

## AH&LA Honors Hotel Properties with 2008 Achievement Awards

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### Properties with Innovative Community Service, Eco-Friendly, and Diversity Programs Recognized

The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) today honored the winners of the AH&LA Achievement Awards, part of the Stars of the Industry Awards luncheon, held during the AH&LA Summer Summit at The Skirvin Hilton and sponsored by U.S. Foodservice. The awards, created in 1966, recognize individual hotel properties that have developed outstanding programs, events, and campaigns. Winners were chosen for awards in the categories of community service, Good Earthkeeping, guest relations, special events (one-time event and ongoing), and honored for outstanding diversity initiatives.

SpringHill Suites by Marriott in St. Petersburg/Clearwater, Fla., won the community service award, small property category, for its long-term commitment to local Floridians in need. Since its opening in 2006, the property has donated furniture to the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate and 'adopted' a local homeless/family transition center, placing particular attention on the needs of children. Despite being in operation for only two years, the hotel's team has been recognized by the community for its selfless giving, winning the Larry Blumberg & Associates C.A.R.E.S. Leadership Award, an honor among the management company's nearly 50 hotels, Marriott International's Quarterly Award for Community Service, and, most recently, the Community Service Hotel of the Year Award, prevailing over all other SpringHill Suites by Marriott hotels.

Huntington Hotels/Courtyard Marriott San Diego Central in San Diego, Calif., won the award for the community service, large property category. Huntington Hotels/Courtyard Marriott stays actively involved in numerous organizations, motivating its employees to always take action when a neighbor is in need. Since opening in 2002, the property has donated rooms at a deeply discounted rate of \$49 to the local Ronald McDonald House, hosted a golf tournament to raise money for a nearby children's hospital, and even hosted a 'Home-cooked Christmas' dinner for more than 200 Marines stationed away from their families. The hotel's connection to the community and their quick, selfless response was also evident as wildfires struck Southern California last year, when the property invited displaced residents and firefighters to stay at the hotel.

Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat in Leavenworth, Wash., won the Good Earthkeeping award, small property category, for fostering a unique and eco-friendly business and guest service approach. Focused on leaving a minimal environmental footprint, the property forges initiatives to lessen its impact via construction, maintenance, and daily operations procedures. Some unique and innovative aspects of the property include 32,000 lineal feet of decking made from recycled plastic grocery bags and hardwood chips, the use of electric vehicles for food, laundry and maintenance servicing the 45 acres of developed area, and buildings featuring recycled heartwood yellow pine from beams salvaged from the original Sears building in Chicago.

Doubletree Hotel & Executive Meeting Center Portland - Lloyd Center in Portland, Ore., is the winner of the Good Earthkeeping award in the large property category. The property has been an environmental advocate for many years, earning Green Seal Certification in 2004. Eco-conscious actions implemented include the creation of a property-specific carbon calculator, a comprehensive composting program, purchasing of renewable energy, retrofitting of all lighting and plumbing for maximum energy efficiency, and subsidizing public transit for employees. These programs have led to a 30 percent reduction in electricity, gas, and water consumption, and increased overall waste diversion from 8 percent to 70 percent.

Chancellor Hotel on Union Square in San Francisco, Calif., the winner of the guest relations award, small property category, believes that excellent guest relations run from top to bottom, explaining why the entire staff frequently receives notes, cards, emails, and letters praising their service. Guest relations begins as all staff are required to sign a 'Front Office Pledge' of service to always act courteously, listen carefully, and respond professionally to guests. Some unique guest services include a choice of 12 different types of pillows, a staff trained to recognize guests' special occasions, and a 'Meet the Manager' event where the entire management staff hosts a reception for guests.

Westin Kierland Resort & Spa in Scottsdale, Ariz., is the winner of the guest relations, large property award, because of its high rate of repeat guests and the launch of its successful 'DISCOVER: The Family Experience Program.' DISCOVER, created by the new 'Fun Department,' provides guests with a passport leading them through all the experiences of the property's robust activities program, which engages between 10 to 500 children and families each week. Popular programs include the Kierland Kampfire where kids make gooey s'mores, 'Dive-In' movie screenings on the banks of the Adventure Water Park, and other active seasonal events left a memorable mark on visiting families. The DISCOVER program has improved guest rankings of the hotel and increased revenue in its food and beverage, golf, and spa outlets.

Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Spa in Stowe, Vt., is the winner of the special events, ongoing, small property award, for its Annual Hot Air Balloon Festival, an event that includes numerous balloon launches, a children's corner, live band, great food, wine, a beer garden, and fireworks. Drawing in thousands as both guests and spectators, the property's event was named one of the 'Top 10 Summer Events' by the state of Vermont, and placed the lesser-known ski town of Stowe on travelers' radar for their summer travels.

Boston Harbor Hotel in Boston, Mass., won the special events ongoing award, large property category. The hotel's Summer in the City Entertainment Series has successfully drawn in large crowds for eight years. The special event includes performances representing various music genres, dancing, and classic movies, and engages local Boston businesses to share in the fun and profitability. In 2007 almost 20,000 tourists and locals alike attended at least one event during the series.

Regency Suites Hotel in Atlanta, Ga., won the special events, one-time only, small property award. After noting guests' perceptions that there were no good nearby eateries, the property created the 'Neighborhood Sidewalk Social' in order to showcase the 60 nearby restaurants. Creating a carnival-like atmosphere, the Atlanta hotel raised awareness for its guests, showcasing how much the Midtown neighborhood has to offer, and drives traffic to local businesses as well as the hotel itself, stimulating the local economy.

This year's Prism Award winner is the Loews Annapolis Hotel in Annapolis, Md., recognizing its innovative diversity programs that have been integrated into the hotel's strategic plan. The Loews Annapolis focuses much of its energy on employee relations, recognizing its importance in cultivating a rewarding and successful work environment. Employee benefits include tuition reimbursement programs, employee meetings conducted in English and Spanish, team-building exercises, and a monthly celebration of employee diversity by the property's management company.

Many of AH&LA's partner state associations choose their own property award winners, which are submitted to the association for national judging. Making the decisions in this year's competition were Kristen Clemens, vice president of marketing & communications, Destination Marketing Association International, Phil Hayward, editor, Lodging magazine, and Allen Kay, director of communications, Travel Industry Association of America.

For more information on AH&LA's Stars of the Industry Awards program, please visit [www.ahla.com](http://www.ahla.com).

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