



CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

ELFA-ROA Franchisee Associations

Winter 2008

Presidential Message to ELFA: Focusing on Our Progress

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I would like to begin by thanking the Board of Directors and the Officers for their hard work and dedication to ELFA this year. I have had the pleasure of working with a group of intelligent and business-oriented individuals who not only helped me throughout the past year, but who have also taught me so much. Through their commitment towards improving certain aspects of our Econo Lodge brand as well as towards resolving some major issues, I have been impressed time and time again by all their work.

Glancing back at this past year, I am delighted to see how far we have come. It has been an emotional rollercoaster, our Officers and Directors have disagreed and have argued, however, at the end of the day, they were able to put their differences aside and make the best decision in order to move the Econo Lodge Brand forward. One of the greatest accomplishments of this year was the creation of different committees. I feel that this has enabled us to increase our efficiency as an organization as well as has increased our communication with representations of Choice Hotel. This is an essential key towards networking and becoming more

accessible to different organizations- key steps towards moving the Econo Lodge Brand to a new level.

Over the last couple of months, we have experienced problems with Choice Advantage. Our Technology Committee worked hard with the Choice Advantage representatives and resolved most of the issues at hand. At the present time, we continue to work on other issues. If you have any problems with Choice Advantage, please contact us.

I have enjoyed serving as your President for the past year and look forward to the next year. I would like to thank all of you, as members of our association, for your



Mahendra Patel
President
Econo Lodge Franchisee Association

support. I would also like to thank the committee chairpersons for their great work. I wish to give a special thanks to Leonard Richardson for his experience and his knowledge, both which have helped me through difficult times.

I would also like to thank Gary Koester for helping me arrange the committees. (Natu Patel has also been very

helpful as Co-op Committee Chair and assisting with Allied Vendors.) In addition, Katen Patel and Kal Master have helped the Technology Committee with resolving issues with Choice Advantage. Last but not least, I would like to thank Ross Almo for his excellent work and for assisting me through all the issues we have faced.

Professional Photography Initiative by Heather Semee

In an effort to help hotels become even more competitive online, Choice paid for all U.S. hotels that were active in the Choice system in 2007 to be professionally photographed. Almost 2,000 hotels have been photographed to date and the remainder will be photographed in 2008. Hotels not photographed in 2007 will be visited in 2008. Here is the schedule: *The schedule is subject to change based on weather. Weather-related cancellations will be rescheduled*

State	Month
Caribbean, Nevada, Texas, Florida, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama	February and March 2008
North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee	April 2008
Oklahoma, Arkansas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maine, Virginia, West Virginia, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Jersey, Delaware, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Northern California, Maryland, Dc	May and June 2008
Iowa, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Oregon, Northern California, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Alaska, Colorado, Utah, Idaho	July and August 2008

Show Hotel, a Choice qualified vendor, was chosen to execute this initiative based on photography quality, consistency and experience. The attractive new photographs are used for the Choicehotels.com ebrochure photo gallery and are also be sent to global distribution



Once the new photos are posted on the ebrochure photo gallery, hotels can request copies of the photos using a form on choicecentral.com. Hotels that have questions about photo shoot schedules should call Show Hotel toll free at 888-999-5880. Remember, the photo standards, posted on Choicebuys.com, are now in effect for all hotels. New hotels should be sure to refer to the standards for information about purchasing hotel photography.

choiceADVANTAGE Team Works With ELFA On Future Enhancements by John Thompson

In November of 2007, Kal Master and Dilip Vakaria, members of the ELFA Technology Committee, visited Choice's Phoenix offices to provide feedback about choiceADVANTAGE and learn more about how the system is developed and supported.

