

# today's hotelier

JULY 2024 | todayshotelier.com

Official Publication of AAHOA

## U.S. Representative Shri Thanedar

*Sponsor of The LIONS Act  
and Proud AAHOA Supporter*

PAGE 8

## Personalization, preferences, & profits

PAGE 12

GET TO KNOW  
**THE 2024  
AAHOA**  
AWARD WINNERS

PAGE 18





TAKE YOUR GUESTS  
... *TO DREAMLAND*



Guests are looking for sleep-focused amenities, and no offering is complete without addressing noise. It's a top complaint across all property types and well known to disturb slumber. By reducing both the frequency and magnitude of noise disruptions, MODIO will help them find dreamland - and wake up singing your property's praises rather than anxiously awaiting their return home.

**GUESTROOM ACOUSTIC CONTROL | [WWW.MODIO.AUDIO](http://WWW.MODIO.AUDIO)**

# contents

July 2024 | todayshotelier.com

# 12

## Make it personal

Hoteliers are building their brands  
by tailoring experiences to guests

by NICK FORTUNA

# 18

## Glorifying greatness

Recognizing the 2024  
AAHOA Award winners

by CARTER DAVIS

**FOCUS: ADVOCACY  
IN ACTION**

# 24

## Allied interests

Get to know U.S. Representative  
Buddy Carter

by NEAL A. PATEL

## departments

- 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT  
AAHOA THIS MONTH
- 6 LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN
- 7 LETTER FROM THE  
PRESIDENT & CEO
- 43 TELL ME SOMETHING GOOD
- 46 AAHOA CLUB BLUE,  
PLATINUM, SILVER, AND BRONZE  
INDUSTRY PARTNERS
- 48 AAHOA MEMBERS IN ACTION
- 50 CLASSIFIEDS
- 50 ADVERTISERS INDEX

## columns

### THE C-SUITE

Partnering for progress: U.S. Representative Shri Thanedar's perspective on the steps necessary to  
build better businesses ..... 8  
by CARTER DAVIS

### THE GUEST EXPERIENCE

The synergy of satisfaction: How employee and guest happiness drive profits ..... 28  
by GEORGE POLYARD

### OPERATIONS

Understanding service dogs: A guide for hotel guest service ..... 30  
by GARY GOBIN, CHA

### CONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

Ready, fire, aim: Understanding PIPs and the franchised property to hit your targets ..... 32  
by AMANDA GERTSEN, KATIE PASS-BRINKER, and KAREN PELZER

### TRENDS

The power of prediction: Using data to see the future ..... 34  
by MICHAEL YEOMANS

### STRATEGY

Elevating hospitality: The power of customized branding in hotels ..... 36  
by MARC MASCARELLO and MICHAEL DITULLO

### HUMAN RESOURCES

The insurance benefit: A new option for employer-reimbursed healthcare  
can help you keep your top performers ..... 38  
by JACK HOOPER

### ADVOCACY

Saddle up: AAHOA advocacy activity in the Lone Star State ..... 40  
by JODI SCOTT

Today's Hotelier (ISSN 24174062), volume 24, issue 7, is published monthly by Naylor Association Solutions, for AAHOA,  
1100 Abernathy Road, Suite 725, Atlanta, GA 30328. Periodicals postage paid at Gainesville, Florida, and at additional mailing offices.  
Postmaster: Send address changes to Today's Hotelier, 11350 McCormick Rd #1000, Hunt Valley, MD 21031

# 2024-2025 AAHOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## AAHOA OFFICERS

**Miraj S. Patel, MBA, CHO, CHIA**  
Chairman

**Kamalesh (KP) Patel**  
Vice Chairman

**Rahul Patel**  
Treasurer

**Pinal S. Patel**  
Secretary

**Laura Lee Blake, Esq.**  
President & CEO

## DIRECTORS

**Bharat Patel, CHO, CHIA**  
Immediate Past Chair

**Sanjay M. Patel**  
Alabama Regional Director

**Danny (Chintu) Patel**  
Arkansas Regional Director

**Viral Patel**  
Central Midwest  
Regional Director

**Vik Zaver**  
Georgia Regional Director

**Naresh (ND) Bhakta**  
Greater Los Angeles Area  
Regional Director

**Vimal Patel**  
Gulf Regional Director

**Mahendra (MZ) Patel,**  
**CHA, CHO, CHIA**  
Mid Atlantic Regional Director

**Ajay Patel**  
Mid South Regional Director

**Pinkesh Patel**  
North Carolina  
Regional Director

**Bhavesh N. Patel**  
North Central Regional Director

**Jayesh (Jay) Patel**  
North Florida Regional Director

**Ankit Panchal**  
North Pacific Regional Director

**Dhiren Masters**  
North Texas Regional Director

**Preyas Patel, CHA**  
Northeast Regional Director

**Taran Patel, MBA**  
Northwest Regional Director

**Fenil Desai**  
South Carolina  
Regional Director

**Vikash K. Patel**  
South Central Texas  
Regional Director

**Chetan (Chris) Patel**  
South Florida Regional Director

**Nilesh (Neil) Bhakta**  
South Pacific Regional Director

**Bhavik Patel**  
Southeast Texas  
Regional Director

**Dharmesh Ahir**  
Southwest Regional Director

**Kalpesh Joshi**  
Upper Midwest  
Regional Director

**Deepak Patel**  
Washington DC Area  
Regional Director

**Nilesh Patel**  
Director at Large  
Eastern Division

**Nalin (Neil) Patel**  
Director at Large  
Western Division

**Purnima Patel**  
Women Hoteliers Director  
Eastern Division

**Shetal Zina Patel**  
Women Hoteliers Director  
Western Division

**Dylan Patel**  
Young Professional Director  
Eastern Division

**Tanmay Patel, MBA**  
Young Professional Director  
Western Division

**Industry Partners**  
Amir Ahmed  
Kevin Sloan  
Abraham Tieh



**FIND THE LATEST AT**  
[WWW.TODAYSHOTELIER.COM](http://WWW.TODAYSHOTELIER.COM)

## CONNECT

**EMAIL:**  
[todayshotelier@naylor.com](mailto:todayshotelier@naylor.com)

**FACEBOOK:**  
[facebook.com/AAHOAofficial](https://facebook.com/AAHOAofficial)

**INSTAGRAM:** [AAHOAofficial](https://www.instagram.com/AAHOAofficial)

**LINKEDIN:** [AAHOA](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AAHOA)

**X:** [@TodaysHotelier](https://twitter.com/TodaysHotelier)

**WHATSAPP:**  
[AAHOA.com/WhatsApp](https://www.aahoa.com/WhatsApp)

**YOUTUBE:**  
[youtube.com/AAHOA](https://youtube.com/AAHOA)

**Today's Hotelier**  
is the official monthly  
publication of AAHOA  
1100 Abernathy Road, Suite 725  
Atlanta, GA 30328  
P: (404) 816-5759  
[info@aahea.com](mailto:info@aahea.com)  
[www.aahoa.com](http://www.aahoa.com)

**AAHOA STAFF CONTRIBUTORS**  
**Laura Lee Blake Esq.**, President & CEO  
**Heather Carnes**, EVP, Communications, and  
Chief Strategy Officer  
**Lisa Moore**, Account Services Manager  
**Jodi Scott**, Marketing & Communications Manager  
**Olivia Story**, Marketing & Communications Coordinator  
**Nancy Taylor**, Director, Marketing

**Today's Hotelier**  
is published by  
**NAYLOR**  
ASSOCIATION SOLUTIONS  
550 SW 2nd Avenue, Suite 200  
Gainesville, FL 32601  
P: (800) 369-6220  
[www.naylor.com](http://www.naylor.com)  
[todayshotelier@naylor.com](mailto:todayshotelier@naylor.com)

**NAYLOR STAFF CONTRIBUTORS**  
**24-7creative**, Layout & Design  
**Carter Davis**, Managing Editor  
**Ben Hopper**, Publisher



Opinions expressed are those of the contributors  
and do not necessarily reflect the policy of  
AAHOA or Today's Hotelier magazine. Publication  
of an article or advertisement does not imply  
approval or endorsement by AAHOA.

©2024 AAHOA, all rights reserved. The contents of this  
publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part  
without the prior written consent of the publisher.

PUBLISHED JULY 2024/AAHOM0724



# 5 Things to Know About AAHOA This Month

## 1 SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH AAHOA

Have you hosted a Back-of-the-House Tour? Have you met with a political candidate? Have you been recognized with an award for your volunteer efforts? Share your news with AAHOA, and let us share it with your fellow members! We'd love to feature you on the AAHOA Broadcast, social media, and, possibly, *Today's Hotelier* magazine. Email us at [pr@aahoa.com](mailto:pr@aahoa.com).



## 2 REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR HEROWNERSHIP 2024

AAHOA's Third Annual HerOwnership event, September 12-13, 2024, in Redondo Beach CA, will focus on helping you elevate your career, determine your next steps, and inspire your journey. Register now at [bit.ly/4bsSbeG](https://bit.ly/4bsSbeG).



## 3 FORE! TEE UP FOR AAHOA CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Participating in AAHOA's charity golf tournaments is more than having fun on the greens. It's about advancing our mission through the community. These tournaments provide a unique platform for vendors and members to network and enjoy the outdoors, most importantly, together for a great cause. This year's AAHOA Charity Golf Tournaments are scheduled for: Aug. 19, Northwest Region, Camas Meadows Golf Club, Camas, WA; Oct. 14, North Texas Region, Cowboys Golf Club, Grapevine, TX; and Nov. 6, Florida Regions, LPGA International, Daytona, FL. Get more information at [AAHOA.com/Golf](https://AAHOA.com/Golf).



## 4 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ON-DEMAND WEBINARS

Are you ready to transform your hotel business and stay ahead in the ever-evolving hospitality industry? We invite you to our exclusive webinar series tailor-made for hotel owners like you! Our webinars bring together industry experts and insiders to provide you with valuable insights, strategies, and trends to boost your success. Explore all the offerings at [bit.ly/3yVgrYu](https://bit.ly/3yVgrYu).



## 5 UNITE. INNOVATE. ELEVATE. REGISTER FOR AAHOA HOTEL OWNERS CONFERENCES & TRADE SHOWS

AAHOA's newly branded Hotel Owners Conferences & Trade Shows are where influencers and decision-makers build the future of hospitality. Everyone in the industry is invited to attend for learning opportunities, networking, and the latest updates for hoteliers that you will not get anywhere else. The events run through November. Registration is free for AAHOA Members. Register at [AAHOA.com/HOC](https://AAHOA.com/HOC).





MIRAJ S. PATEL,  
MBA, CHO, CHIA

AAHOA CHAIRMAN (2024-2025)

“

As hoteliers, it is our primary responsibility to ensure guest experience is always the top priority. Without guests, there would be no hotels. And without hotels, there would be no owners.”

## Betting on the future

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.”  
- Warren Buffett

**W**HEN I BECAME AAHOA CHAIRMAN, ADDRESSING THE TOP INDUSTRY challenges was a key component of my strategic plan. These challenges directly impact the customer experience in several ways.

Some of those challenges are brands and franchising, industry disruptors, costs, and regulations. Surprisingly, each one impacts the guest experience.

- **Brands and franchising:** By addressing the proliferation of brands and advocating for each brand to maintain a clear identity and value proposition, customers are less likely to be confused, can make more informed choices, and brand recognition and loyalty improve.
- **Prioritizing NOI:** AAHOA is committed to helping our members improve their bottom line. Prioritizing owner profits can lead to improved investment in properties, resulting in better-maintained facilities and higher service standards for guests.
- **Reducing costs:** What if we could determine a way to streamline the booking process and reduce costs associated with online travel agencies? This would result in more competitive pricing for customers and a smoother booking experience.
- **Advocacy:** One of AAHOA’s top priorities is advocacy. We’re committed to addressing regulatory concerns around short-term rentals at the highest levels of government and transparency in fees to protect consumers with AAHOA’s support of the *No Hidden FEES Act*.
- **Technology:** Embracing AI and partnering with tech companies can lead to personalized guest experiences, from AI-driven recommendations to seamless check-in processes.
- **Regulations:** AAHOA stays up to date on rules and regulations to keep you informed. Implementing stringent health and safety measures ensures peace of mind for customers. Also, meeting safety standards, such as ADA requirements, ensures all guests can enjoy a comfortable and accessible stay. And finally, ensuring compliance with payment security standards builds trust with customers, assuring them their financial data is protected.
- **Workforce:** Labor shortages continue to persist. Investing in recruitment, retention, and career-development programs can increase employee satisfaction, translating into better customer service and guest loyalty.

When we come together to address industry challenges, it can affect every corner of our industry. As hoteliers, it’s our primary responsibility to ensure the guest experience is always the top priority. Without guests, there would be no hotels. And without hotels, there would be no owners.

When we address our challenges and Build a Better Tomorrow Today, we ultimately strengthen the industry and increase the satisfaction and loyalty of our guests. ■





**LAURA LEE BLAKE, ESQ.**  
AAHOA PRESIDENT & CEO

## Control is key

“We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It’s our job every day to make every important aspect of the customer experience a little bit better.”

– Jeff Bezos

“

In the hospitality business, providing exceptional guest experiences is priority No. 1. That is why AAHOA is committed to working toward a more sustainable business model for all stakeholders.”

### **IN THE HOSPITALITY BUSINESS, PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL GUEST EXPERIENCES**

is priority No. 1. That is why AAHOA is committed to working toward a more sustainable business model for all stakeholders. Everything we do at AAHOA ultimately can impact the guest experience and the 3.5 million guests who stay in AAHOA Member-owned hotels each night.

At AAHOACON24 in April, AAHOA announced the release of revised Point Number 12, Sale of the Franchise System Hotel Brand(s), in its 12 Points of Fair Franchising. The recent best-practice updates reflect the current industry landscape and are in response to the several noted acquisitions and proposed mergers of one or more hotel brands between franchisors in recent years.

Best practices related to Point 12 now recommend that each franchise agreement include a change of control clause to protect franchisees in the event of a purchase, sale, acquisition, or merger of one or more hotel brands between franchisors. The inclusion of this clause impacts the guest experience by ensuring stability and continuity in service quality and brand standards.

When a hotel faces franchisor ownership changes, there is a risk of disruption in operations. Guests may experience inconsistencies in service quality, amenities, and overall experience. By allowing franchisees to exit their agreements without excessive penalties in the event of a change in control, the clause ensures guests can continue to expect the same level of service and experience to which they are accustomed.

Importantly, franchisees whose hotel brand is acquired by a different franchisor may face uncertainty about their future, which can lead to disruptions in operations, staff morale, and, ultimately, the guest experience. However, a change of control clause would provide franchisees with an option to terminate their agreements within a reasonable timeframe after a change in control event (generally, within 12 months by providing proper notice), minimizing disruptions and ensuring a smoother transition.

