

TeleGRAM

Great American Hotel Group Newsletter

A Little Bit Wiser

Wishing a "Happy Birthday" to our Great American Hotel Group office and property associates:

Karen Beranger - July 18
Mercy Breitenbach - July 22
Adam Robitaille - August 2
Catrina Stith - August 12
Dave Akridge - August 14

Around the Block

Wishing a "Happy Anniversary" to our Great American Hotel Group office and property associates:

Linda Komornik - 20 years
Catrina Stith - 1 year

A Laugh A Day ...



The mint on the pillow?

Why it's complimentary my dear Watson!

TeleGRAM Staff

President - Dave Akridge

Dave.Akridge@GreatAmericanHG.com

Editor/Corporate Sales & Marketing-Linda Komornik

Linda.Komornik@GreatAmericanHG.com

Corporate Human Resources - Suzanne Baele

Suzanne.Baele@GreatAmericanHG.com

Corporate Controller - Gabrielle Smith

Gabrielle.Smith@GreatAmericanHG.com

Regional Director of Operations - Rob Greene

Rob.Greene@GreatAmericanHG.com



Happy 1st Birthday Homewood

August 20th marks the first birthday of the Homewood Suites by Hilton Gateway Hills. The hotel is hosting a week-long celebration for their guests, the community and the staff to include a plethora of special events. Beginning August 13th, and culminating on August 20th, the hotel staff will,

- ◆ Volunteer and help "End 68 Hours of Hunger" move to their new location at the local United Way. End 68 Hours of Hunger is an organization that sends food home for the weekend to 320 children who are in food insecure home. This program assists to alleviate hunger between school lunch on Friday and school lunch on Monday. The hotel has been involved with this organization prior to, and during it's year-long operation.
- ◆ Host a craft beer and adult coloring contest on Monday evening.
- ◆ Sponsor a social hour with the Kona Ice Truck and Pizzeria Uno on Tuesday evening. There will be live music and "Jewelry Blingo".
- ◆ Feature cake and ice cream during their social hour.
- ◆ Host a meet and greet with Lewis the Duck, the HWS mascot on Thursday. Children under 12 will receive a free autographed copy of Lewis' book.

Not to toot our own horn (but we will), the hotel has gathered quite a few achievements during their first year.

(continued on Page 4 - Happy BD)

Operationally Speaking *Rob Greene, Regional Director of Operations*

Excerpted from the article Sustainable Hotel Practices Make For Flourishing Hotel Business by Young Yoon, HMG Hospitality

Consumers are interested in sustainability and green practices – this isn't exactly breaking news. Yet, the significance of that statement is still immense, green practices aren't optional if you want success for your hotel, they are necessary.

The hospitality industry is an industry consistently at the forefront of the trends, and since the latest green practices tend to become "trendy," hotels must try and be ahead of the trends, set the trends, and at the very least – follow them.

The green practices of five years ago are commonplace now – i.e. the friendly card in the bathroom explaining the option to reuse towels. If that's the sort of green level your hotel is on, there may be some work to do.

In the eyes of your guests, wastefulness means a lack of commitment to sustainability, which translates into not having the same ideals as them. People choose to spend their money on things that are in alignment with their ideals.

Sustainable Hotel Practices That Can Be Adopted

First ask: What are you already doing? What more can be done? To help you get on the right track, here are some action steps to take to help propel your hotel in a positive and "sustainable" direction:

Create a "Green" Team

Things get done when there are people championing them do get done. If you have a collection of team members committed to helping your property improve in this area, a committee that holds everyone accountable, change will happen.

Know Your Plants

A relatively simple way to save water is to landscape with a drought-friendly mindset. There are plenty of landscape artists who are experts in this area, and would be glad to advise you.

Pleasing Products

A single hotel uses an army of products – why not opt for environmentally friendly ones? Everything from cleaning supplies, to paper products can be a part of your sustainability goals. This might be seemingly costly up front, but consider the long term benefits – including guest reactions and reviews of the environmentally minded practices of the hotel.

Involve the Guests

When it comes to Earth's future, everyone is accountable and everyone can be involved. For starters, you can develop a rewards program for sustainable guests – i.e. discounts and restaurant vouchers for guests who donate old clothes, use fewer towels, leave unused amenities for the next guests, etc.