During the course of this day-long meeting, Kal and Dilip met with various department heads within Choice's Property Systems group and provided insight on franchisee expectations for the system. Todd Davis, Vice President of Property Systems Development & Administration, found the meeting to be a positive step toward continued cooperation between Choice and the ELFA Board. *"This was a great opportunity to share where we are going with choiceADVANTAGE and get input directly from the Board that will help shape those efforts."*

Choice has taken the feedback received from the ELFA meeting, along with user input from focus groups, regional meetings and Suggest-A-Grams, to help map out future enhancement efforts for the system. One recent example of this was a process for backing up hotel emergency reports that was put into place on January 10, 2008. With this new process, the emergency reports for each choiceADVANTAGE property are backed up to ChoiceCentral every six hours. *Continued on page 10*

ROA President's Message - Exciting Changes for 2008

2008 is going to be a great year, I am so excited to be a part of Guest Privileges. It will enhance our Brand, as well as, increase our customer satisfaction.

At our Winter Board meeting, we focused on realigning our Committees. These committees are focused and committed to having monthly conference calls with Choice, produce articles to keep all of our Owners & Managers up to date, as well as some committees will also meet with CHOC to discuss issues that affect both the Mid-scale and Economy Brands.

The 2008 Committees, in partnership with ELFA are:

Technology Committee, Education and Conference Committee, QAR and Standards Committee, Marketing, Reservation, & Ad-Promo Committee, Executive Committee, Fall Regional Task Force, CO-OP Committee, PR & Membership Committee

As everyone can see there will be a lot of work going on in the Committees. The main goal of these committees is to improve the Economy Brands. See everyone in Vegas!



Kay Collier- Pittman
President-Rodeway
Owners Association

Doing the right thing & taking a bow for it

Last year, Americans generously donated over \$150 billion to charities.

But while the total reflects an increase of 7.3% over the prior year, the number of individual donors is in fact shrinking, as is government funding for many programs.

This double whammy is forcing charities to "sell" themselves. Welcome to the increasingly popular world of cause-related marketing. Cause-related marketing is an alliance between a company and a selected charity through which the business gives a few cents of the purchase price or a share of the profits to a specified charity. Among the better-known national companies that have used cause-related

marketing are American Express, Coca-Cola, and Ben & Jerry's. Some initial suggestions.

1. Know your goal. Do you want to raise your company's visibility? Enhance internal PR through team building? Have a venue for product promotion?
2. Choose a non-profit you truly have enthusiasm for. There is nothing more transparent than pretending to be involved.
3. Mirror your market. If your target customer is women, perhaps you should consider something like breast cancer efforts. Or perhaps you want to be seen as a good neighbor and "green" organizations are a better fit.
4. Like all marketing, this

one-shot deal - not just one walk-a-thon or gala ball. Look to long term involvement and yield.

5. Integrate your non-profit effort with employee participation, include this in your advertising and PR messaging.
6. Build a team, assign responsibilities, create a committee to manage non-profit efforts.
7. Create and share standards. Alert the public of your efforts via your website and outline how they can also get involved.

A more cynical consumer might ask: Are you trying to sell products or services, or are you trying to support a worthwhile cause? The answer should be: "Both."

should NOT be a

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**New
Directors
Showcase**



**Mike Adams
Region 6 ELFA Director**

Re-introducing Mike Adams. Mike Adams lives in Holland, NY with his wife Paulette. He has two adult children and two grand-kids. Mike is a graduate of Alfred State College where he received his degree in computer programming. In 1972 he joined Erb Co a large plumbing wholesaler in Buffalo, NY. Erb Co owned a 85 room mom and pop motel. Mike got involved at the motel early on in his career and loved the business; In 1991 the motel was franchised with Econo Lodge. Mike loves the outdoors. He likes to hunt and fish and just being outdoors. If he is not at work, he is generally snowshoeing or hiking in the woods near his home.

Kal Masters replaces his wife Rupal Masters, as Region 4 ELFA Director

Kalpesh D. Master has a Bachelors of Science in Computer Engineering with specialization in real time processing and artificial intelligent systems from Old Dominion University. For over a decade he worked for Northrop Grumman as a defense contractor, managing real time systems, security, processing data using web-based applications. He is also a youth hotelier who entered this industry as part of the family business. His family owns several economy and mid-scale hotels including an Econo Lodge, Howard Johnson and a Comfort Inn. He developed his skills helping his parents operate an Econo Lodge, providing support, learning, managing it over the years with their continued guidance. An active member of ELFA as a Chair for Region 4, replacing Rupal Master who has taken leave to take care of their growing family. He looks forward to working with other directors, Choice and franchisees, learning from them while contributing positively in the best interest of our brand.