This clause will give franchisees the necessary flexibility to assess their options and make decisions that align with their business interests and goals. They can evaluate whether staying with the new franchisor is in the best interests of their community, employees, and loyal guests, or if they would prefer to explore other opportunities without facing exorbitant penalties.

By educating our members about a change of control clause in franchise agreements, AAHOA is not only looking out for the interests of franchisees but also promoting a healthier and more equitable relationship between franchisees and franchisors. When franchisees feel supported and have mechanisms in place to navigate significant changes in ownership or management, it fosters a more positive and collaborative relationship between all parties involved, which can indirectly contribute to an improved guest experience. Indeed, through our collective efforts, we can all exceed guest expectations, create lasting memories, and lead our industry into a future of continued success and innovation. Truly, a win-win for all. ■

**U.S. Representative  
Shri Thanedar,  
Ph.D. (MI-13)**



# Partnering *for* progress

U.S. Representative Shri Thanedar's perspective on the steps necessary to build better businesses

by CARTER DAVIS

**L**IKE MANY AAHOA MEMBERS, Congressman Shri Thanedar (MI-13) made his way to the United States in search of new opportunities and a new life. Arriving at age 24 from India, he immediately set forth establishing himself and creating a brighter future for himself and his family back home.

"I came here looking for economic opportunities," he said. "I got an education – a Ph.D. – and I started a small business that grew to about 500 employees."

Today, this self-starting businessman and author is a member of the United States House of Representatives, from Michigan's 13th district, a living embodiment of the power of the American Dream.

## A SHARED HISTORY

The fifth-ever Indian American Congressman – and the first from Michigan – Rep. Thanedar's experiences of immigrating to America and working diligently to become a well-educated and highly successful business owner have given him a perspective that aligns well with AAHOA.

Accordingly, he has used his platform to advocate for many causes close to the heart of the hotelier.

"I'm a serial entrepreneur and understand the struggles many businesses have in terms of making payroll and getting capital for purchases for expansion of their businesses," he said.

Through that experience, coupled with his relationship with AAHOA, Rep. Thanedar announced the introduction of the *Loans in Our Neighborhoods (LIONS) Act*, a bill designed to amend the *Small Business Act* by increasing the maximum gross loan amount for section 7(a) loans, from \$5M to \$10M, which would provide greater financial support to small businesses.

"By introducing the *LIONS Act*, we're taking a significant step to bolster the resources available to the small business community in Michigan and across the country," he said. "This act is about ensuring that the financial needs of small businesses are adequately met, allowing them to continue driving our economy and creating jobs."

Earlier this year, Congressman Shri Thanedar (MI-13) introduced H.R. 7242, the *Loans in Our Neighborhoods (LIONS) Act*, which would increase the maximum loan amount for the Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) program from \$5 million to \$10 million. AAHOA knows how important this increase would be for our industry, and we need your help to let Congress know.

Write to your Member of Congress to garner support for this legislation and ask them to cosponsor H.R. 7242. Your voice can help move this legislation forward.

**Contact Your  
U.S. Representative  
and Senators!**



This legislation is being referred to the appropriate House Committee. The road ahead is certainly long, but Rep. Thanedar feels this is the first of many necessary steps to help hoteliers obtain access to capital, thus allowing them to operate and thrive in a challenging economy.

"It's important we grow our economy and create American jobs by helping those who want to start the businesses by eliminating the red tape and make it easier for people to access federal contracting and small business loans," he said.

## WORKERS WANTED

A related area of Rep. Thanedar's focus is on helping small-business owners adequately fill job openings. Throughout his life as an entrepreneur and now as a U.S. Congressman, Rep. Thanedar has traveled extensively and talked to many fellow business owners across many industries and has found similar concerns regarding an ongoing absence of much-needed workers in industries like hospitality.

"I consistently hear a lot of concerns about access to employment," he said.

"For example, many immigrants are having trouble getting their visas or green cards because of current limits at the federal level."

As a result, he said, businesses that depend on an immigrant workforce are inadequately staffed and likely will remain so until legislation is passed that can help reopen the pipeline for foreign-born workers to come to the United States.

"In addition to working on amending SBA loan amounts," he said, "I'm also working on fixing our broken immigration system – making more H-1 visas available and making the green card process much quicker so families don't have the stress of long periods of delay in getting their green cards. That way, employers can get a skilled workforce and immigrants can immediately begin working toward making a better life."

## YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

Also, in tandem with AAHOA's goals to actively engage in establishing relationships with legislators and being increasingly involved in helping drive legislation critical for successful hotel operations, Rep. Thanedar is a staunch advocate for AAHOA Members getting increasingly involved in the legislative process.

In establishing and nurturing those relationships, while presenting a united front, he said, AAHOA Members ultimately can achieve better bargaining power with the brands, better insurance rates, increased transparency from the brands on financials, greater freedom to shop around for supplies, and contracts that are more fair for franchisees.

After all, he said, the goal isn't just to aim for financial prosperity; these relationships between legislator and business owners will help lift communities and ensure America remains a beacon of innovation and success.

"For these and so many other reasons, it's vital you participate in the political process," Rep. Thanedar said. "Ultimately, it's in your best interests to be familiar with the issues our nation faces and ensure you interact regularly with your members of Congress. Talk with them and tell them about the important issues you face. Let's all work together to make this country a better place and continue to create jobs in America." ■



# IDEALLAV™



## Introducing IdealLav™

- Only lav drain to include replaceable grid strainer and internal stopper.
- No more clogs! Removable grid strainer keeps jewelry and hair out of drain.
- Internal stopper holds water overnight.
- Also available without internal stopper for public restrooms, etc.
- One-piece tube drops in for easy installation.









Always a step ahead

**816.796.3900 ■ watcomfg.com**

Patent [www.watcomfg.com/patents](http://www.watcomfg.com/patents)







## Payment processing that's simple, secure and trusted by over 10,000 AAHOA Members

We've been AAHOA's preferred partner for more than 25 years. As the number-one merchant acquirer in the U.S.,<sup>1</sup> processing \$2.15 trillion globally<sup>2</sup> and backed by financial powerhouse JPMorgan Chase, our strategic payments experts, solutions engineers and fraud specialists are here to help you.

### With Chase you'll benefit from:

- A dedicated lodging team
- Preferred group rates
- 24/7/365 customer support
- In-person, online and on-the-go payment options



Call 1-800-727-1872 or email  
[Team\\_AAHOA@chase.com](mailto:Team_AAHOA@chase.com) today to learn more.

<sup>1</sup>Nilson ranking March 2023

<sup>2</sup>JPMorgan Chase Q4 2022 Earnings Presentation

Businesses are required to complete an application and agree to terms and conditions at the time of enrollment. All businesses are subject to credit approval. Merchant services are provided by Paymentech, LLC ("Chase"), a subsidiary of JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. ©2024 JPMorgan Chase & Co. All rights reserved.



NEW AFRICA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM,  
 SUMMER PARADISE/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM,  
 KUDLA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM, SKVALVAL/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM,  
 VECTOR STOCK PRO/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM,  
 DIGITAL ART STUDIO/H/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Hoteliers are building their brands by tailoring experiences to guests

# Make it personal

by NICK FORTUNA

**T**RUTH BE TOLD, MOST OF US ARE guilty of online nosiness and social-media snooping, but at The Indigo Hospitality Group, that kind of inquisitiveness is a virtue, not a vice. Team members at the Charleston, SC-based company routinely Google guests' email addresses and scour their Facebook profiles for information that can inspire a personalized experience.

Indigo operates four luxury hotels in the South, with six more under development, and runs almost three dozen high-end restaurants. Its hotels typically call guests days before their arrival and ask if they'd like to make reservations at the restaurant. The next question is vital, according to Gabriel Perez, chief operating officer of Indigo's lodging division.

Are they celebrating a special occasion such as a birthday, wedding, anniversary, or graduation, or is there another special reason for their visit?

If the answer is yes, guests might find a chef-prepared dessert and a handwritten note in their rooms, and there might be a special insert printed just for that night's dinner menu, celebrating the occasion, Perez said. Clean rooms, friendly workers, and well-maintained amenities are essential to a hotel's success, but building brand loyalty and differentiating your property requires a personalized touch, he said.

Perez said online research can reveal when guests are in town for a big game, or they're dreading being away from their pets. So, Indigo's hotels have given personalized gifts to guests, such as ball caps or T-shirts representing their favorite team, a special dessert with their favorite player's name and uniform number written in icing, or a basket with dog treats and chew toys.

All gifts come with handwritten notes or cards from the general manager, and some are signed by the entire staff, Perez said. If a couple is celebrating an anniversary in the restaurant, the waiter might take a picture of them toasting the occasion, and by the time they're ready to check-out, they have a framed photo to take home.

"With that single piece of information, we can elevate and enhance their experience to make sure they feel recognized," he said. "We find ways to get that touchpoint. These things certainly aren't expensive or difficult in concept, and we execute them very well.

"We try to find things far beyond what everybody else does," Perez added. "We want them to think, 'How did they know that [about me]?' We want to create a moment that they'll remember five years from now."

Customer relationship management software makes it easy for hotels to take notes on guests' preferences and special occasions, but with a few minutes of online research, hotels can learn much more about their guests. Room rates at luxury hotels can justify the expense of personalized gifts, but even budget-friendly hotels can make a lasting impression with a little effort, Perez said.

Simply keeping stacks of greeting cards in the GM's desk drawer to celebrate special occasions is a good way to start, he said.

"I think any hotel right off Highway 95 or Highway 80 can pull this off if you have a culture of experience-driven hospitality and you use some creativity," Perez said.

## MAKING A SPLASH WITH GUESTS

Personalized experiences also are top of mind at The Grove Resort & Water Park in Orlando, which typically is packed with families visiting the Walt Disney World Resort next door. The Grove, featuring two- and three-bedroom condos, relies heavily upon repeat business, especially from British travelers, according to GM Charlie Kingston.

Holidays are a big deal at The Grove, he said. Around Easter, guests get customized baskets with their names on them, and they can order an Easter egg hunt in their rooms. At Christmastime, families get personalized stockings. There's also fake snow and a mailbox where kids can deposit letters to Santa. If the requests are doable, such as Disney- or Grove-branded toys or apparel, the kids often get their Christmas wishes, Kingston said.

No holiday is insignificant, as evidenced by the food specialties on National Cheddar Fries Day, April 20, he said. There also are pool parties with a disc jockey and games such as cornhole, karaoke

## Building a brand around

# pets

Garfield, the cartoon cat who loves lasagna, has been around since 1978 but is having arguably the biggest year of his life in 2024. His new movie hit theaters in May, a month after he was named the first chief pet officer for G6 Hospitality's Motel 6 brand.

Garfield's mission is to make Motel 6 the preferred economy hotel chain among pet owners, including those who travel with their furry friends. Motel 6 has allowed pets to stay for free for the past 60 years, according to Adam Cannon, chief brand officer of G6 Hospitality, and catering to pet owners is good business.

According to Forbes Advisor,

**66%**

of American households have at least one pet, up from 56% in 1988, and in 2022.

Pet owners spent a whopping

**\$136.8 BILLION**

on their animals.

The trend seems likely to continue given that millennials make up the largest group of pet owners

followed by Gen X

**25%**

and baby boomers

**33%**

**24%**

To appeal to pet owners, 11 Motel 6 locations have created Garfield-themed guestrooms, featuring orange curtains and bedding, stuffed animals, cat trees, water and food bowls, and blankets that look like pizza, another of Garfield's favorite treats. One contest winner will get to stay in a Garfield-themed suite at the Motel 6 in Hollywood and attend the red-carpet movie premiere.

"Who better to provide his expertise to help pet travel be a little easier than everyone's favorite pampered, Monday-hating, lasagna-loving, indoor cat?" said Jeffrey Godsick, an executive vice president with Sony Pictures Entertainment.



IMAGE COURTESY OF G6 HOSPITALITY

# max

THE ONE TO WATCH

## Only The Best For Your Guests



Contact your service provider to  
learn more about Max for Hospitality!

[HBOBulk.com](https://www.hbobulk.com)



nights, arts-and-crafts lessons, and special beverages for the parents.

"You need to have a little something for everyone," Kingston said. "We take notes in our property management system as much as possible and try to customize the experience, and at the holidays, we obviously try to go over the top. That's especially important in a place like this, where it's primarily leisure customers. They're spending their own money, and

this might be the one vacation they take all year – or in three or four years."

#### LEVERAGING YOUR LOCALE

The guest experience is more memorable when hotel managers feel empowered to embrace the local flavor surrounding their properties, according to Melissa Magnuson, chairman of Magnuson Hotels. All hotels in the group are required to achieve a minimum aggregate review

score, but there are no "template brand standards," she said.

Some of the company's hotels, for example, get steady business from government workers, traveling nurses, and construction workers who are in town for an extended period and begin to feel socially isolated. These workers typically don't have large expense accounts, and they're missing their friends and family, so the hotels have sought to bring them together with free bingo and pizza, Magnuson said.

One property in Florida recently had a lot of guests in town for a fishing tournament, so it set up tables near the swimming pool where they could clean their fish, enjoy a few beers, and swap fishing stories. Likewise, hotels located near great outdoor attractions have established relationships with companies that rent out kayaks, mountain bikes, and fishing tackle, connecting guests with the local community.

Hotels may not benefit financially from these relationships, but by facilitating a better experience for guests, hotels come out ahead, Magnuson said. Similarly, buying breakfast pastries from a local bakery instead of from a national brand churning out cinnamon rolls by the pallet may not improve the bottom line, but it might help guests to remember your hotel, she said.

Hotel workers should be well versed in all their communities have to offer so they can serve as resources for visitors. In many instances, knowing the best place to take the kids bowling or to get the best burger in town can enhance the guest experience more than fancy amenities, Magnuson said.

"Consider that your hotel is the place where people are living at the moment, so you should try to make their experience more comfortable and enjoyable," she said. "You want to make them smile and say, 'Wow, I didn't expect that.'"

