting.
7. Make use of the local Sheriff’s department to patrol periodically as this will serve as deterrent for any criminal activity.
8. Have a good management system in place for any visitors that guests may have during their stay.
9. Make sure an accurate log entry is made for any incident, however trivial.
10. Being an economy branded property it may not be cost effective to have full time security on the premises, but we can make our sales

attendants more attentive to their surroundings (keep a constant eye on the security camera, keep in contact with other staff on the property).

11. Any bushes or trees that are causing poor visibility should be trimmed and edged.
12. There should be a constant monitoring of vending areas and guest laundry areas.

By Poovin Pillay
ELFA Region VII Director

Choice Hotels Will Once Again Be 'Playing Ball' This Spring

Choice Hotels recently renewed its partnership with Little League Baseball for another 4 years beginning this month. Under this deal, coaches, parents, family and friends of Little Leaguers can save 15% when they stay with Choice Hotels. In addition, every time a guest uses the special Little League Baseball discount code when booking a Choice hotel, a portion of the proceeds goes back to Little League.

Not a bad way to kick off a new year. So what else does Choice Sports Marketing have up its sleeve for 2006?

"As we've been doing since our launch in 2000, the Choice Sports Marketing team will be looking for new sports partners who can send incremental business to our hotels," said

Donald Crawford, director of sports marketing for Choice Hotels. "Our goal is to maximize sports travel business for Choice Hotels' brands and franchisees through various sports marketing, sales, and promotional initiatives and through national partnerships while making the reservation process more cost effective and time efficient for all parties."

Their efforts have not gone unrewarded. Crawford and his team have negotiated partnerships with some of the major players in the youth, scholastic, collegiate and professional arena. The two most high-profile partnerships are the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and Little League Baseball. Other partnerships include the Sun Belt Conference, Colonial Athletic Association, Big South Conference, Missouri Valley Confer-

ence, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), California Junior Tour, USA Diving, US Racquetball Association, USA Triathlon, USA Track & Field, and the National High School Rodeo Association.

To find a complete list of sports marketing partners, go to www.ChoiceSportsTravel.com, the lodging industry's first online solution developed exclusively for the sports travel market.

By: Robin Ferrier

Manager, Corporate Communications
Choice Hotels International

"Your Participation Makes a Difference"

I want to personally thank each property that attended one of the 2005 Fall Regional Meetings and participated in the Economy Brand Session... and the leaders and staff of CHOC, ROC, ELFA, and Choice Hotels for structuring and facilitating the successful meetings.

I especially want to recognize the folks from my Region (Region-10: LA, TX, OK, AR) and Region (13) that despite the disastrous hurricanes and rescheduled meetings, remained committed to attending the Fall Regional Meeting. And let us not forget those who attended and contributed generously to the Hurricane Relief Fund appeals – Thank You.

Your participation at Fall Regional meetings enabled you to learn from: education sessions, vendors, fellow licensees, Association leaders, Brand leaders and speakers.

- Your learning enables you to improve your property... and that improves our Brands and all our properties.

Your participation allowed you to share your experience, ideas, teach and influence others.

- Your influence will improve decisions, direction, and the

probability of future success of our Brands, fellow licensees, and all of our properties...and that improves your property.

Your ELFA and ROC leadership is summarizing the specific issues and inputs that we heard from you at the Fall Regional meetings (and throughout the year), and is establishing clear priorities and strategies to represent your needs and improve our collective results. More details will be available for discussion at Convention, some priority areas include:

Continued on next page

Participation Cont from pg 8

- Increase Advertising \$
- Re-Imaging / Brand Standards
- Leverage EASY Choice
- Member Education
- Member Tools
- Co-op
- ChoiceCentral / ChoiceAdvantage

Thanks for your input.

I encourage you to help yourself and others by participating whenever possible.

Opportunities to participate in 2006 include:

- Choice Training Days
- Regional Co-op
- Convention (Director elections for even number regions)
- Fall Regional Meetings
- ELFA / ROC Projects

BY: Gary Koester
ELFA Secretary/ Region X Director

ELFA DIRECTORS NEEDED

REGIONS: VIII, XII



Visit ELFA.ORG

Want something added?

Contact Region V Director, Technology Committee Chair
Mahendra Patel 732-329-4555
MZpatel329@yahoo.com



Need In-Room HBO Directories?