**Kal Master
Region 4 ELFA
Director**



**Joanne Johnston
Region 1
ROA Director**

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*For more information call Telcorp International at: 1-888-TELCORP (888)-835-2677

ChoiceHotels.com 2007 Year in Review, by Heather Semee

Choicehotels.com experienced phenomenal growth in 2007 due in part to the exciting features and tools implemented during the year. Here are some of the highlights:

Interactive Mapping Features

The maps on Choicehotels.com were upgraded in the fourth quarter to incorporate Microsoft Virtual Earth technology. Customers can now choose how they want to display a map of a hotel and its surrounding area. Options include:

- Satellite imagery (available in most major markets)
- Road maps
- Hybrid: A combination of the satellite and road map views.

Customers can choose to display points of interest and restaurants and can get driving directions to and from the hotel.



Additional 2007 Choicehotels.com Enhancements

- A shop and compare feature that allows Choicehotels.com visitors to see a side-by-side hotel comparison including key amenities and rates for up to five hotels.
- Multiple-room bookings give visitors to Choicehotels.com the capability of booking up to five rooms within one reservation.
- A refreshed Choicehotels.com ebrochure design that is easier to navigate featuring larger hotel photos and a highlighted Check Rates function to draws more customer attention.
- Updated Choice Privileges pages help members and prospective members instantly find what they need.
- eMail address collection from visitors who want to receive Choice Hotels' news and special offers. Additional enhancements and upgrades are planned for 2008.

Co-op Update, by Natu Patel

Congratulations to our co-op chairs, all have submitted their 2008 co-op marketing plans. The state co-op pages are being updated for 2008 and there are several new creative marketing ideas being used. Please contact your Regional Director for further details on your Regions' marketing plan for 2008.

Again, this year, Choice is contributing \$1.7 million for eight brand co-op marketing efforts at the Regional, State and Local level.

Our focus for 2008 is to build brand awareness and further guest relations in our Regions, States and at the local levels by creating fresh, innovative marketing programs. We want to follow our guests' behaviors such as booking and travel patterns to raise our ADR/RevPAR.

Programs for 2008 include online advertising such as keyword buys and banner ads on Yahoo Maps, MapQuest, and other online vehicles, as well as printed media through magazines, State and Regional maps, brochures, rack cards, State guides, and coupon books. In 2007, almost all hotels participating in the co-op marketing program received increased revenue and showed a higher ROI. With the proven success of the co-op programs of the past several years, this increase in revenue should continue to increase year after year.

Currently, these are the statistics on membership in co-op 2008:

Mid scale:	Participated	63.82 %
	Non-participated	36.18 %
Econo Lodge:	Participated	37.17 %
	Non-participated	62.83 %
Rodeway Inn:	Participated	34.90 %
	Non-participated	65.10 %

All properties who participated in 2007 but did not sign the enrollment form for participation in 2008, will be removed from all co-op marketing programs immediately.

If you have not signed up for participation, what are you waiting for? There is still time to sign up for the program. The co-op enrollment form for your Region is available on Choicecentral.com under Marketing and then National Co-op Enrollment Form. It is still not too late to enroll.

For Questions about the Co-op Program please either contact your Regional Director or Joey Martin at the Corporate offices at joey_martin@Choicehotels.com, or email me at bestholiday@hotmail.com

Upcoming Meetings

Mark Your Calendars for Choice's 54th Annual Convention!
Choice Hotels' 54th Annual Convention will be held from

May 6 - 8, 2008 in fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada.



Check out the new convention website ChoiceCentral.com for the tentative schedule. Registration/Housing will open in January.