"Across all markets, our data clearly indicate that higher [revenue per available room] is achieved by independent hotels that leverage their individuality and their unique property characteristics," Magnuson added. "We believe when hotels are given the freedom to meet guest expectations in their own way, with local market considerations, then the minimum review score that's our brand standard is easy to achieve." ■

# THE LAUNDRY IS WAITING. DO IT RIGHT.



**AFFORDABLE - RELIABLE - EFFICIENT**



**850-249-2222**  
**bandctech.com**  
**[sales@bandctech.com](mailto:sales@bandctech.com)**  
**Commercial Laundry Equipment**

# Cost Segregation got this hotelier **\$3.5M** in extra cash flow in year 1.

TO LEARN MORE, REACH OUT TO **#costsegissac**



**ISAAC  
WEINBERGER**

(848) 261-1300  
iweinberger@madisonspecs.com  
www.madisonspecs.com



**18** years in  
all 50 states

**27k+** cost seg  
studies

**\$5b+** lowered  
upfront taxes

**MADISON  
SPECS**



## 2024 AAHOA FALL NATIONAL ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, WASHINGTON, D.C.

**ADVOCATING FOR  
TOMORROW:  
STRENGTHENING  
HOSPITALITY IN 2024**

**SEPT.  
18-19  
2024**

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**



# Glorifying *Greatness*

Recognizing  
the 2024  
AAHOA Award  
winners

by CARTER DAVIS

**E**ACH YEAR, AAHOA TAKES time to recognize a select group of individuals – and one overachieving property – who are blazing their own trail in the industry. This year, winners were announced on the final day of AAHOACON24, during the general session, in Orlando, FL. The annual AAHOA Awards Program recognizes the industry's best and brightest, and here is a small look at what makes these winners so special as we discuss why they're so passionate about belonging to AAHOA.

AAHOA is proud to have dedicated and innovative leaders who light the path for future generations.





## DR. RUBY DHALLA

### Outstanding HerOwnership Award of Excellence

#### WHAT WAS YOUR RATIONALE FOR JOINING AAHOA?

As one of the world's largest hotel associations, AAHOA is to be commended for its work, legacy, and the reputation it has created in championing the voice, issues, and concerns of hoteliers. I joined to become a part of the AAHOA family – to work, support, and empower each other with the skills, resources, and tools needed for everyone to succeed.

#### HOW HAVE YOU SEEN AAHOA WORKING TO HELP LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD REGARDING WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY?

The HerOwnership initiative launched by AAHOA is a great platform for supporting and mentoring women hoteliers. As a keynote speaker at the HerOwnership Conference & Retreat in 2023, I was

humbled with the response both during the conference and afterward by fellow women hoteliers who appreciated the event and wanted to be a part of a community they could trust and rely on for advice, support, and resources. Through the HerOwnership initiative, AAHOA is elevating the voices of women in the industry to ensure there's a level playing field for women in all aspects of the hospitality industry.

#### HOW HAS AAHOA MEMBERSHIP SHAPED YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER?

Professionally, AAHOA has given me strength and confidence in knowing I'm part of a larger community. As a relative newcomer, I'm full of gratitude to the board and to the members of AAHOA for their support, insight, advice, and words of wisdom.

## RAY PATEL

### Political Forum Award for Advocacy

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN AAHOA MEMBER AND WHY DID YOU JOIN?

I'm an AAHOA Lifetime Member and have been a part of the association since at least the late '90s.

#### WHY ARE YOU SO PASSIONATE ABOUT ADVOCACY, AND DO YOU THINK IT'S SOMETHING THAT NEEDS GREATER ATTENTION ACROSS THE INDUSTRY?

I'm passionate about advocacy because it's a process for me and my fellow hoteliers to practice fighting for our rights. Advocacy is the mechanism by which we as hoteliers can overturn adverse laws and effectuate changes for our industry to help protect and bolster our livelihoods. When we're forced to reckon with adverse legislation, only then do we

advocate for our side. It would be beneficial for all hoteliers to stay vigilant with any proposed legislation at the local and state levels and to ensure their elected officials don't pass laws that harm the hotel industry.

#### WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO HOTELIERS WHO HAVEN'T YET JOINED AAHOA?

Strength in numbers. It is imperative that every hotelier joins AAHOA as it's one of the largest trade associations that represents the largest numbers of hoteliers and has the capabilities to protect the industry from adverse legislation. More importantly, the advocacy AAHOA performs from Washington, D.C., to the smallest municipality in America helps bolster our viewpoints and effectuate legislation in our industries favor.



## DHRUV PATEL

### Outstanding HYPE Award of Excellence

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN AAHOA MEMBER AND WHY DID YOU JOIN?

I joined in 2021 because of its strong community support and valuable resources for hotel owners like me. The networking opportunities and access to industry insights have been instrumental in my business's success. Plus, being part of a diverse community that shares common goals and challenges has been incredibly enriching.

#### HOW HAS AAHOA MEMBERSHIP SHAPED YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER THUS FAR?

AAHOA membership has had a profound impact on my professional career. Through networking events, conferences, and educational resources, I've gained valuable insights into the hospitality industry. Connecting with fellow hotel owners has provided me with invaluable advice and support, helping me navigate challenges and seize opportunities. Additionally, AAHOA's

advocacy efforts have given me a voice in important industry issues, ensuring my concerns are heard and addressed.

#### WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO YOUR FELLOW YOUNG PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVEN'T YET JOINED AAHOA?

For young professionals who haven't yet joined AAHOA, I highly suggest exploring the countless benefits it offers. Membership provides access to a wealth of networking opportunities, enabling you to connect with experienced professionals in the hospitality industry. Additionally, take advantage of the educational resources and workshops available through AAHOA to enhance your skills and knowledge in hotel management. Remember, AAHOA offers a supportive community of peers who understand your challenges and share your ambitions. Joining AAHOA can be a valuable investment in your professional growth and success.



## DR. JAY S. PATEL

### AAHOA Award of Excellence

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN AAHOA MEMBER AND WHY DID YOU JOIN?

I joined AAHOA in 1989 and became one of the initial members in 1990. My motivation was to unite with fellow industry colleagues and collaborate to educate others about our identity and origins, especially when the insurance industry began unfairly targeting Indian hoteliers.

#### HOW HAS AAHOA MEMBERSHIP SHAPED YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER?

AAHOA has become the cornerstone of my professional career. In the mid-1990s, I conducted a thorough examination of franchising practices and contract provisions. I discovered these

contracts, often drafted by franchise attorneys, heavily favored franchisors and provided minimal benefits to franchisees. Recognizing the need to educate hoteliers, I co-developed the 12 Points of Fair Franchising in 1999.

#### WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO HOTELIERS WHO HAVEN'T YET JOINED AAHOA?

AAHOA serves as the sole advocate protecting the interests of the Asian American community across all industry issues. By uniting as one voice, AAHOA can influence industry rules and regulations that impact our daily operational costs and mandates. In today's environment of business mandates, it's crucial for business owners to be part of AAHOA and have their voices heard collectively.





## PRAKASH SARAF

### Cecil B. Day Community Service Award

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN AAHOA MEMBER AND WHY DID YOU JOIN?

I've been a proud member of AAHOA for 14 incredible years. I initially joined to expand my network, be part of a vibrant community, and gain new insights. AAHOA is an exceptional platform for learning and skill development. When asked why I joined, I simply say: 'To be part of a dynamic organization that offers endless opportunities for growth, connections, and success!'

#### WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO HOTELIERS WHO HAVEN'T YET JOINED AAHOA?

I wholeheartedly encourage my fellow hoteliers to become part of this vibrant

community. By joining AAHOA, they expand their professional network and broaden their perspective, gaining valuable insights into the industry. They will discover new opportunities for growth, learn about innovative approaches to community partnerships, and develop meaningful connections that can help take their business to the next level.

I can attest to the transformative power of this organization. Through AAHOA, I've gained access to exclusive resources, mentorship, and support that have been instrumental in my success.

## HITESH PATEL

### Cecil B. Day Community Service Award

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN AAHOA MEMBER AND WHY DID YOU JOIN?

I joined AAHOA in 2008 when I acquired my first hotel property. For me, membership transcends a mere affiliation; it represents a commitment to a collective endeavor aimed at enhancing our industry. I was drawn to AAHOA for its robust educational resources and exclusive vendor discounts, which were instrumental as I navigated the complexities of hotel ownership.

#### CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR HISTORY OF COMMUNITY SERVICE?

Community service has been a cornerstone of my life. Recently, as president of LPS of USA, we have initiatives that profoundly impacted our community, particularly the youth. We awarded numerous scholarships to students in need, fostering their future success.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, under the leadership of Nayna (Nancy) Patel, we raised nearly \$442,000. This funding facilitated the acquisition of oxygen plants for hospitals in Gujarat, India, marking a significant achievement in our humanitarian efforts.

#### WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO HOTELIERS WHO HAVEN'T YET JOINED AAHOA?

I strongly encourage every hotelier who hasn't yet joined AAHOA to consider membership. The value of AAHOA lies in the relationships and knowledge we share among our peers. It's a platform where learning from one another isn't just encouraged – it's integral. Engaging with AAHOA can profoundly enhance your operational strategies and industry understanding.







## AMIT BHAKTA

### Outreach Award for Philanthropy

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN AAHOA MEMBER AND WHY DID YOU JOIN?

For more than two decades, I've been part of AAHOA. My journey started straight out of high school, tagging along with my dad, eager to soak up everything about the industry. Back then, AAHOA was the ultimate spot to connect with vendors, fellow business owners, and newcomers like me.

#### CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS AND WHY YOU FEEL IT'S SUCH AN IMPORTANT UNDERTAKING?

Growing up, I watched my parents give back to the community despite having little themselves. It really sparked something in me. Now, I'm involved with several charities here and in India. I feel lucky to be where I am, but I know not everyone gets the same chances. Through my charity work, I'm just trying to make life better, bring people together, and lift others up.

#### WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO HOTELIERS WHO HAVEN'T YET JOINED AAHOA?

AAHOA brings together a group of seasoned hoteliers, each with a treasure trove of knowledge and experiences. In the fast-paced world of hospitality, AAHOA stands out for its ability to stay ahead of the curve with the latest trends. Its educational seminars are top-notch, covering a wide range of relevant topics. Beyond business, AAHOA is where lasting friendships are made. Some of my closest pals are folks I met through AAHOA!

## LEXEN HOTEL

### Hollywood, CA, IAHA Independent Hotel of the Year Award

*Answers provided by Armaan Patel*

#### HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE LEXEN HOTEL?

The Lexen Hotel is a luxurious accommodation known for its elegant ambience and top-notch amenities. Nestled in the heart of Hollywood, CA, it offers guests a sophisticated experience coupled with impeccable service. The hotel's modern architecture blends seamlessly with its surroundings, creating a captivating aesthetic for visitors.

#### WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT THE LEXEN HOTEL?

The Lexen Hotel stands out from a design perspective due to its collaboration with award-winning interior designers who have crafted a truly distinctive aesthetic. Every corner of the hotel exudes elegance and sophistication, with attention paid to every detail. From the moment guests step into the lobby, they're greeted by a seamless fusion of modern flair and incredible service.

#### WHAT SPECIFIC CHALLENGES DO INDEPENDENT PROPERTIES FACE IN TODAY'S MARKET?

Many independent hotels are having trouble standing out due to brand recognition and the marketing power brands have. But, there's a solution on how to stand out in oversaturated markets by creating and implementing aesthetics that present your hotel as Instagrammable, as well as the advantage of offering a more personalized and authentic guest experience, which can be a significant draw for travelers seeking unique accommodations. Currently, on all our boutique products, we are targeting Gen Z travelers as we see the industry changing, and most importantly, creating a guest experience for each individual who steps foot into our hotel. ■





# Where *Style* Meets *Substance*

## Introducing the VTech T961 Universal Wired Thermostat

VTech Hospitality is introducing the pinnacle of temperature control for hotels – T961NN50 Universal Wired Thermostat. Beyond its sleek and unobtrusive design lies a powerhouse of features crafted to elevate the guest experience. Whether it's the intuitive interface or the antibacterial design, every aspect is meticulously engineered for both comfort and peace of mind.



24V wired thermostat is compatible with most PTAC, VTAC, Heat Pump, and Conventional HVAC systems



VTech thermostats come with a 3-year limited warranty, showcasing our commitment to reliability and durability



Guests can effortlessly manage room temperature with a large 2.8", dimmable display, ensuring clarity and ease of use



Manufactured with antibacterial plastics prioritizing guest well-being during their stay



With manual and auto changeover modes, our thermostat suits the diverse climate needs of your guests



Secure NFC setup with EC Pro app for Android/iOS allows you to save multiple thermostat provisioning profiles and group them by property

**vtech®** | Hospitality

[vtechhotelphones.com](https://vtechhotelphones.com)

For more information contact our sales team at [sales@vtechhotelphones.com](mailto:sales@vtechhotelphones.com)

## Get to know U.S. Representative Buddy Carter

# Allied interests

by NEAL A. PATEL

**T**HIS MONTH, WE'RE SITTING DOWN WITH CONGRESSMAN BUDDY CARTER, A REPUBLICAN MEMBER OF THE U.S. House of Representatives who has represented Georgia's 1st District since 2015. Himself a small business owner, Rep. Carter is acutely familiar with the specific challenges facing America's hoteliers and has made it his mission to help ease the pain of doing business in today's economy.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THIS SESSION?

Given my background as a pharmacist, one of my top priorities has always been lowering prescription drug prices and combating the vertical integration in health care that's destroying independent pharmacies and driving up the costs of medicines.

I'm also chair of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials, meaning I have an expanded role in shoring up America's energy security, critical mineral supply chains, and permitting reform, to name a few. Permitting is a pressing issue in our country. Not only does it affect Americans' access to broadband connection, but it also impacts our national energy security, with many aspects of our national energy sector being controlled by China and Russia. This session, the House passed H.R. 1, the *Lower Energy Costs Act*, which will tackle some of the burdensome regulations preventing America's energy sector from thriving. I hope to see it signed into law.

### WHAT SORTS OF POLICIES, SUCH AS TAX AND REGULATORY REFORMS, DO YOU HOPE TO WORK ON TO SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY?

Georgia's 1st District has a rich hospitality and tourism industry. From River Street to the Okefenokee Swamp, our district is a destination for people across the country. It's critical we implement pro-growth economic policies that allow these families and businesses to thrive. Let's face it, inflation is crushing all Americans, including our friends in the hospitality industry. That's a pressing issue we must address. As a member of the Budget Committee, I'm constantly working to curb federal spending and bring relief to families fighting to afford the basic necessities. Inflation is directly impacting people's purchasing power, and we must get a grip on it so more of your money stays in your wallet.

One of the ways we're doing this is through H.R. 1, the *Lower Energy Costs Act*, which I mentioned previously. By

increasing domestic energy production and reversing some of the anti-energy policies of this administration, we'll bring down costs in all sectors. There's no industry that can function without energy. It's important this vital resource be both affordable and reliable.

Additionally, there is a bipartisan bill in the Senate that will help build up Main Street, called *The Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act*. It does this in part by cutting red tape, expanding the small business expensing cap, and reducing families' tax burdens so they have more disposable income and can afford to take trips and support local businesses. I hope to see this bill signed into law before the end of the year.