The sky's the limit when it comes to green practices for hotels. Sometimes simply beginning to make the changes is the hardest part. Start small if you must, but by all means – start! Make a new, sustainable, beginning for your hotel, and reap the rewards.



Don't Get Jacked While Juicing

Excerpted from Infradapt News

Hackers today are trying every approach possible to steal your device's data, including the hijacking of public USB ports. This technique is known as "juice jacking," and with this new threat, you should think twice about charging your device using a public USB charging kiosk, or even the USB port on a friend's computer.

There's a very real risk that a strange USB port will be riddled with data-stealing malware designed to spread via charging. When it comes to something as precious as your data, you want to be safe and use protection.

According to Brian Markus, president of Aires Security, "Anyone who had an inclination to, could put a system inside of one of these kiosks that, when someone connects their phone, can suck down all of the photos and data, or write malware to the device." Making matters worse is the fact that, by default, many mobile devices like smartphones are configured to automatically sync or dump off data as soon as a connection is made. This setting plays right into the hackers' hands.

You've got a few options you can take to safely use a public USB port.

The USB Condom: Yes, you read that right. The USB Condom is a real thing. When a device loves a USB port, a magical process known as charging takes place. Sometimes, the device finds itself on the road and a sketchy USB port is its only charging option. When using strange ports to charge your personal device, be sure to stay safe and wrap your device with a USB Condom.

The USB Condom is a real product made by int3.cc. Essentially, it is a circuit board that's only a few inches in length. A user will plug their device into one end of the board, and then plug the other end of the USB Condom into the strange USB port. The USB Condom blocks the device's data pins while leaving exposed the power pins for the purpose of charging.

Tape: An inexpensive solution is to simply put tape over the USB's data pins before charging it. This tape solution may work if you're in a pinch, but it's not recommended. The tape can fall off and get stuck in the port and leave glue behind. Plus, if the pin isn't 100% covered, then your device will still be vulnerable.

(Continued on page 6 - Juice Jacking)

End of the Summer Trivia

- For whom is August named?
 - A Greek God
 - A Roman Emperor
 - A Religious Icon
- For whom is July named??
 - Julio Iglesias
 - Julio Jones
 - Julius Caesar
- What is July's flower?
 - Larkspur
 - Poppy
 - Gladiolus
 - Rose
- "I'm as corny as ___ in August" is a line from a Rogers and Hammerstein musical. What is the missing word?
 - Corn
 - Goofy
 - Kansas
 - My Feet
- Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked the moon on July 20, 1969. Which was their mission?
 - Challenger
 - Gemini 4
 - Apollo 11
 - Apollo 13
- July 3 through August 11 are the hottest days of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. What are they commonly called?
 - Sweat-er-Days
 - Dog Days
 - Indian Summer
 - Blue Moon
- In J.K. Rowling's first book, Harry Potter turns 12. When was he born?
 - 7/31/80
 - 7/12/80
 - 7/31/78
 - 7/12/78
- The first US zoo opened on July 1, 1874. Where was it?
 - San Diego
 - Philadelphia
 - The Bronx
- August 9, 1930 is birthdate of what cartoon character?
 - Mickey Mouse
 - Betty Boop
 - Bullwinkle
- What famous rock concert opened on August 15th, 1969?
 - Monterey
 - Newport
 - Woodstock
 - Altamonte



1b 2 c 3 a 4 c 5 c 6 b 7 a 8 b 9 b 10 c

May & June Trivia Answers:

Nashua Hotel Wins Hilton Award



Pictured above from left to right: Matt Therein, Breakfast Attendant, Denise, Mentor from Project Search, and Liz Ledoux, House Person and Breakfast Attendant.

Homewood Suites Gateway Hills, Nashua and their community organization, The Plus Company, were selected to receive a Travel with Purpose Action Grant!

The Travel with Purpose Action Grant program was created by Hilton Hotels as a way to recognize and support the excellent work that Hilton Family properties and offices lead in their local communities, and to amplify the impact of Travel with Purpose around the world.

A diverse panel of judges carefully reviewed the 502 applications that were submitted this year, and awarded 117 grants. All of the winning projects, including the Homewood Suites Gateway Hills team, showed tremendous potential to impact communities, engage Team Members and increase collaboration with the local neighborhood.