Be sure to continue visiting the website for updates.

registration.expoexchange.com/ShowCHI081/

May 6th, 2008 ELFA Even Regions Elections at Convention

ELFA will be conducting elections for Regional Directors and Vice Chairs in even-numbered regions (2-12). The Elections will be held at the ELFA – ROA Roundtables during the Choice Hotels Annual Convention. To nominate a candidate or if you have interest in running for a seat on the ELFA Board please contact Ross Almo at the ELFA offices, 866-508-0055 or ELFA Elections Chair Leonard Richardson via email: L.RichardsonVB@gmail.com.

Fall Regional Meetings 2008- Advance Notice

Make your plans now to attend this year's Fall Regional Meetings. Listed here are the dates and locations for the 5 different sessions that will be held. Hotel sites are still being reviewed and that information will be forthcoming very soon but we wanted to get you all as much information as early as possible so that you could at least try to work these dates into your busy schedules. As you are all aware, Fall Regionals are mandatory attendance meetings, but it is your option to come and learn something, or waste your time and money.

With all the changes in the Economy segment from reimagining to new amenities, from EasyChoice to Choice Privileges, from the cigar box to ChoiceAdvantage, there are bound to be some great learning opportunities for everyone. You will also have plenty of opportunity to socialize and network with you friends, ven-

dors, and Choice Corporate staff.

As soon as the agendas are firm, the hotels decided and contracted, and all the other information we can gather is available we will send it out. Mark your calendars now; we'll be seeing you in Las Vegas in May!

Regions



Dates and Locations Subject to Change

September 2-4	(7&10)	States: Tennessee, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana
September 10-12	(8&13)	States: Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa
September 21-23	(4,5,6)	States: Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, DC, Maryland, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine
October 13-15	(9,11,12)	States: Washington, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, Alaska
October 19-21	(1,2,3)	States: Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina
September 2-4		New Orleans, LA
September 10-12		Milwaukee, WI
September 21-23		Williamsburg, VA
October 13-15		Scottsdale, AZ
October 19-21		Jacksonville, FL

Spring Special for ELFA-ROA Members



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flexible insurance options at competitive prices (and generally more comprehensive coverage than that available in the general market) for Choice franchisees. As a result, the Franchisee Insurance Program, which is managed by Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services (AJG), was formed.

Because risks seem to lurk around every corner today, it makes good business sense for entrepreneurs to protect the investments they have made in hotel properties. The Franchisee Insurance Program offers options that include property and casualty insurance, professional liability insurance, and workers compensation coverage. In addition, AJG also has claims-management and loss-control services for Choice franchisees who want a more comprehensive risk management package.

One of the particularly compelling benefits of the program is that it can serve all the insurance needs of a franchisee's entire portfolio by writing umbrella policies that cover all properties, including non-Choice brand properties. This can help reduce costs, save time, and simplify paperwork for franchisees.

Another ownership group that is participating in the Franchisee Insurance Program is Winfield, Kansas-based Darco Hotels. Darco president Darlene Coffey approached AJG about switching her coverage last March after reading about the Franchisee Insurance Program on ChoiceCentral. Within 72 hours, Darco Hotels had property & casualty, liability and workers compensation policies in place for both of its hotels.

"We're saving over \$10,000 per year," said Coffey. "Switching insurance companies was a breeze and our cost savings are incredible."

Econo Lodge franchise owners and operators who would like more information about the Franchisee Insurance Program may contact John Montgomery at (301) 592-6650 at Choice Hotels. You can also visit Arthur J. Gallagher on the web at www.ajg.com/choice.

Smart. Economical. Easy.

How Choice's New Insurance Program is paying off for our Owners

"I applaud Choice for the vision and commitment to approach AJG to establish this program," says Amar Shokeen, president of the Welcome Group which owns hotels in Colorado and Virginia. "I've been involved in franchising for many years. This program is having a direct, positive impact on my bottom line and it is making my job much easier."

If you feel as though you are paying too much for your property and casualty insurance, you're not alone. Over the last several years, many Econo Lodge owners have seen their insurance rates jump dramatically, in some cases as much as double the previous year's rates.