### WHAT EXCITES YOU THE MOST ABOUT SERVING IN CONGRESS?

As I say often, the shine hasn't worn off for me. I'm excited every time I land in Washington, D.C., and I mean that. It's always an honor to be able to hold public office, but it's a special honor when you get to represent your home, the place



U.S. Rep.  
Buddy Carter (GA-1)

“

In fact, AAHOA Member-owned hotels alone impact more than 152,000 jobs in Georgia and contribute \$11.9 billion to our state GDP. Frankly, our district and state wouldn't be the same without our hoteliers.”

you've lived all your life and intend to live the rest of your life.

I got my start in local government, serving on the city council and then as mayor of Pooler, GA. Through that experience, I developed a love for constituent service, and I've maintained my commitment to helping, meeting with, and recognizing the great people who call our district home. One of the ways I do this is by delivering speeches on the House floor, called one minutes, where I talk about constituents' accomplishments and honor those who have passed. For that reason, I'm consistently among the most active speakers on the House floor, because when you represent such great people from such a great district, it's hard not to talk about it.

#### **WHAT INDUSTRY (OR INDUSTRIES) DID YOU WORK IN BEFORE YOU WERE ELECTED TO CONGRESS?**

My very first job in high school was as a landscape engineer, a fancy way of saying that I cut grass, for Travis Field Airport, now known as the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport. In college, I also worked at Union Camp Paper Mill, now International Paper Mill, in our district. Let me tell you, that put a fire under me to continue my education, because that work was no joke.

Like many AAHOA Members, I'm a former small business owner. After graduating from the University of Georgia with a bachelor's of pharmacy degree – GO DAWGS – I opened Carter's Pharmacy, which I owned

and operated for more than 30 years. I also served as a consultant pharmacist for nursing homes for many years. I no longer practice, but I still retain my pharmacy license to this day.

#### **WHAT LED YOU TO RUN FOR CONGRESS?**

Opening Carter's Pharmacy was my American Dream. I was able to raise all my sons in Pooler, GA, which is only a short drive from where I grew up in Port Wentworth, in a home my father helped build. I was able to give my family opportunities that generations of Carters before me worked their entire lives for, and I wanted to give back to the people and community that gave me so much.

That's why I ran for Congress, to give others the same opportunity to live the American Dream that I had. Public service is exactly that, a service. Whether you serve our nation in the form of military service, public service, or by being an active and engaged citizen, we all have a role to play in ensuring tomorrow's youth have more opportunities available to them than we did.

#### **WHAT DO YOU MOST ENJOY ABOUT STAYING IN HOTELS?**

I love hotels that have a good, firm mattress. Oh, and warm chocolate chip cookies!

#### **WHY ARE HOTELS AND HOTEL OWNERS IMPORTANT TO YOUR DISTRICT/STATE?**

Our district is a major travel destination. We have many great attractions and a rich history that folks from across America, and the world, enjoy. Our hotel owners do so much for our community by giving these people a place to rest after a long day on the beach, walking through historic Savannah, or trips out to the Okefenokee Swamp. Hotels also help the surrounding local businesses by bringing in customers, and the economic impact is major.

In fact, AAHOA Member-owned hotels alone impact more than 152,000 jobs in Georgia and contribute \$11.9 billion to our state GDP. Frankly, our district and state wouldn't be the same without our hoteliers.



#### **THE HOTEL WORKFORCE WAS ONE OF THE INDUSTRIES MOST AFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC. DO YOU SEE CONGRESS PLAYING A ROLE TO SUPPORT BUILDING BACK THE HOTEL WORKFORCE?**

House Republicans have been raising the alarm on pandemic-related policies that are crushing small businesses. In the 117th Congress, while battling the pandemic, I supported an extension of the Paycheck Protection Program and opposed tax increases, new mandates, increased legal liability, and problematic employment law revisions that made it harder for small business owners to survive and thrive. Even still, there are far too many “help wanted” signs, and that's a major problem.

Congress needs to ensure our policies incentivize businesses to grow and people to reenter the workforce. One of the ways we do this is through adopting smart tax policies that don't punish success. Additionally, inflation has got to get under control. The federal government cannot continue spending the way we are, which is driving up costs for everyone on everything. That's a major problem, and it's keeping our economy from roaring back the way we all hoped it would. ■

*Neal A. Patel is the Vice President of Patel Partners, a bipartisan, bicameral government affairs consulting firm located on Capitol Hill, and he can be reached at [neal@patelpartnersdc.com](mailto:neal@patelpartnersdc.com).*



# Unite. Innovate. Elevate.

Where Influencers and  
Decision Makers Build  
the Future of Hospitality



Save the Dates!

MONTH	DATE	AAHOA REGION(S)	LOCATION
JULY	7/09	Northeast Conference	Springfield, MA
	7/11	South Carolina Conference	Columbia, SC
	7/16	North Central Conference	Indianapolis, IN
	7/30	Mid South Conference	Nashville, TN
AUGUST	8/01	Arkansas Conference	Little Rock, AR
	8/06	Upper Midwest Conference	Elmhurst, IL
	8/08	Alabama Conference	Birmingham, AL
	8/13	Georgia Conference	Atlanta, GA
	8/20	Northwest Conference	Portland, OR
SEPTEMBER	9/09	Southwest Conference	Albuquerque, NM
	9/17	Mid Atlantic Conference	Cherry Hill, NJ
	9/20	Washington DC Area Conference	Arlington, VA
	9/25	Southeast Texas Conference	Houston, TX
	9/27	Gulf Conference	New Orleans, LA
OCTOBER	10/15	North Texas Conference	Dallas, TX
NOVEMBER	11/07	North & South Florida Conference	Daytona Beach, FL
TBD	TBD	Central Midwest Conference	TBD



EXHIBITING AND SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES  
AVAILABLE. REACH OUT TO [SALES@AAHOA.COM](mailto:SALES@AAHOA.COM).



# The synergy of satisfaction

How employee and guest happiness drive profits

by GEORGE POLYARD

**T**HE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IS IN A unique position in that in addition to offering core products – at its essence, a clean room and bathroom at a hotel or a meal at a restaurant – it also creates experiences. There's the guest experience, which is often discussed these days, and the employee experience. The latter can be less of a focus but be just as important, as employee satisfaction can directly influence guest satisfaction and, subsequently, profitability.

## THE FOUNDATION OF EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

In the service industry, particularly in casinos and resorts, employee satisfaction is vital. It's through happy and healthy employees that guest needs are not only met, but also exceeded with enthusiasm and a genuine love of service.

Various factors contribute to employee satisfaction, including fair compensation, a positive work environment, recognition, and growth opportunities. Interestingly, employee satisfaction is increasingly linked with guest satisfaction. Experience platform Medallia recently published a [whitepaper](#) on this link, highlighting how a unified view of customer and employee experience contributes to revenue growth.

In fact, a recent *Harvard Business Review* study of a global retail brand where employees were heavily customer-facing showed a clear link between the employee experience and the company's revenue. As the authors wrote, "Employee experience drives customer experience, which in turn drives revenue growth." This builds on a previous HBR analysis into the service-profit chain, which "establishes relationships between profitability, customer loyalty, and employee satisfaction, loyalty, and productivity."

## MEASURING SATISFACTION THROUGH SURVEYS

The natural question then leads to how satisfied employees contribute to a positive guest experience – and one key answer is through both guest and employee feedback.

"As an operator, I've seen firsthand the transformative impact of conducting both guest and employee surveys," said Eric Segreti, vice president of rooms at Fontainebleau Miami Beach. "These tools allow us to listen actively to both our guests and our team members, providing invaluable insights that drive our operational decisions. When employees feel heard and valued, it positively influences their interactions with guests, enhancing overall satisfaction. This holistic approach not only boosts our service levels but also contributes significantly to our profitability and industry reputation."

It's important to gauge employee and guest satisfaction, and one key way to measure both levels is through regular surveys. Once conducted, the surveys then need to be analyzed and, most importantly, acted on, to address issues, make improvements, and reinforce successful practices.

## INTEGRATING EMPLOYEE AND GUEST SATISFACTION INTO BUSINESS STRATEGY

It takes time and a concerted effort over time to develop a culture that prioritizes satisfaction – including leadership practices, communication strategies, and incentive programs. Leaders and managers must put into practice actions to maintain the positive work culture they've worked so hard to build.

To effectively bring feedback into daily operations, consider a multi-faceted approach. First, at regular times – weekly or monthly, for example – discuss survey results and plan for improvements during team meetings. Second,

incentivize staff to engage with feedback by linking participation to rewards or recognition programs. Third, create a routine for managers to follow up on survey insights, translating feedback into actionable steps that address areas of concern and opportunities for improvement.

To balance the needs of employees and guests, prioritize communication, regular employee training, and comprehensive feedback capture. Recognize and reward employees for great service to boost morale and motivate high standards, while adapting service offerings based on feedback and trends. This integrated approach ensures an environment that values continuous improvement and the well-being of both staff and guests.

Once a system is in place, it's important to remember the interconnectedness of employee and guest satisfaction and its impact on profitability. It is in an organization's best interest to recognize the strategic importance of investing in the happiness of both employees and guests as a long-term business model for success in the hospitality industry. ■



*George Polyard is the Vice President, Customer Experience at ComOps and began his career training as a chef at The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY, followed by five years in rooms division leadership at Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts. George then spent four years as a Senior Executive Trainer with Forbes Travel Guide, helping over 150 luxury properties worldwide to elevate their customer experience. Most recently, George brings experience from the leader in experience management software, Medallia, to elevate customer experiences by leveraging enterprise-grade technology.*



# Understanding service dogs

## A guide for hotel guest service

by GARY GOBIN, CHA

**F**OR INDIVIDUALS WITH disabilities who rely on service dogs, navigating everyday life can be a challenge. Hotels are meant to be a place of relaxation and exploration but can sometimes become a source of unexpected hurdles. Through the eyes of Lon Hodge, a renowned service dog advocate and founder of Operation Fetch, we can explore the unique experiences of service dog handlers and how hotels can create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for their guests.

The rise in service dog usage coincides with an unfortunate increase in people misusing the designation. Emotional support animals and pets are not service dogs. Service dogs are highly trained canines that perform specific tasks directly related to a disability. As Hodge emphasizes, “Service dogs are akin to medical equipment, just like a wheelchair, crutches, or an oxygen tank.” Treating them with respect and understanding is key.

### COMBATING COUNTERFEITS

Unfortunately, the rise in legitimate service dog teams has also led to an increase in fake ones. Here are some red flags to watch for:

- Disruptive behavior like barking, begging, or relieving themselves in inappropriate places.
- Ignoring the handler and paying attention to others.
- Not being housebroken or exhibiting aggressive behavior.
- Being very young (under 18 months) or exhibiting signs of inadequate training.



Here are some key things to remember when encountering a service dog handler at your hotel.



**1**

**Respect the dog's work:** Service dogs are always “on duty.” Avoid petting, talking to, or feeding the dog without permission. This disrupts their focus and can hinder their ability to assist their handler. Imagine a doctor mid-surgery being interrupted by a conversation – a service dog is just as focused on its job.



**2**

**Two questions and trust:** By law, hotels can only ask two questions: “Is that a service dog?” and “What work or task does the dog perform for you?” Once these questions are answered, legally, the dog must be allowed access. There are no certifications for service dogs. While some organizations may offer certificates or registration, these hold no legal weight. It's important to remember a genuine service dog will be highly trained and focused on its handler's needs.



**3**

**Educate yourself:** Hodge emphasizes, “Not all disabilities are visible.” Don't question a handler's legitimacy based on appearance. Service dogs come in all shapes and sizes, and some disabilities are invisible.



**4**

**Welcome the team:** Service dogs and their handlers are a team. Respect their bond and avoid separating them. This could compromise the handler's safety and well-being.

### CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Hotels can contribute to a more inclusive environment for service dog handlers by:

- Educating staff on service dog etiquette.
- Providing designated pet relief areas with waste disposal bags.

If a dog exhibits disruptive behavior, a hotel can politely ask the handler to remove the dog, but not the handler. While service animals can't be assessed a pet fee or deposit, emotional support animals can be assessed a fee.



- Offering a list of local dog-friendly restaurants and parks.
- Training staff to understand the nuances of service dogs vs. emotional support animals and pets.

While the *Americans with Disabilities Act* provides legal protections for service dog handlers, hotels can go the extra mile to create a truly welcoming experience. Consider offering amenities specifically catering to service dogs, like a welcome pack with dog treats, waste disposal bags, and a list of nearby dog-friendly parks. Training staff to recognize the subtle cues between a service dog and an emotional support animal demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity.

Ultimately, fostering a positive experience for service dog handlers comes down to trust and respect. By understanding the unique bond between handler and dog, and by prioritizing clear communication and education for staff, hotels can create a haven for all guests, with or without canine companions. Remember, a little kindness goes a long way in making someone's journey a little easier. ■



Gary Gobin is the Director of Operations for hihotels by Hospitality International, an Atlanta-based franchisor with five

national economy hotel brands. He has been in the hospitality industry for 16 years with a focus on operations and development. He is also an avid animal lover and has a puppy named Sammy.

Established in 2013, Operation Fetch is a non-profit organization providing education, training and support for service dog handlers as well as championing kindness and understanding toward service dogs, PTSD, and the support they offer for both visible and invisible disabilities.

“

By law, hotels can only ask two questions: ‘Is that a service dog?’ and ‘What work or task does the dog perform for you?’ Once these questions are answered, legally, the dog must be allowed access. There are no certifications for service dogs.”





# Ready, **FIRE!** aim

Understanding  
PIPs and the  
franchised  
property to hit  
your targets

by AMANDA GERTSEN,  
KATIE PASS-BRINKER and  
KAREN PELZER

**A**CCORDING TO A RECENT EXPEDIA study, 72% of travelers prefer selecting a hotel based on its guest review score rather than one with a brand name or a lower price. This underscores the necessity for franchised hotels to distinguish themselves as establishments that prioritize guest satisfaction. Property improvement plans (PIPs) are essential for ensuring properties align with guest needs and brand standards. These comprehensive strategies facilitate the enhancement of hotels to meet customers' evolving needs and desires. Unlike independent

hotels, franchised hotels are responsible for upholding brand consistency across multiple locations, spanning regions and sometimes continents. This prompts the crucial question: What factors should franchised hoteliers consider when contemplating the adoption of a PIP?

Understanding the rationale behind PIPs within franchised hotels is essential. Subsequently, it's vital to assess current revenue drivers, survey neighboring hotels, and strategize on repurposing materials and reallocating budgets to align with the plan's requirements.

