

400th Country Inns & Suites Hotel Opens

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Country Inns & Suites By Carlson Celebrates the Grand Opening of Its 400th Hotel In Portage, Indiana

Country Inns & Suites By Carlson(R), the mid-tier lodging brand of Minneapolis-based Carlson Hotels Worldwide, today announces the opening of its 400th hotel. The landmark hotel, located at 1630 Olmsted Drive, has a prime location in Portage, Ind., near the southern shore of Lake Michigan and 45 minutes east of Chicago.

The grand opening ceremony of the new 100-room Country Inn & Suites hotel in Portage will be attended by Portage Mayor Doug Olson, members of the Portage business community, the brand's Executive Vice President and Brand Leader Steve Mogck; Carlson Hotels Regional Vice President of Operations John Malone; John Phair, president of Holladay Properties, the owner of the hotel; Dave Swift, president of Swift Hospitality Group, the management company for the hotel; General Manager Jokima Hiller and members of her staff.

'The opening of our 400th hotel is a major milestone in our company's history,' said Mogck. 'Over the past 19 years Country Inns & Suites evolved from a brand new concept that Carlson created from the ground up to become a brand leader in the mid-tier segment of the lodging industry with more than 31,000 rooms in the United States, Canada, Germany, Austria, England, France, Mexico, India, Costa Rica and Panama.'

'The Country Inn & Suites Portage hotel exemplifies the brand's high quality product and service standards and marks our 11th location in the state,' Mogck added. 'All of the hotel's employees will participate in the Country Inns & Suites 'Be Our Guest' service training program, designed to uphold consistent delivery of quality customer service at Country Inns & Suites.'

'The new Portage Country Inn & Suites will be the finest hotel in the Portage, Indiana area - and we are very proud of that,' Phair said.

'This new Country Inn & Suites hotel is an exciting addition to the community,' Swift said. 'We have developed seven Country Inns & Suites hotels in the region, we own six hotels, and we manage a total of eight properties, including the new Portage hotel and another property under construction in Illinois. 'We know from experience that this innovative lodging concept will gain quick popularity with travelers to the area.'

The property is off of Interstate 94 at exit 19, near the Indiana Toll Road, 46 miles from Midway Airport and 57 miles from Chicago O'Hare International Airport. Portage is a lakeside city that offers beaches, marinas and national parks, including Indiana Dunes.

The hotel is a 100 percent non-smoking and offers upgraded guest rooms equipped with microwaves, refrigerators, complimentary High Speed Internet Access (with wireless access in the ground floor rooms), complimentary breakfast and meeting space for up to 40 people.

The Country Inn & Suites in Portage features an indoor recreational area including a pool just for kids, a large heated pool, whirlpool, fitness center and game room.

As a leader in the mid-scale hotel segment, Country Inns & Suites By Carlson locations feature residential architecture and home-like interior design with highlights that include hardwood flooring, lobby fireplace and front porch.

Each hotel offers many upgraded features and amenities such as complimentary breakfast, in-room hair dryer, coffee maker, iron and ironing board, and weekday morning newspaper. The brand is known for its consistently high quality accommodations and personal, warm hospitality.

For the 14th year in a row, Country Inns & Suites has earned a 98 percent guest willingness to return rate, one of the highest in the industry. As a way to thank guests for their loyalty to the brand, Country Inns & Suites provides an in-house lending library program at its hotels in the U.S. and Canada which lends free books to guests based on the assurance they will return the book on their next visit. For every book returned to a Country Inns & Suites hotel, the company makes a \$5.00 donation to ProLiteracy Worldwide. To date, over \$80,000 has been donated.

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