In response, Choice Hotels sought an insurance provider that could provide

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COUPONS



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Even with a great mattress, you can still have a bad nights rest, if you do not have a consistent nightly routine.



For many people, lack of sleep or poor sleep is caused by an old, out of date and under achieving bed set. Mattresses that are over 9-11 years old are usually past their prime performance and don't give you the support you need for a great nights rest. Purchasing a new mattress, box spring and bed base can help you sleep much more soundly, but if you've done that and you are still having problems, you very well could need advice on a consistent nightly sleeping routine.

How do I establish a good sleeping routine? Honestly, there has not been much public research into mattresses and bed sets, but there has been great amount of research done on sleep. Experts agree that having a consistent nightly sleep routine is a very important part to a good nights sleep, and

there are a few things you can do to help establish a routine.

Bedtime – just like small children adults need to have a regular bedtime. This helps to prepare your body for sleeping, establishing a pattern that your body will become accustom to. Unless unavoidable, try to go to bed, at roughly the same time each night.

Food and drink - eating and drinking too much before you go to bed is a recipe for poor sleep. Alcohol and caffeine stimulate the brain and a large meal will be digested as you try to sleep. Only eat a very little before you go to bed, and have warm milky drink, which will help you feel sleepy.

TV's and computers – many people have televisions, DVD players, computers, MP3's or radios in their bedroom. Watching TV and movies

before you try to rest will not help you sleep. Also, if you fall asleep with the Television on you are likely disturbed in the middle of the night. Research has concluded that even having electrical items on standby in your room can interfere with your sleep. If you can do with out your appliances in your room then you can have an undisturbed nights sleep.

Give these simple ideas a try and see if you get a better nights rest after a few evenings.

Contact BenRoney, Beau Gorrell or Buddy Woodbridge at (800) 225-1183

ReImaging

For nearly 40 years, the Econo Lodge® logo has served as a familiar beacon for travelers. Through innovation and a focus on guest satisfaction, Econo Lodge has become a different, more modern brand. To signal these changes, the Econo Lodge image was updated to a more inviting, dynamic logo.

To introduce the new logo to consumers, Choice® has developed an advertising campaign that will raise awareness of the new Econo Lodge image. The campaign will be anchored by television advertising, with fifteen second ads on well known networks such as TNT, ESPN, CNN, The Weather Channel and many others. Also included are several sponsorships including *Mythbusters* on the Discovery Channel, *Sportscenter* on ESPN and the *Business Traveler's Advisory* on FOX News. Online advertising will run in conjunction with the television campaign. Ads promoting the new Econo Lodge logo

will appear on a variety of sites such as MSN.com, Budget-Travel.com, Google and many others. An email sponsorship with Rand McNally is also included in the online plan. Topping off the campaign is print advertising in *USA TODAY*, including the color-bar on the front page.

Make sure to attend the 2008 Convention where you can pre-

view the Econo Lodge re-imaging television ad and learn more details about the campaign.



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RESOLUTIONS FOR 2008

By Samantha Martinez, Esq.

The new year is a time for reflecting over the last twelve months, and for renewing promises to make the next twelve months better. In that spirit, here are a handful of new year's resolutions for managing employee relations in 2008, based on the legal trends of 2007:

- *Take a fresh look at your handbook and other written policies.* Review your handbook from your employees' perspective. Does your handbook provide the information that they truly need to know? Is it written in language that the employees can understand? Does it provide too much or not enough detail? It is difficult but necessary to provide just enough information to alert employees of policies without constraining managers' flexibility in applying them.

- *Conduct a yearly refresher course on key policies.* If a policy is important to your company, then say it, and say it often. Examples of key policies include harassment policies, leave and sick time policies, and overtime policies. Moreover, yearly training can be part of a key defense in employment claims. Courts and juries are no longer impressed that a company has a written anti-harassment policy. They want to know how it was communicated to employees, and how often it was discussed – not just that it was contained in a handbook provided years ago and never talked about again.