## UNDERSTANDING PIPs WITHIN FRANCHISED HOTELS

The initial step is understanding that not all franchised hotels share the same circumstances. As owners begin the PIP process, navigating which brand requirements are negotiable and which aren't can prove challenging. Typically, these plans are negotiated before architecture or design teams come into play. It's crucial for owners to enter negotiations with a clear understanding of which updates will have the greatest impact on their property's revenue and enhance guest satisfaction.

To stretch financial obligations, owners may consider requesting phased PIP updates. To help, it's important to prioritize funding for upgrading high return on investment (ROI) spaces initially. Owners can then balance future construction spending by focusing on essential spaces for maintaining brand identity and market presence, even if they offer a smaller ROI.

For owners on tight budgets, consulting early with architectural and design teams can be beneficial. This allows for brainstorming of creative cost-saving solutions related to brand issues before finalizing a PIP agreement. In some cases, architects and designers can also serve as mediators between stakeholders, strategically implementing PIP components to align with everyone's objectives.

## CONSIDER CURRENT REVENUE DRIVERS

Before implementing changes, it's necessary to grasp the revenue drivers specific

to franchised properties. This may entail looking beyond the confines of the PIP and implementing alterations that enhance the hotel's long-term viability or marketability for owners considering selling their assets.

By proactively upgrading key amenities in advance of the PIP cycle, the hotel can anticipate and address future needs. An example of this scenario could involve owners considering casegood replacements for properties where the current casegoods are still considered relatively new in the PIP cycle but will become outdated in three to four years. Investing in new casegoods can reduce the near-term investments for new ownership and enhance the asset's marketability.

## SURVEYING SURROUNDING HOTELS

Just like with any business, it's critical to survey competition within the area. What's attracting customers to choose one hotel over another? If the guest rooms are in great shape, consider the lobby design and public spaces. See what is holding people back from coming to the property. It could be as simple as all the hotels in the area have already converted all their bathtubs into walk-in showers, and that demand is driving customers to go to that hotel over one with a bathtub. When looking at a PIP, it's essential to consider local competition and understand what drives customers to other hotels.

## REPURPOSING MATERIALS AND REALLOCATING BUDGETS

PIPs are an imperative tool to bring franchised hotels up to industry standards. For example, reflecting on the hospitality landscape of a decade ago, it was common to find large armoires housing analog TVs. This evolved into flat screen TVs placed on credenzas, and now wall-mounted TVs have become the norm. To attract new and repeat guests, technology advancements surpass traditional renovation requirements. If the technology within a hotel fails to meet contemporary standards, addressing this takes precedence over standard renovations. To execute these updates within budget constraints,

designers and architects must employ creativity, repurposing existing furniture, sometimes foregoing costly treatments, and reallocating funds toward enhancing technology.

Understanding the underlying motivations behind PIPs, evaluating existing revenue streams, conducting thorough assessments of nearby competitors, and devising innovative approaches to repurpose materials and reallocate budgets are critical for franchised hoteliers initiating a PIP. When implemented effectively, franchised hotels can reap significant returns on investment from their completed property improvement plans. ■



*As a licensed architect specializing in hospitality with NELSON Worldwide, Amanda Gertsen has extensive experience working with most major hospitality brands and*

*boutiques. An extremely passionate and detailed professional, she leads project teams using an open and collaborative approach with scopes ranging from renovations and PIPs to reflagging and new ground-up builds.*



*Katie Pass-Brinker works with the NELSON Worldwide hospitality team to create and produce high quality design through all phases of project development, ensuring the*

*client's expectations and design vision is exceeded, and achieve the firm's goal of design excellence.*



*Karen Pelzer brings a unique expertise to the NELSON Worldwide team, having worked for both a hotel owner and various design firms throughout her career. She*

*understands the delicate balance between design and operations in the world of hospitality, recognizing that these two domains are unique yet interconnected, and when not in sync, can create economic, environmental, and social consequences.*



# The power of prediction

## Using data to see the future

by MICHAEL YEOMANS

An illustration of a person in a purple shirt and dark pants standing on a blue ladder, looking through a telescope. The telescope's beam of light is yellow and orange, illuminating a large, pink puzzle piece that is part of a larger, dark blue puzzle. The background is a light beige with diagonal lines. There are also some stylized clouds and stars in the scene.

**I**N THE DYNAMIC WORLD OF hospitality, where market trends can shift rapidly and customer preferences evolve constantly, data provides hoteliers with valuable insights into historical patterns. Hoteliers can leverage data to accurately anticipate demand, optimizing operational efficiency and revenue management, as they can run targeted marketing campaigns and maximise upsell opportunities.

Business intelligence solutions provide the in-depth insights hoteliers desire. From booking trends to market insights at the portfolio or property level, the depth of understanding a hotelier can gain from business intelligence can help create a powerful hotel strategy. Let's dive in and look at some of the key strategic benefits of business intelligence solutions.

### UNLOCKING PAST INSIGHTS

Historical data serves as a treasure trove of information, offering invaluable insights into past performance and trends. By analyzing year-over-year occupancy and booking patterns, hoteliers can relate this to metrics across the business – including guest segmentation and preferences, loyalty program engagement, and marketing performance. This allows hoteliers to fine-tune their strategies and adjust their approach accordingly.

Once the performance picture becomes clear, hoteliers can then shift to looking at what's happening in their markets today – what channels are people booking on, what do occupancy trends look like, and for how long guests are staying?

Distribution strategies should be reviewed frequently with data in hand so hoteliers can identify their most profitable channels, drive more traffic to them, and be well informed in the way they allocate resources. This not only optimizes revenue but enables streamlining of the overall operation, including staffing needs and packaging options.

### FORWARD-LOOKING DEMAND

While historical data provides a solid foundation for hotel planning, anticipating forward-looking demand enables a higher level of strategic planning for the optimization of the hotel operations and profitability.

“

The power of data in the hospitality industry cannot be overstated. From the traditional benefits of unlocking insights from historical data to the game-changing ability to enable strategic planning, data serves as the proverbial crystal ball.”

For instance, consider the case of the solar eclipse, which hit North America on April 8. More than six months ahead of the event, forward-looking data identified that hotels in its path would see a significant surge in occupancy with enthusiasts booking rooms in droves. Hotels located in prime viewing of the eclipse saw their occupancy rise, on average, from 5% on April 1 to 59% on April 7.

These insights indicate a peak demand period during which hoteliers will want to utilize to prepare for the additional operational needs of the property and drive last-minute bookings with targeted offers to those interested in the eclipse. Creative strategies include launching personalized promotions via email or as part of the direct booking process so they can differentiate their property.

In addition, the most sophisticated business intelligence solutions in the market also provide insight into flight and alternative accommodation activity. Although not directly related to hotel performance, this information can be a leading indicator of demand. Since travelers are known to book both flights and alternative accommodations in advance of the typical hotel booking window (0-7 days in most cases

with regional fluctuations), this data can help hoteliers understand and plan for what may happen further out. This level of insight can inform hoteliers about inbound demand and origin markets (as with the Americas region at the start of 2024), allowing them to plan marketing spend and enhance their distribution strategy to make sure the right offers reach the right travelers, on the right channels.

### STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PLANNING

Just as important as revenue management is the ability to successfully deliver on guest expectations and build loyalty.

Understanding occupancy trends helps hoteliers more effectively prepare for busy seasons and staff the property appropriately. Using the example of April's solar eclipse, hotels could use the projections to adequately plan ahead and meet those guest needs well in advance of the actual bookings.

The 2023 Christmas and New Year's period is another example. Hotels with access to similar insights that forecast high demand are in the best position to deal with an influx of guests and offer them the best stays possible, since they're empowered to properly plan staffing schedules and ensure a seamless guest experience.

Moreover, forward-looking data facilitates strategic planning for accommodating various types of events. By analyzing booking trends and patterns, hoteliers can tailor their offerings to meet the specific needs of different customer segments, driving maximum bookings and revenue to the property.

The power of data in the hospitality industry cannot be overstated. From the traditional benefits of unlocking insights from historical data to the game-changing ability to enable strategic planning, data serves as the proverbial crystal ball, providing hoteliers with the insights needed to navigate the complexities of the industry to drive profitable demand, reduce operational costs, and deliver exceptional guest experiences. ■



*Michael Yeomans is the Senior Vice President, Business Intelligence & Data Solutions with Amadeus and has eight-plus years of experience within Amadeus in global*

*roles building the strategy and driving the execution of diversification and new growth initiatives such as digital advertising, and hospitality solutions.*



# Elevating hospitality

The power of customized branding in hotels





by MARC MASCARELLO  
and MICHAEL DITULLO

**I**N THE DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE OF the hospitality industry, where competition is fierce and guest expectations are ever-evolving, hotels are constantly seeking innovative ways to distinguish themselves. Beyond providing a place to rest, modern travelers crave unique experiences that leave a lasting impression. Looking for differentiation, the role of customized branding elements within hotel spaces emerges as a tool for creating memorable guest experiences.

Branding in hotels was once confined to standard neon signs and generic printed amenities. Today, forward-thinking establishments recognize the value of seamlessly integrating their brand identity into every aspect of the guest's stay. It's not just about adding a logo to a product; it's about crafting an immersive environment that tells a story.

Leveraging innovative technology, hotels can surpass conventional branding constraints by providing tailored solutions, extending to every last detail – even down to HVAC systems. One notable example in this field is diffusers made of non-metal composite materials, rather than traditional metal. Without the limitations of a metal form, this groundbreaking material empowers hotels to exceed traditional branding boundaries by delivering customized solutions. With a non-metal composite material, diffusers can be customized for any length, curve, or configuration, and the design possibilities are truly endless. Imagine walking into a hotel lobby and being greeted by the hotel's logo or name seamlessly integrated into the ceiling, which is actually an air diffuser, ensuring comfort from the very first step inside. This powerful first impression sets the tone for the entire stay and is only made possible if the logo or name remains in pristine condition. Compared to aluminum, a non-metal

“Forward-thinking establishments recognize the value of seamlessly integrating their brand identity into every aspect of the guest's stay. It's not just about adding a logo to a product; it's about crafting an immersive environment that tells a story.”

composite material has a significantly lower response to temperature change, reducing condensation on the diffuser by up to 95%. This means hotel owners don't need to worry about the design cracking due to water or mold buildup.

#### SET YOURSELF APART

Another way to create customized solutions is to utilize products that fit a hotel's brand identity while providing other benefits. Take acoustics as an example. When people are comfortable in a hotel – or anywhere, really – they want to stay in the space longer. In this context, the impact of sound cannot be underestimated.

Hotels are mini-communities with private living spaces in the form of rooms and suites, public spaces like lobbies, restaurants, and bars, and semi-private mixed-use functions rooms. There are so many opportunities here to dial in and tune the acoustics of each of these spaces to their specific function while enhancing the look with show-stopper aesthetics that make people notice.

It's important to find a company that allows the designer to customize any product to fit a brand identity, whether that be via handpicked color palettes, logo incorporation, or other methods of displaying the brand authentically and uniquely.

Utilizing innovative solutions like non-metal custom diffusers and acoustic solutions, hotels can elevate the guest experience to new heights, leaving a lasting impression that extends far beyond the duration of a stay. Whether it's a boutique hotel aiming to carve out a niche identity or a global chain seeking to reinforce its brand presence across diverse markets, the power of customized branding elements lies in their ability to captivate, engage, and delight guests in ways that resonate long after they've checked out. ■



Marc Mascarello is the Head of Design at Invi Air, where he has been working since 2018. After graduating with a master's of architecture degree from Columbia

University, he has more than 10 years of experience in the fields of fabrication and architecture. His broad base of knowledge and skills in these fields has allowed him to synthesize design and detail with highly engineered components, making Invi Air a leader in design-centric air diffusers, vents, and grilles.



Michael DiTullo is the Head of Product Innovation for Carnegie Acoustic Solutions and has been designing iconic products for some of the world's biggest brands for

more than 20 years. He has worked with Nike, Google, Honda, Timex, Chantal, Converse, Motorola and has been collaborating with Kirei since 2019.

# The insurance benefit

A new option for employer-reimbursed healthcare can help you keep your top performers

by JACK HOOPER

**A** HOTEL'S SUCCESS HINGES ON its brand – and the brand is only as good as the people delivering the experience that defines it. The Great Resignation and the pandemic may be over, but that doesn't mean high turnover rates have ceased to wreak havoc on hotel management across the country. This is only compounded by inflation and economic uncertainty.

The pain that turnover invokes is palpable. Not only is it disruptive to business

operations when there isn't adequate staffing; it contributes to burnout among employees who stay on and frustration from guests when the standard of service falls short. In addition, the cost of turnover is at an all-time high. The work it requires to replace an employee can be 75% to 200% of their annual salary. There are intangibles to consider here as well. According to the Society of Human Resources Management, lost productivity and institutional knowledge can amount to as much as two-thirds of the costs incurred from turnover. This goes beyond the hotel industry as turnover costs the U.S. economy upward of \$1 trillion annually. Regardless, it's adversely affecting the bottom line, and the brand, of hotels across the country.

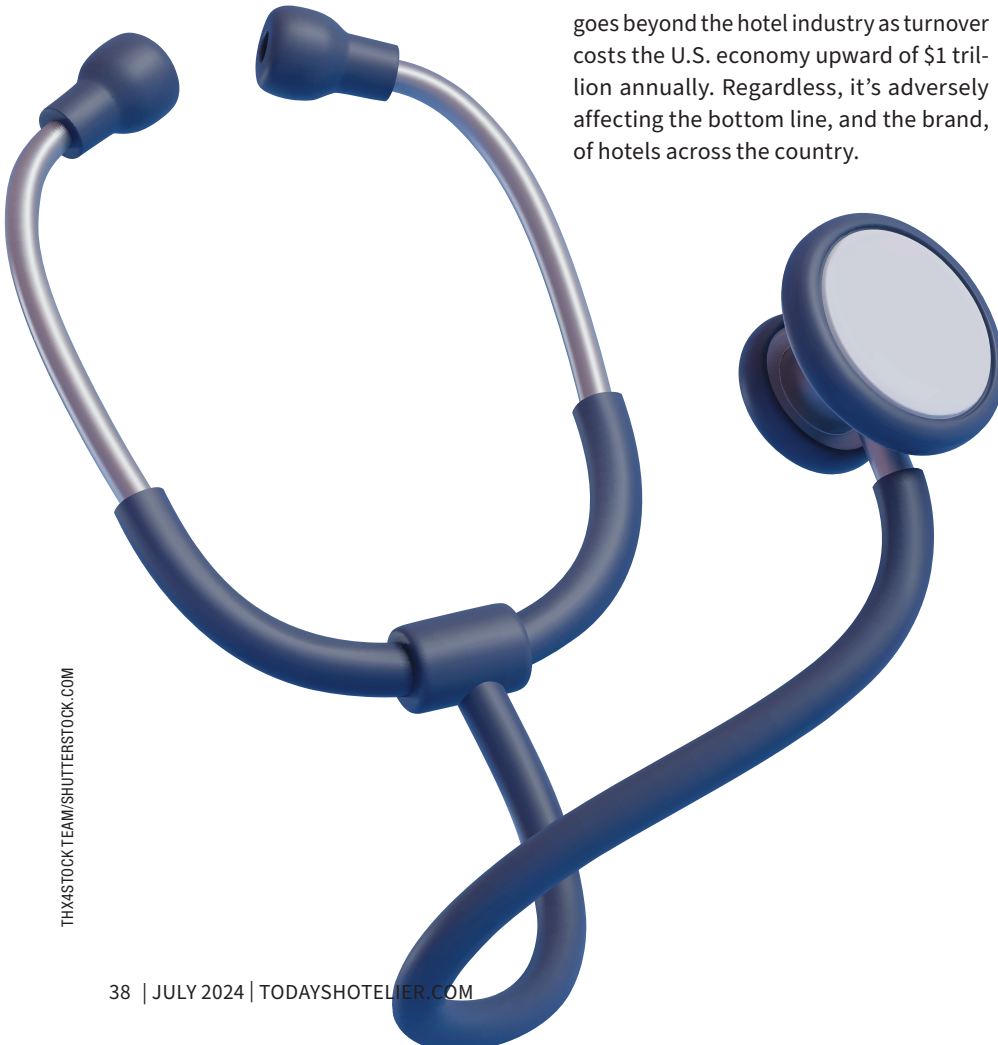
Offering rich benefits is a proven way to boost recruitment and retention, but with health insurance costs jumping higher than ever in 2024, can the battered hotel industry afford to offer generous health benefits? Can they afford not to?