Call 800-426-1426

Rewards are adding up faster this Spring

Your customers can earn a free night faster with double rewards. Beginning February 1st, when customers stay at any Econo Lodge® or Rodeway Inn® hotel in the U.S., they'll earn double EASY CHOICE® stamps towards discounts or a free night at one of hundreds of locations. Promotion ends April 30th.

Look for your promotion kits should have arrived the week of January 16th. For more information, contact the promotion hotline at 301.592.6334.

Around the water cooler with Bob

Good morning everyone, can you believe that another year has come and gone and the changes we have experienced with Choice Hotels International has been far reaching. By this, I mean we have added another 2 brands, changes in advertising requirements for the co-ops, and other minor nuisance categories, some of these I will discuss in this article.

First lets talk about your ELFA/ROA Co-op. As of January 1st we have been mandated by Choice to buy all our own internet banner headlines. Unfortunately the cost of this mandated expenditure comes from our allotted Choice funds so this will limit our options and access to the local markets, where the co-ops are most effective. If Choice Hotels International, mandates a certain position, my opinion is that they must fund it, otherwise leave us alone....

Don't get me wrong, I am all for mandatory Co-op participation for all properties, that would be the only way we can raise adequate funds for local advertising and get the most bang for our bucks. Unfortunately, when participation is voluntary no one wants to contribute but, all want to complain. Enough on this subject otherwise people will think I have a problem with

Choice Hotels International or at least their management people.

Next lets talk about the Easy Choice Program. According to some of my contacts at Choice Hotels, the reason we, as economy branded hotels, are not allowed to participate in the mid-scale redemption program is because we and Choice Hotels can't track these transactions. Well I have an answer to several of these objections by the bean counters in Silver Springs and Phoenix. Mandate everyone, and I mean everyone to get the new ChoiceAdvantage Computer system, this includes the mid-scales and Clarions, by retiring the inefficient Profit Manager system everyone will save. What shock, dismay, pure anger over this bold statement, wait, there is a method to my madness so just bear with me for a minute. If everyone used the same system it would lower the overall operating cost for every property. It standardizes the system so everyone is using the same guidelines which will ultimately save us in operating costs. Finally, it will allow everyone the same access to the necessary programs to help us run our properties in the most effective and cost efficient manner.

I realize I could go on and on about this system

but to me it is pretty much only common sense, while at times I realize this is in short supply in the home office it still applies. I had better change the subject now before you all think I am finally loosing what little mental facilities I have left.

Finally to all you economy branded hotels that have not put in your wireless hot spot connections yet. I have made my entire hotel totally wireless for under \$1,000.00 plus \$75.00 per month for Time Warner Business Class Road Runner, so it can't be because of cost. Let me give you one last warning, either pay the start up cost or watch your clientele use hotels that will.

Well my time is up and its time to climb down from the old soap box one last time, you've been a great audience I hope I gave you a few ideas to ponder, moments of indigestion, and with luck "anger". Just remember tomorrow is always a fresh day and today never ends..

If you have topics of interest let me know.

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Request for Nominations for Elections to the Econo Lodges of America Franchisee Association

Each year, we request nominations for Elections to the Econo Lodges of America Franchisee Association (“ELFA”) as stipulated by the ELFA by-laws. Nominees for positions of Regional Director or Vice Chair must be a paid member prior to the election.

The ELFA is a voluntary organization consisting of thirteen (13) directors. These directors are elected from thirteen (13) regions throughout the country. At this year’s annual convention, the following regions will be conducting elections:

Region II AL, GA, MS **Region IV** VA, WV **Region VI** CT,ME,MA,NH,NY,RI,VT
Region VIII IL,IN,MI,OH,WI **Region X** AR,LA,OK,TX **Region XII** AZ,CA,HI,NV

Econo Lodge Franchisees, either general managers or owners who are in good standing, meaning membership dues are current may submit a nomination or self nominate within the region their property is located. All nominations must be received no later than February 15th, 2006 and should be sent to:

Econo Lodges of America Franchisee Association

Attention: Gary Koester ~ Secretary

5341 Estate Office Dr. Suite 3

Memphis, TN 38119

Fax: 901-684-1267

GKoester@hismtm.com

Nominations received by this date will be presented as candidates at the Annual Convention being held at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, TN May 17-19 2006 for election to their respective regions.

Become a part of the leadership of the nation’s oldest hotel franchisee association– submit your nomination today!

With Kind regards,

Sincerely,

Sandhya Patel, President