- *Expand your harassment policy to include other types of harassment.* The EEOC now receives a large number of complaints of harassment based on race or ethnic origin in addition to sexual har-

assment. Your policy and training need to cover every form of harassing behavior. And when you revise this policy, also include language prohibiting retaliation for complaining of harassment or discrimination.

- *Make sure your policies are available in the languages your employees speak.* As discussed above, it is little use to employers to put forth a policy that employees cannot understand. And it won't help you at all when defending claims on the basis that the employee failed to follow your policy. It is difficult to blame an employee for failing to report harassment, for example, if the employee has no idea where to go for help.

- *Learn how to document employee issues and teach supervisors how to do same.* There is an art to documenting employees' misconduct and errors, and most people get it wrong. There are many good guides and trainings on this subject, and it is worth taking the time to learn them. Courts and juries will tell you that if misconduct or performance issues are not written down, then the issues do not appear to be important to the company.

- *Familiarize yourself with the EEOC's new caregiver discrimination rules.* The EEOC recently issued an Enforcement Guidance regarding discrimination on the basis of a person's caregiving responsibilities, available at <http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/caregiving.html>. Examples of caregiver discrimination would be treating a female employee differently once she became a mother, or disciplining an employee more harshly than others for tardiness or absences due to care of a disabled relative. The EEOC is keeping an eye out for these types of discrimination, and so should you.

- *Implement a policy that all key employment decisions will be reviewed by Human Resources.* Too many flawed employment decisions are made in the heat of the moment by a supervisor who is angry at an employee. It is best to let a cool

head intervene and assess the proper response. Human Resources can also help make a decision that is proportional to decisions made in the past, a key defense to discrimination claims.

- *Seek input from employees and managers as to what the company can do to function better.* Your employees know the best way to get a job done. They also know what sorts of benefits and policies would make their jobs more appealing to them. Smart companies seek employees' input on these issues. Some do this in the form of formal surveys, but it can also take place in regular meetings with employees or by training supervisors to listen to and respect staff.

- *Finally, make a promise to treat your employees as well as you can.* It is amazing the difference in company cultures across the same industry. The companies that value their employees generally find that their businesses run more smoothly and they have reduced turnover costs. Cheers and Good Luck!

Samantha Barlow Martinez is a partner with Muskat, Martinez & Mahony, LLP in Houston, Texas, a law firm specializing in management-side labor union issues and employment litigation. She and her partners assist hotels and restaurants with union prevention and campaigns, pay and overtime disputes, investigations of misconduct, and lawsuits relating to discrimination, retaliation, and leave issues. She can be reached at 713-987-7850 or at smartinez@m3law.com. This material is intended to provide general information on noteworthy legal issues and is not a substitute for legal advice. For additional information go to www.hospitalitylawyer.com.

Spring Promotion by Nisha Starks

This spring marks a very exciting time not only for **Choice Privileges**[®], but also for Econo Lodge[®] and Rodeway Inn[®]. The economy brands will participate in their first ever **Choice Privileges** promotion. And, it comes at a great time with **Choice Privileges** recently surpassing the six million member milestone and embarking on a celebration of its 10th anniversary.

This spring's promotion offers guests an opportunity to earn up to 15 points per dollar spent at Econo Lodge and Rodeway Inn properties. **Choice**

Privileges members normally earn five points per dollar spent on qualifying stays.

During the promotion they will earn an additional five points, and if they register at choicehotels.com prior to check-in they will receive a bonus five points. So, guests can earn up to triple points between February 1 and April 17.

The midscale and extended stay brands are celebrating the 10th anniversary of **Choice Privileges** with a similar offer for triple points.

There is also a **Choice Privileges**[®] Visa[®] card promotion this spring that offers consumers an opportunity to earn enough points for two

free nights. Consumers earn 10,000 points if they apply for the card between February 1 and May 31 and make their first purchase by August 14, 2008. Additionally, they earn another 10,000 points when they use the card to pay for a stay at a Choice hotel by August 14.