Fortunately, a new benefits solution, called individual coverage HRAs (ICHRAs), allows hotels to reimburse their employees for health insurance rather than buying it for them. Employees simply purchase the individual health plan of their choice from Healthcare.gov or a state-based exchange and get reimbursed on their paycheck, tax-free. Personalized benefits alleviate many of the pain points hotel management faces today.

## SIZED TO FIT

For small independent hotels, keeping up with compliance and regulations for health insurance without an HR department can be daunting and traditional group plans are cost prohibitive most of the time. Offering an ICHRA for health benefits helps keep valuable management-level employees happy and healthy while minimizing administrative burden and cost. With many job seekers today listing health insurance only behind salary as a motivator for taking a job, ICHRAs are an effective recruitment and retention tool for hotels looking to step into offering benefits. With lean teams, owners of small hotels can effectively outsource benefits with ICHRAs, offering quick setup and less than an hour of actual administrative work each month. With an ICHRA, they simply set a monthly reimbursement budget that works for them.

For Pritesh Patel, who owns several small hotels in the Midwest – including Indianola,



IA-based Hotel Pommier – ICHRA was the answer to his turnover challenge. Wearing many hats, Patel oversees management of his various properties in addition to more intricate functions like human resources and continuous employee training. With only 15 employees, Patel had researched different group health insurance plans to boost recruitment and retention. He was frustrated by the rigid design, complexities, and high costs. His reimbursement model, which he has offered for the past three years and integrates with his payroll provider, gave his management team unprecedented choice in their healthcare, minimized the administrative overhead, and helped his employees' morale and productivity.

For larger hotel brands that are required by law to offer health insurance, ICHRA represents an off-ramp for traditional group health plans. The most common scenario we see is a hotel chain struggling to keep healthcare costs down as they face steep renewals year over year. They might also have multiple locations, which complicates group health insurance, or participation rate issues, a common problem for lower wage workers. On top of that, the most common strategy for keeping costs down is to actually increase employee contributions and shift more cost to workers – a move that's always met with criticism. ICHRA allows these companies to exit the double-digit renewal game, with many large companies saving 30% right off the bat by switching from group health insurance. What's more, ICHRA makes it easy to offer insurance to employees in various geographies and there's no participation rates to worry about.

### GROWTH CURVE

For Coury Hospitality, a fast-growing, Texas-based, lifestyle hotel brand with 14 locations, their group rates were facing a 20% premium increase – one of

several years of premium hikes on their fully insured plan. The rising costs had reached a fever pitch and for Kim Dunbar, Coury Hospitality's senior vice president of human resources, it was time to make a change. She'd been in the fully insured market long enough to know employers have very little control over their future and their benefits budget.

With plans to double their employee size to 2,500 by 2026, they needed a scalable solution. For their diverse employee population comprised of many different roles across many locations, Coury also needed a benefits solution that could be tailored to each employee.

A fan of the ICHRA model, Dunbar shares, "For any CHRO or CFO, you simply can't ignore the math." Ultimately saving \$1.1 million by switching to ICHRA, it represented 60% in company savings and 40% in employee savings – a true win-win.

No matter the size, an ICHRA caters to all types of employees, from seasonal to part time to hourly to salaried – all of which can be offered health insurance through an

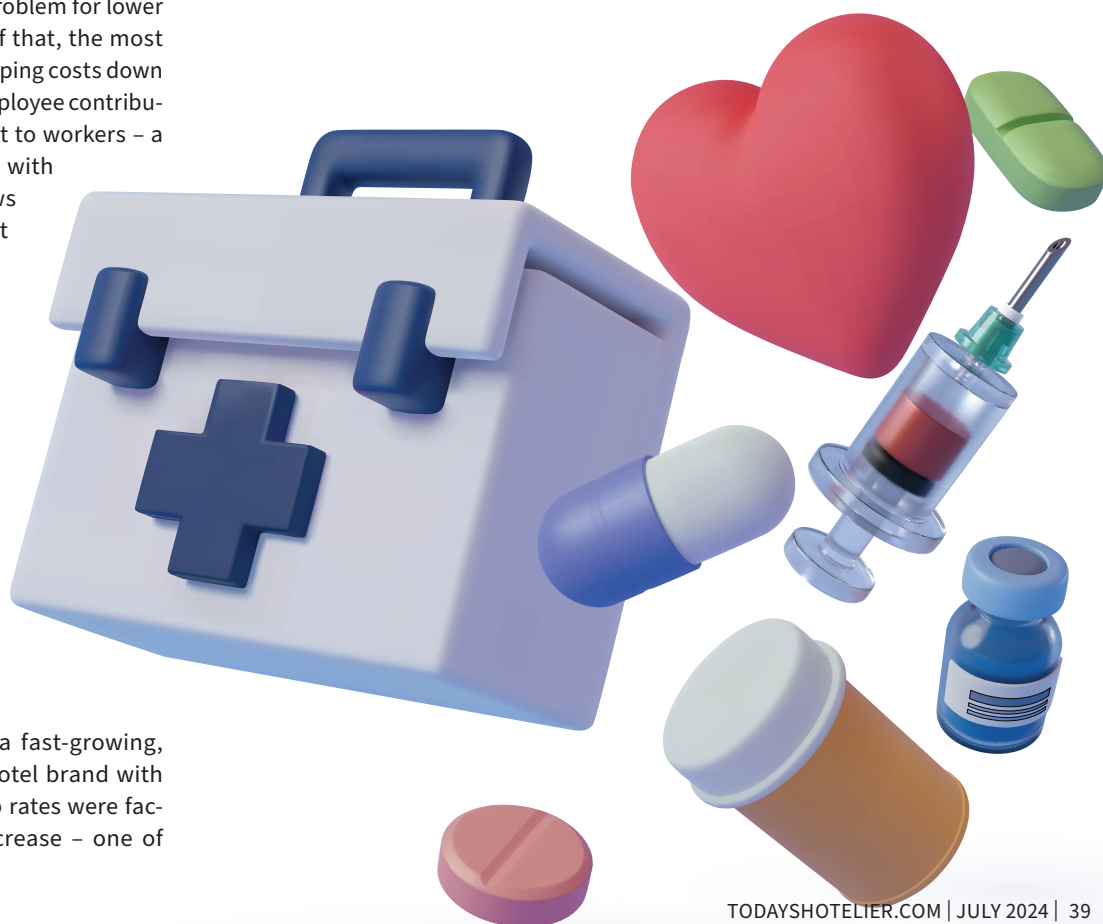
ICHRA. That's something hard to do with traditional group health insurance.

For these reasons, the hotel industry is one of the early adapters of individual coverage HRAs and a trendsetter for the greater hospitality sector. For an industry that has one of the highest turnover rates, this new benefits model allows hotels to boost their recruitment and retention, take care of their trusted team, control costs and administrative burden, and focus on building and bolstering their brand. ■



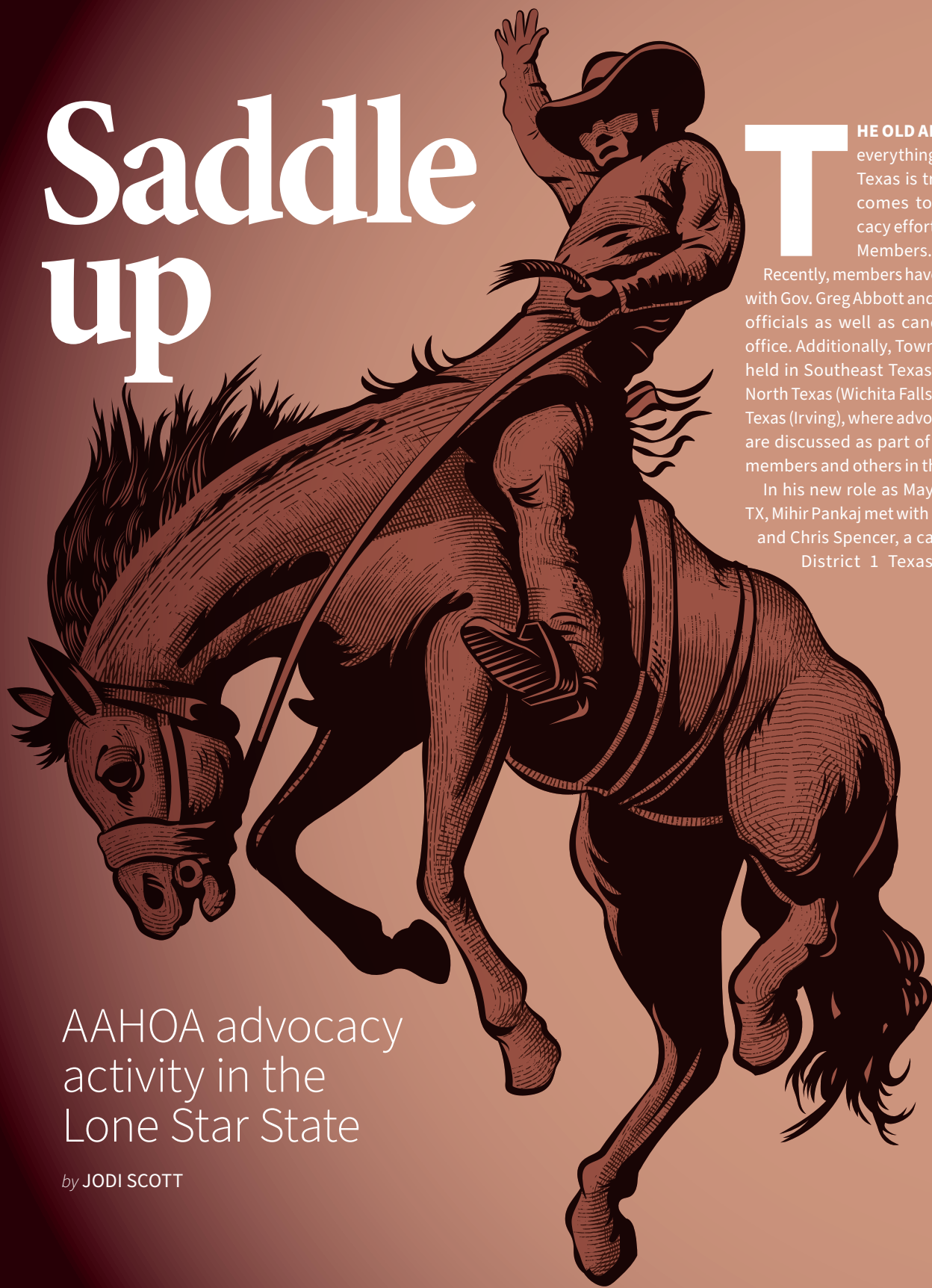
*Jack Hooper is the CEO and co-founder of Take Command, a technology company dedicated to helping employers provide modern, personalized benefits to their*

*employees while taking command of their insurance costs through built-in cost controls. He is a graduate of the Wharton School of Business and has been featured in The New York Times, Dallas Morning News, Bloomberg, and more. His motto? "Health insurance was never meant to be this complicated."*





# Saddle up



**T**HE OLD ADAGE THAT everything is bigger in Texas is true when it comes to the advocacy efforts of AAHOA Members.

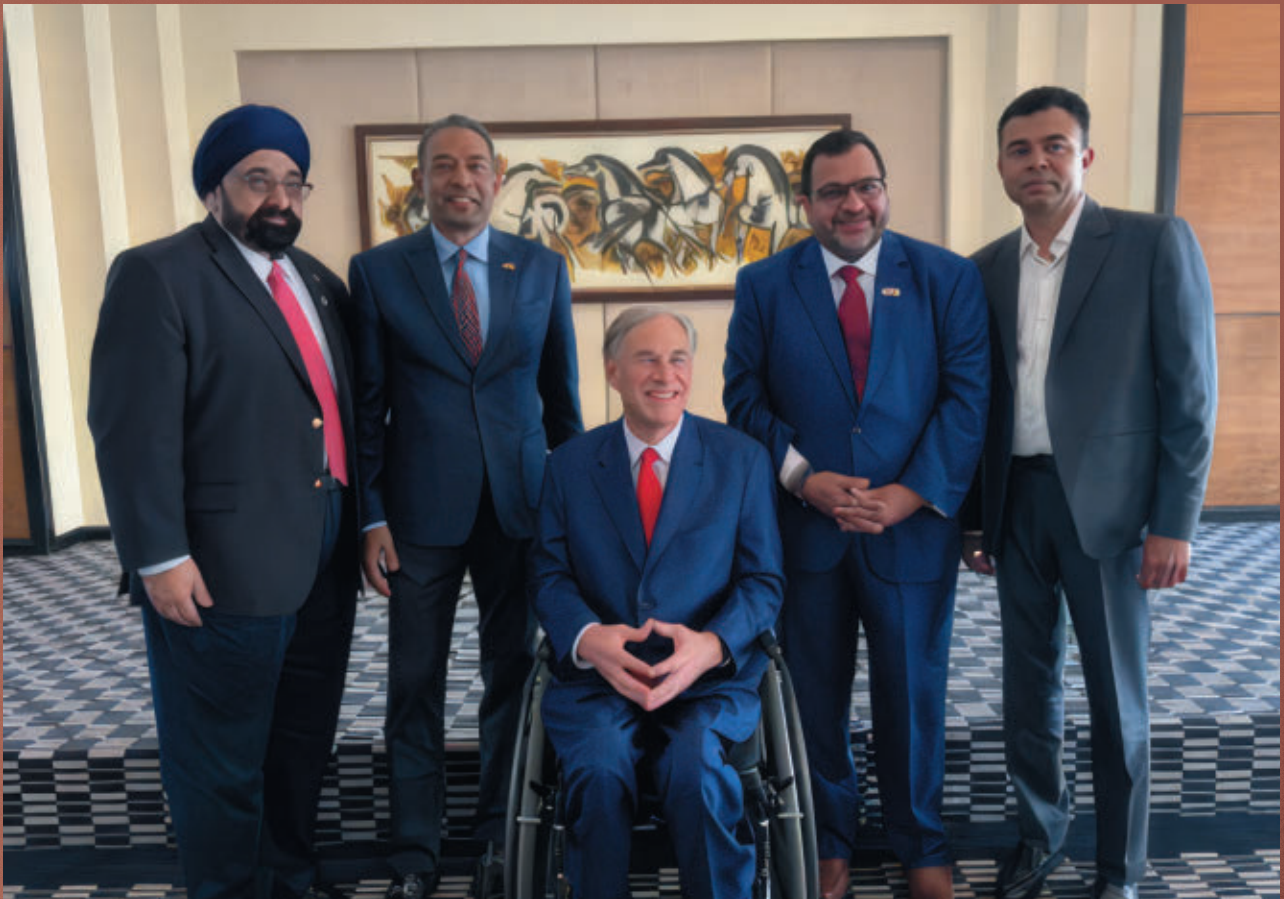
Recently, members have interacted with Gov. Greg Abbott and other state officials as well as candidates for office. Additionally, Town Halls were held in Southeast Texas (Houston), North Texas (Wichita Falls), and North Texas (Irving), where advocacy efforts are discussed as part of updates to members and others in the industry.