Be sure to display all of your promotional materials and train your staff on the spring offers. Then leverage this promotion to all your guests and you'll start to see how **Choice Privileges** can make a difference to your business.



choice ADVANTAGE *Continued from page 2* Keep an eye out for additional regional focus groups that the Property Systems team will be conducting for choiceADVANTAGE users. A schedule will be emailed to the GM account once completed. Choice will also be collecting additional user feedback at our booth on the tradeshow floor at Choice's annual convention.

Regarding future versions of choiceADVANTAGE, here's a look at what is being tested for upcoming releases:

Version 3.1

- Rooms available to sell" added to the Quick Stats page
- An interface to Corporate Lodging Consultants (CLC)
- The ability to print registration cards and confirmation letters from an existing reservation
- Direct Bill statements will include guest names and account numbers
- The ability to export data to support back office accounting packages
- The ability to display elite status and point eligibility for Choice Privileges
- Version 3.2
- Company history reporting
- Cashier shifts by user
- Full housekeeping functionality
- Ability to edit historical demand seasons
- Ability to increase room inventory beyond 52 weeks
- Express check out folio functionality

- Arrival/check-in time added to guest folio
- VIP and vehicle ID fields added to the guest form

As Choice further develops the features and functionality of choiceADVANTAGE, user feedback will continue to be one of the major driving forces behind new enhancements. This is why it is so important for users to send in those Suggest-A-Grams and participate in user feedback sessions whenever possible. For more information on the development of the choiceADVANTAGE system, contact Choice's product management group at (800) 699-2994.

SILVER LEVEL ALLIED MEMBER



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Around the Water Cooler with Bob

by **Robert Thompson**

Good day folks, though for some of us with the inclement weather we have been battling it isn't such a nice day. These properties I am talking about are located in the Midwest, the northeast and even upper northwest United States. All of us having been battling with Mother Nature since the beginning of December and there looks to be no end to her wrath this year. All I can say is that if you are in an affected area use your Brand Performance Consultant at Choice Hotels International to discuss with everyone what is happening in your region and ask for help with repositioning yourself. Get in touch with the mid-scales brands in your area, see if we / you can work together in solving some of the problems you face locally, because remember there is strength in numbers and if you can help each other that goes a long way to showing the customers what kind of properties you are. Participate in your regional Co-op and join ELFA, you lucky Rodeway owners automatically belong to ROA. Also remember that by using all of Choice Hotels

International's different help areas, it proves they work for us because if we go broke so does Choice Hotels. Well enough on this subject lets move on shall we?

What else shall we talk about now? I know, I have an announcement to make, "I regret I must inform everyone that I am retiring from the hospitality industry, ELFA and the Region 6 Co-op." This is probably my last column. I know some of you are cheering and some are groaning and weeping, but I know I personally am going to miss a lot of the friends that I have made over the last 17 years of being part of Choice Hotels. This was

not an easy decision to make, but sitting here and watching my health deteriorate these last couple of years and discussing this decision with my wife we decided that it is time for the "fat old bald guy" to no longer climb up on his soap box but will amble off in the sunset, while mumbling to himself about the ignorance of his fellow corporate man. So until we meet again I hope everyone has a good year and are using all of Choice Hotels resources to assist in running at full occupancy. Anyone interested in taking over the column please contact Ross in the ELFA – ROA Offices.

The Importance of Brand Standards

As consumer tastes continue to mature when it comes to the type of lodging product they expect, hotel brands find themselves in a constant state of flux when it comes to brand standards. Nothing is sacrosanct these days, and the intersecting trends toward better beds, more residential style and décor, and bigger bathrooms, are just some of the major changes affecting existing hotels. But whether or not you're in favor of this ever evolving change in standards, one thing is certain -- standards are critical to maintaining brand integrity. While most talk of brand standards usually revolves around franchisee frustration from changes made by franchisor fiat -- without these requirements in place, a hotel brand could no exist in its current form. A brand is a guarantee to the consumer they will get certain services, amenities and experiences during their stay, and without that guarantee, a hotel flag is really nothing at all in the traveler's mind.

by Katen Patel
QAR-Standards Committee Chair
Region 9 Director

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