In his new role as Mayor of Paris, TX, Mihir Pankaj met with Gov. Abbott and Chris Spencer, a candidate for District 1 Texas House of

AAHOA advocacy activity in the Lone Star State

by JODI SCOTT









Town Hall participants in Irving, TX, received updates on AAHOA Advocacy efforts.



Paris, TX, Mayor Mihir Pankaj met with Gov. Abbott and Chris Spencer, a candidate for District 1 Texas House of Representatives.

Representatives. Pankaj has served on several local boards and as a councilman on the Paris City Council. He said advocacy is vital for AAHOA at all levels, which includes having good debates and respectful conversations.

“You can’t really complain if you don’t get involved,” Pankaj said of his volunteer efforts. “You have to put some skin in the game. My parents came to America and wanted to fund the American Dream. If we’re here, every second of our day better be utilized to do something better for our community and our next generation.”

#### MAKING CONNECTIONS

In other Texas advocacy efforts, AAHOA Member Jignesh Patel was part of a recent economic development mission to India made by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. The

Governor’s Economic Development & Tourism Office and the Texas Economic Development Corp. organized the event. Patel took part in his role as a founding member of the U.S. India Chamber of Commerce Austin.

During the trip, the delegation met with company executives, business leaders, and government officials to promote Texas’ economy; encourage continued trade, job creation, and capital investment by Indian companies in Texas; and deepen the partnership between India and Texas.

The delegation included other Texas government officials as well as business and economic development leaders from across the state.

Several Town Halls recently were held in Texas, in part to keep members informed about advocacy goings-on. AAHOA Town

Hall meetings are local meetings for AAHOA Members to meet their Regional Directors, learn more on topics of interest, ask questions, voice opinions, and discuss specific upcoming issues or concerns. ■

For more information on how to get involved at the local, state, or national levels, AAHOA provides resources at [AAHOA.com/Advocacy/Government-Affairs](https://AAHOA.com/Advocacy/Government-Affairs).



# A voice lifted

Get to know the new mayor of Paris, TX – AAHOA Member and Ambassador Mihir (Mark) Pankaj

by CARTER DAVIS



**L**OCATED IN NORTHEAST Texas, roughly 100 miles from the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area and near the border between the Lone Star State and Oklahoma, the city of Paris and its population of approximately 24,000 is much like many other small towns in America. It's home to a variety of businesses and industries, with Campbell Soup Company and Kimberly-Clark operating plants in the city. Where it differs, however, is that it's currently led by an AAHOA Member.

Recently elected Paris Mayor and AAHOA Ambassador Mihir (Mark) Pankaj hasn't always been interested in operating a hotel, and he took a detour into a different field before family called him back to hospitality. While he was prepared for operating a hotel, his career took a turn he hadn't anticipated – elected official. As a small-business owner himself, Pankaj believes his in the perfect position to help shape the future of Paris for the better.

## CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY, AND HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN THE HOTEL BUSINESS?

I'm a second-generation hotelier, and I was in the medical field for a while. My parents have always been hoteliers, and when my dad got sick several years ago, I put medicine aside and came back to Paris, TX, to get into the hotel business and take care of the family. It has been wonderful to be in a position to help my family while giving back to the community.

## WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH AAHOA, AND HOW HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED THROUGH THE YEARS?

I joined AAHOA at the 2019 Wyndham Global Conference. I had a strong desire to learn more about AAHOA and everything it can do for its members, but then COVID hit. Like many hoteliers, I'm sure, I had to pull back a little bit and focus on the day-to-day operations of the business, but

AAHOA Member and Ambassador, Mihir (Mark) Pankaj, the newly elected mayor of Paris, TX.

I've become more involved with AAHOA in the time since. I even got to attend the Fall National Advocacy Conference last year. That was an amazing experience and one I won't forget as it was energizing to talk with so many leaders who are able to drive big-picture policies and legislation that can help our industry tremendously. I'm very glad I've gotten the chance to be more engaged and do my part to help drive AAHOA forward.

I also sit on the Days Inn Franchise Advisory Council, which has allowed me to learn a great deal about what goes on behind the scenes, but it also helped me put into my practice my desire to serve the industry and make it as great as possible for everyone involved.

Ultimately, we need to advocate for help on the issues that are having an enormous



impact on day-to-day business – like credit card processing fees, for example. We have to stand up for what we believe.

### **WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO DECLARE YOUR CANDIDACY FOR MAYOR OF PARIS?**

You can only truly make an impact in your community if your voice is heard, and I want to help my community as much as I can. So, to really help address and solve local issues meant I needed to find ways to amplify my voice, so to speak. That's what led me to running for a seat on the city

council and getting elected as mayor this year. I want to represent this community and its residents to the best of my ability.

I've been on the Paris City Council for three years, I served as mayor pro tem a year ago, and I was just elected to serve as mayor. I'm very excited to work with the city to make this a better place to live for everyone here. However, I'm a firm believer that an opportunity like this one shouldn't be in any way self-serving. My job is to be a voice for those I represent, much like how AAHOA is voice of its members. With strong leadership and by working together toward a common goal, we can do great things. I'm very excited for this opportunity.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR OF YOUR TERM?**

I'm focusing a lot of my efforts on understanding what it is our community needs as well as what its people and businesses are asking for and accomplish as much as we can. With that said, you can go into any situation with goals for what you want to accomplish, but the ball will always keep moving so we need to be flexible and respond to changing needs and circumstances as we go.



But I would like to be able to create more job growth and economic development opportunities. And in creating new jobs, we can improve the quality of life for our community. We recently broke ground on a new eight-court pickleball facility here in Paris, and this sport has been a positive movement within our community, and we're very excited to bring this amenity to our residents to give everyone one more reason to love calling Paris home.

### **DO YOU HAVE PLANS TO RUN FOR HIGHER OFFICE?**

If the opportunity presented itself and was truly a calling from God, I'd definitely look into it. I've always said I want to help where I can and grow as an individual, but my current focus is on my community and my family. If life takes us down that road and the people are supportive of it, I'm happy with it.

### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO AAHOA MEMBERS THINKING OF RUNNING FOR ELECTED OFFICE?**

If it seems like something you want to do, you really need to spend time getting to know the people and the issues in your community so you can be a true representative of the people. Your job is to govern in a way that's representative of the people and their best interests.

Spend time studying the fundamentals of the area you want to represent so you can be that representative everyone can count on to be their voice in government. I'm a firm believer in God and, from a religious aspect, I want what's best for all. I want to see positive growth and the best outcome for everyone, so we as elected officials have to act and govern in a way that allows the voice of the people to be represented.

### **HOW CAN LOCAL OFFICIALS LIKE YOU MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF SMALL-BUSINESS OWNERS?**

So much of what happens in this country starts at a local level, so those one-on-one conversations with business owners and community members are vital. Small businesses are the backbone of this country, and I'm a small-businesses owner myself. As a hotelier myself, many of the challenges I face are the same faced by those in other

industries in our community, so I feel like AAHOA Members are in a perfect position to serve their communities if elected office is something they're thinking about.

And although many of the problems I face are similar to those in other industries, not everything is the same, so it's important officials familiarize themselves with other industries in their communities. Those businesses, and the people behind them, are going to look to you for support, so you want to have a good understanding of what they want and how you can help

them best position themselves for long-term success.

As an example, we're building a wastewater treatment facility here in Paris, and there are businesses here that are obviously affected by the cost of water in our community. A business that depends on water, like a car wash, wants those costs to be as low as possible, because high costs in any area eat into profit margins. As hoteliers, we can all understand that dynamic, and I think that puts us in a great position to lead if we feel called to it. ■

## DEMAND BETTER HOTEL TECHNOLOGY

Drive revenues, build brand equity and boost guest reviews.

- Managed WiFi that drives new revenues.
- Customizable and branded TV and in-room entertainment solutions.
- Personalize the guest experience with our cloud based unified communications platform.



WiFi



TV solutions



Unified Communications



Fiber connectivity



Scan code or call us

Contact us to learn more

1-844-281-5551

**Spectrum**  
ENTERPRISE

©2024 Charter Communications. All Rights Reserved.



## AAHOA CLUB BLUE, PLATINUM, SILVER, AND BRONZE INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The following companies provide generous ongoing support to AAHOA and its members. A heartfelt and sincere thank you is extended to every one of our Industry Partners for their contributions to AAHOA and the industry at large. When searching for a provider, consider doing business with the Industry Partners.



**ADP, Inc.**  
Thomas Bell: (973) 510-0196



**Anand Systems Inc.**  
Mike Joshi: (209) 653-8546



**Avendra**  
Mara Radis: (301) 825-0311



**Chase**  
Faheem Khan: (972) 324-5510



**DISH Business**  
Khalid Jivani: (510) 299-7935



**Gauthier Murphy & Houghtaling**  
John W. Houghtaling, II:  
(504) 456-8600



**Home Box Office**  
Caroline Bello: (347) 610-1081



**Lowe's ProServices**  
Julie Patel: (210) 627-3830



**O'Connor & Associates**  
Andrew Choy: (713) 375-4224

### AAHOA CLUB BLUE INDUSTRY PARTNERS



**Amana PTAC**  
Byron Cortez: (800) 647-2982



**Best Western Hotels & Resorts**  
Michelle Zajac:  
(800) 847-2429



**Cyberweb Hotels**  
Bhavish Bhutta:  
(813) 731-1960



**Extended Stay America**  
Linda Trexler: (980) 345-1600



**G6 Hospitality Franchising, LLC**  
Tina Burnett: (972) 360-9000



**Procell**  
Catherine Nelson:  
(289) 838-4759



**Red Roof Inn**  
Matt Hostetler:  
(713) 576-7426



**Sonesta**  
Jordan Langlois:  
(954) 254-3539



**TV Asia**  
Pradeep Hegde:  
(732) 650-1100 ext.26



**Wyndham Hotels & Resorts**  
Klaudia Porebski:  
(973) 753-8350

### AAHOA PLATINUM INDUSTRY PARTNERS



**AccuLock, Inc.**  
Dan Brown: (866) 222-8562



**Alvi Satellites**  
Prashant Ajmera:  
(678) 466-7868



**Bath Knot Hospitality**  
Gavin Hsu: (347) 337-0691



**Berkshire Hathaway Direct Insurance Company**  
Brandon Lockhart:  
(833) 274-4270



**Richie Yang:** (702) 235-5488



**bookit n go**  
Sarah Eley: (949) 329-8181



**Champion PTAC, LLC**  
Chris Goreman:  
(754) 224-9498



**Cox Business**  
Alea Riley: (404) 269-3057



**Curve Hospitality**  
Sargent Khan: (713) 819-7296



**Dickson Furniture Manufacturers**  
Paul Mougel: (713) 747-0341



**DOCYT**  
Sid Saxena: (812) 340-4725



**Ecolab, Inc.**  
Michael Pfister:  
(317) 250-5189



**Elkay Interior Systems (EIS)**  
Greg Gliniewicz:  
(630) 346-7549



**Entegra**  
James Perry: (615) 342-9575



**Floor & Decor Commercial**  
Delana Delgado:  
(877) 659-2478



**Foliot Furniture**  
Mahesh Parekh:  
(702) 278-7380



**GE Appliances**  
Rachel Atkinson:  
(502) 656-8926



**Greentree Hospitality Group**  
Nicole Lei: (702) 465-5753



**Guest Supply - A Sysco Company**  
Justin Haggart:  
(732) 868-2331



**Hcareers**  
Doug Tutt: (605) 409-1304



**HD Supply Maintenance**  
Bree Lewis: (800) 233-6166



**hihotels by Hospitality International**  
Gary Gobin: (770) 270-9398



**Hospitality1**  
Babita Patel: (713) 343-5875



**INFINITI HR**  
Daniel Mormino:  
(623) 455-6234



**Jacaruso Enterprises**  
Melanie Calcagno:  
(210) 415-0522



**Kellanova-Kellogg's**  
Tina Griffin: (630) 335-3737



**Kings III**  
Jennifer Burks: (972) 965-9439



**M3**  
Haley Wolf: (770) 531-3746



**Marcus & Millichap**  
Biran Patel: (214) 505-4547



**Matrix Telecom**  
Ashu S. Upa: (800) 283-0539



**MSI Surfaces**  
Anil Palasamudram:  
(713) 570-7000



**NewGen Advisory**  
Dinesh Rama: (602) 648-2700



**Nimble Accounting**  
Rahul Kumar Singh:  
(866) 964-6253



**OCA Furniture**  
Fiona Shi: +86 18359625931



**Onity**  
Mark Lewitt: (800) 248-6189

### AAHOA SILVER INDUSTRY PARTNERS



**PHD Financial**  
Paul Darrow:  
(888) 508-7558



**Serta Simmons Hospitality Bedding**  
Andrea Hochworter:  
(770) 353-0122



**State Bank of Texas**  
Melissa Butler:  
(469) 200-8245



**Universal Financial Consultants**  
Vincent Munno:  
(727) 669-0109



**Walmart Business**  
Ryan Ramirez: (209) 643-3691



**Rinnai**  
Dipesh Parekh: (404) 821-0908



**Spectrum Enterprise Solutions**  
Stephanie Pitts:  
(212) 379-5826



**United Rentals**  
Shawn Borth: (317) 448-6257



**USA Digital, Inc.**  
Aaron Gomez:  
(909) 200-5445



**World Cinema, Inc.**  
Ella Ahmed: (713) 266-2686



**A Advantage Laundry Systems**  
Marcela Veloz:  
(800) 880-2138



**Dial Professional, Div of Henkel Corp.**  
Richard Spencer:  
(419) 540-3842



**Hub International**  
Kim Gore:  
(843) 839-4380



**Lead Designs**  
Nirav Sheth:  
(336) 580-3990



**Pineapple Capital Group**  
Dharmang M. Shah:  
(850) 960-5500



**Star Textile**  
Theresa Sutton:  
(586) 758-2700



**All4Lodging**  
Naresh "ND" Bhakta:  
(626) 253-6355



**EnterSource**  
Andy Degraw:  
(931) 680-0068



**HVS**  
Daneen Godinet:  
(214) 766-5394



**Marathon Fitness**  
Ashley Thomas:  
(713) 705-9278



**PMC Commercial Trust**  
Kristi Lewis-Hodge:  
(972) 349-3200



**Strategic Claim Consultants**  
James Houston:  
(404) 902-6017



**Apogee Travel**  
Pearson Talbert:  
(844) 827-6433



**Fabian Couture Group**  
Kim Zabala:  
(201) 460-7776



**Hytera**  
Ty Estes: (213) 519-7465



**MBC Public Adjusters**  
Mady Galarza:  
(708) 537-8229



**PointeNorth Insurance Group**  
Paul Mayo: (816) 582-5181



**Atica Global Inc.**  
Akash Goel:  
(415) 881-1587



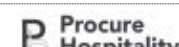
**Faultless Brands**  
Justin Nelson:  
(816) 520-4477



**Intertek Cristal**  
Seth Martin:  
(978) 614-0619



**Midea America Corp**  
Sean McKinney:  
(973) 459-6283



**Procure Hospitality**  
Jyotish Patel: (408) 674-5930



**Bottom Line Concepts**  
Samir Patel:  
(301) 332-9077



**Ferguson**  
Eric Tucker:  
(434) 249-3785



**Jacuzzi Bath Remodel**  
Timothy McGuire:  
(815) 257-6064



**National Tax Group**  
Lee Ferry: (847) 878-6564



**Public Loss Consultants**  
Daniel Russo:  
(800) 738-6101



**Coast to Coast Computer Products, Inc.**  
Kyle Kurtz: (800) 231-4553



**FGI Industries**  
Glen Paporello:  
(973) 652-3978



**Jansen/Adjusters International**  
David Moore:  
(832) 496-6761



**Newspace, Inc.**  
Jason Chen:  
(650) 873-8029



**PureHD**  
Ryerson Ciesluk:  
(978) 460-5560



**Cobblestone Hotels, LLC**  
Brian Wogernese:  
(920) 230-2622



**Focus Brands**  
Rani Bhatt:  
(404) 978-4829



**Kingsdown Hospitality**  
Vince Nicholson:  
(404) 229-8042



**NMG Financial Services**  
Dan Russo: (800) 637-6103



**Queen Bee Purchasing**  
Robert Brown:  
(972) 743-1254



**Dairy Queen**  
Jennifer Rude:  
(952) 830-0391



**Fortis**  
Raj Pannu: (972) 979-2296



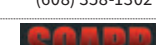
**Friedrich Air Conditioning Company**  
Bill Huber: (210) 573-3500



**JIO Supply**  
Andy Soni: (909) 721-6975



**Peoples Bank**  
Ashley Jones:  
(601) 867-6263



**Soarr Services**  
Michael Ferrer:  
(817) 437-8011



**Dexter Laundry, Inc.**  
Mackenzie Flattery:  
(641) 209-8115



**Hotel Design Services**  
Samir Parikh:  
(908) 222-9383



**Kiotel**  
Raj Patel: (646) 820-7251



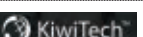
**Parth Hospitality**  
Parth Thakkar:  
(803) 319-7365



**Southeastern Laundry Equipment**  
Heather Villa:  
(770) 928-0080



**Hotel Renovation Solutions**  
Oleg Arifov: (470) 960-9026



**KiwiTech**  
Rakesh Gupta:  
(917) 929-1620



**PhoneSuite**  
Angela Koslowski:  
(303) 991-2649



**Soyea USA**  
Rahul Wadhvani:  
(732) 668-8825



**Vogue Hospitality**  
Bobby Sethi:  
(770) 282-0418



**Websrefresh**  
Nimesh Dinubhai:  
(602) 647-9777



**Wizehire**  
Michael Stevenson:  
(512) 567-9376

## AAHOA BRONZE INDUSTRY PARTNERS



# AAHOA MEMBERS



Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R-TN 1st District) is shown with staff of the Glenstone Lodge and AAHOA Mid South Ambassadors, along with members from Gatlinburg and Tennessee's 1st congressional district, during her Back-of-the-House tour.



Chairman Miraj S. Patel was recognized on the House Chamber Floor by Rep. Sylvia Garcia (TX-29) as the first Houstonian and youngest chairman in AAHOA's 35-year history.



Former AAHOA South Pacific Regional Director Mike Riverside recently met up with Riverside (CA) Mayor Patrick Lock Dawson. California city leaders met at the same venue where a California Hotel & Lodging Association/AAHOA event occurred. Riverside lives in the city of Riverside.



AAHOA Northwest Regional Director Taran Patel recently gave Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) a Back-of-the-House tour at a Courtyard by Marriott in Pasco, WA.



# IN ACTION



During his Back-of-the-House Tour by Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) of a Courtyard by Marriott in Pasco, WA., several important industry issues were discussed, including challenges the industry faced navigating out of the pandemic, the impact of inflation on margins, the franchisee/franchisor model, and the need for Congress to support increasing the Small Business Administration 7a loan limit to \$10 million from \$5 million.



During her Back-of-the-House tour to AAHOA Member-owned Glenstone Lodge, Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R-TN 1st District) got creative in the kitchen by making pizza. The tour was arranged by AAHOA Mid South Ambassadors, along with members from Gatlinburg and Tennessee's 1st congressional district.



Back-of-the-House tours, such as the one recently given to Rep. Jennifer McClellan (R-VA) of an AAHOA Member-owned extended-stay hotel in Petersburg, VA., help grow the association's relationships with policymakers.



AAHOA Members, including Women Hoteliers Director Eastern Division Purnima Patel, recently gave Rep. Jennifer McClellan (R-VA) a tour of an AAHOA Member-owned extended-stay hotel in Petersburg, VA. Rep. McClellan got a tour of the property and gained new insights into the hospitality industry.



**5000+ HOTELS-MOTELS WORLD-WIDE TRUST**  
**MATRIX COMMUNICATION & SECURITY**  
**SOLUTIONS FOR EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING**

- Hospitality IP Phone System
- Time-Attendance and Access Control
- HD IP Security-Camera System



1291, N.Tustin Ave.  
 Anaheim, CA 92807-1603  
 Call: 1-(800)-283-0539  
[sales@matrixhotelpbx.com](mailto:sales@matrixhotelpbx.com)  
[www.matrixhotelpbx.com](http://www.matrixhotelpbx.com)

**BATHTUBS & SHOWER PANS**  
**Repair • Restore • Reglaze**

*Don't Let Amateurs and "Fly-By-Nights" Ruin Your Bathtubs!*  
 Unique Refinishers is the nation's oldest and largest bathtub repair, reglazing and restoration company. You can be assured of the highest quality workmanship and materials for chips, old tubs and tile, cracked fiberglass, cultured marble, etc... service provided Coast to Coast!



**UNIQUE®**  
**REFINISHERS, INC.**  
 Nationwide 1-800-332-0048  
 Atlanta 770-945-0072





**www.uniquerefinishers.com**  
 We specialize in fiberglass Bathtub & Jacuzzi Repairs

B&C Technologies .....	16
<a href="http://bandctech.com/index.php">bandctech.com/index.php</a>	
Charter Communications Operating, LLC .....	45
<a href="http://enterprise.spectrum.com/">enterprise.spectrum.com/</a>	
Chase Payment Solutions .....	11
<a href="http://www.chase.com">www.chase.com</a>	
HBO .....	15
<a href="http://www.hbobulk.com/">www.hbobulk.com/</a>	
Madison SPECS .....	17
<a href="http://www.madisonspecs.com/">www.madisonspecs.com/</a>	
Matrix Telecom .....	50
<a href="http://matrixhotelpbx.com/">matrixhotelpbx.com/</a>	
MODIO Guestroom Acoustic Control c/o K.R. Moeller Associates Ltd .....	Inside Front Cover
<a href="http://www.modio.audio/">www.modio.audio/</a>	
Motel 6 .....	Outside Back Cover
<a href="http://g6hospitality.com/">g6hospitality.com/</a>	
Patel & Associates .....	50
<a href="http://patellaw.net/">patellaw.net/</a>	
Unique Refinishers .....	50
<a href="http://uniquerefinishers.com/">uniquerefinishers.com/</a>	
VTech Communications Inc. ....	23
<a href="http://www.vtechhotelpbphones.com/">www.vtechhotelpbphones.com/</a>	
Watco Manufacturing Company .....	10
<a href="http://watcomfg.com">watcomfg.com</a>	

## FRANCHISE LITIGATION



Legal assistance in reviewing/  
 negotiating franchise agreements  
 and liquidated damages settlements.



Mahesh I. Patel  
 Patel & Associates, Attorneys at Law  
 Phone: 972-643-1813  
 Fax: 972-231-0104  
 Email: [mpatel@patellaw.net](mailto:mpatel@patellaw.net)





*Empower.  
Connect.  
Lead.*

*Join Us!*

**2024**

**HerOwnership  
Conference**

by **AAHOA**

**Sept. 12-13, 2024 | Redondo Beach, CA**

*Sonesta Redondo Beach & Marina | 300 North Harbor Drive*

*Your 2024 Hosts*



**Purnima Patel**  
Women Hoteliers Director  
Eastern Division  
[purnima.patel@aahoa.com](mailto:purnima.patel@aahoa.com)



**Shetal Zina Patel**  
Women Hoteliers Director  
Western Division  
[shetal.patel@aahoa.com](mailto:shetal.patel@aahoa.com)

*Register Today!*  
**[AAHOA.com/HerOwnership](https://AAHOA.com/HerOwnership)**



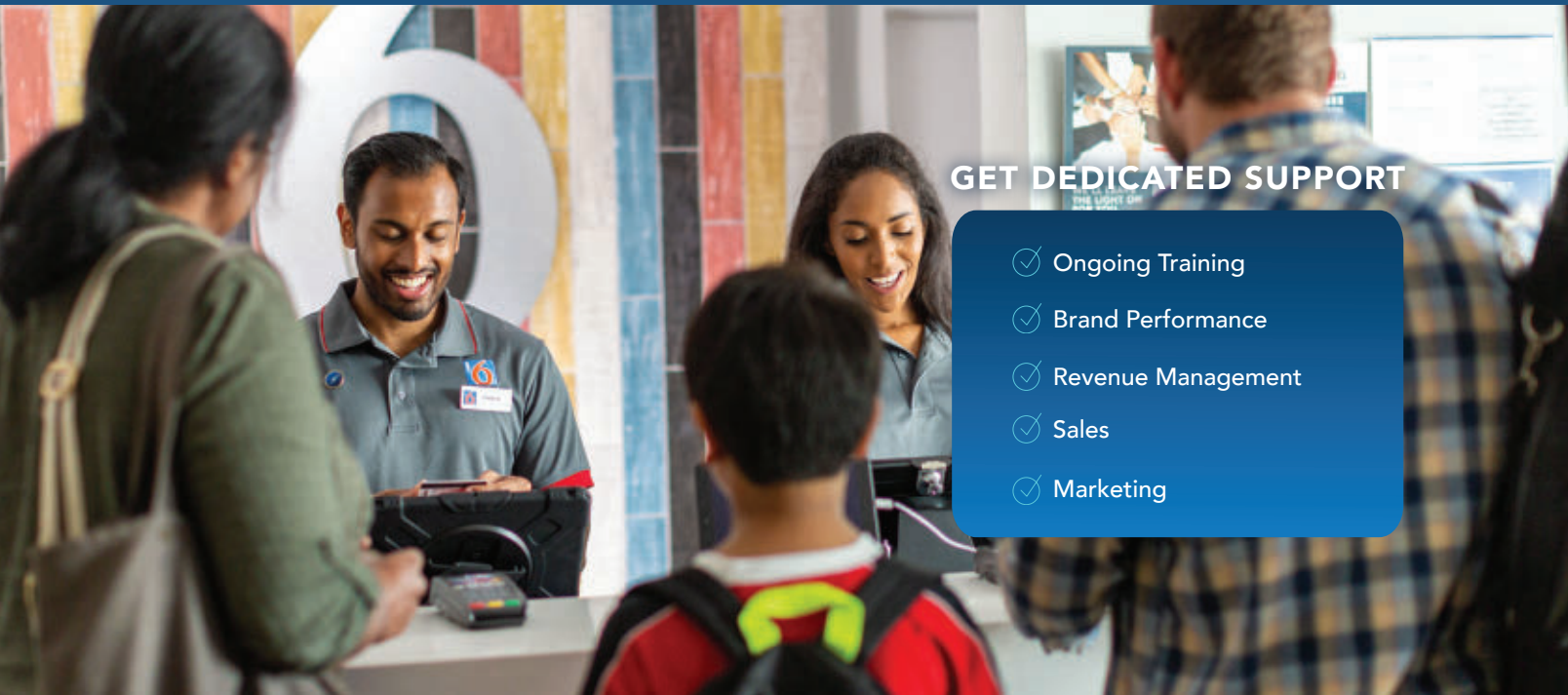


## REASON 3

# Get economy lodging expert support.

Since 1962, we've been exclusively dedicated to economy lodging. That's why we provide our owners with a full team of dedicated support for marketing, sales, brand performance and more.

**ECONOMY. IT'S WHAT WE DO.**  
See all 6 reasons to franchise with us.



### GET DEDICATED SUPPORT

- ✓ Ongoing Training
- ✓ Brand Performance
- ✓ Revenue Management
- ✓ Sales
- ✓ Marketing