The hotel received an award certificate recognizing the property for its winning submission. Congratulations to the team on their winning application and dedication to strengthening their community!

Happy BD *(continued from Page 1)*

- ◆ The hotel is the recipient of the NH Employee Leadership Award. The award will be presented on October 12th by the Governor of NH. This prestigious award is presented each year to NH employers who recognize the skills and contributions that those with disabilities bring to the workforce and who have adopted inclusive policies and hiring practices that all those with disabilities to fairly compete for employment.
- ◆ The hotel received a \$3000 Community Action Grant to help The Plus Company enhance their mission to employ those with disabilities in the work force. The hotel successfully ran programs that directly contributed to 3 new hires for this year's graduates in business that had never worked with the program before, and has 6 graduates from the program employed at the hotel.
- ◆ The hotel received an "outstanding" (98.62) score on their QA inspection.
- ◆ The hotel has been number one in it's market in occupancy, ADR and RevPar (amongst 13 hotels) for 11.5 months.
- ◆ Hotel has produced \$73,000 in revenue as a result of its dedication to serve the community. Members of management hold the following titles: Nashua Rotary Public Relations Committee Board Member, Vice President of the Polaris Educational Foundation, Social Media Coordinator Foundation for Education NH (FENH), Business Advisory Council Member Project Search/Plus Company at St. Joseph's Hospital, Project Coordinator End 68 Hours of Hunger. In addition, many line employees donate time to the Nashua Soup Kitchen, The Front Door Agency, The Boys and Girls Club, and other local organizations in the greater Nashua Area.
- ◆ The hotel has successfully promoted 3 employees to supervisor position.
- ◆ The hotel has given over 1,000 site tours of the facility, hosted a grand opening event, hosted events for the Merrimack CVB, Nashua Chamber of Commerce, Nashua Rotary, The Plus Company, Project Search, Granite State Ambassadors, the Mayor's office city planning board, The Hope Foundation, The Scottish Arts Foundation, The Academy of Science and Design's robotics team, and many more.

Congratulations to the leadership and staff at the Homewood Suites. We wish you much success in your journey!

Have you every phoned a person or a business and had the person picking up the call use the speakerphone? What is your reaction to this informal greeting? Do you think appropriate?

From a sales perspective, I believe this is a poor reflection on our customer service. Remember – you never get a second chance to make a first impression – and that includes the phone. Answering our switchboards using a speakerphone tells the caller that you are too busy for personal attention. This goes for back office personnel “helping” the GSR by picking a ringing call!



Hands free phone operation should never be used when speaking with a guest or client on the switchboard, while dialing for dollars, or during business conversations unless you have first asked for permission. True respect would be to ask: “do you mind if I put you on speakerphone while I reference my computer and take notes during our call?” It is good etiquette to ask before automatically putting a person on speaker! Check with Emily Post.

I realize that it is inconvenient to be tied to a phone with a handset and a cord. In this day and age of hands free dialing, bluetooth, and text - many of use find it difficult to remember that our office phone is “different” than our personal phone and that the people we are speaking to at work are “different” than our friends and acquaintances.

Recently I phoned one of our hotels, and while the greeting was spoken perfectly, the person used the speakerphone. This public, echoing, distracting phone greeting instantly turned me off and my gut reaction was that this person did not care to nurture a personal relationship with me. What if I was a potential guest or client calling for the first time? You would have lost a golden opportunity to WOW the me-the-potential-guest!

So - if you really find it difficult to use the receiver when talking on the phone, invest in a headset... but we really need to remember that informality breeds disrespect... especially in some of our older guests.

Happy picking up the receiver!

Linda

Roomer Has It

GARRETT'S DESERT INN

Longmire, an American crime drama television series developed by John Covery and Hunt Baldwin is filming for the series 5th season in and around Santa Fe. Some scenes are even being shot at the Garrett's Desert Inn! The cast features Robert Taylor, Katee Sackhoff, Bailey Chase, Adam Bartley, Cassidy Freeman and Lou Diamond Phillips and is featured on Netflix. Watch the new season starting in September.



Juice Jacking

(continued from page 3)

Implement a Mobile Security Software Solution: There are software security solutions available that can proactively protect your device from juice jacking. Inside Counsel explains:

Consider software packages that can be implemented on company devices to build security protocols to shield against external attacks and block unauthorized access. This type of device management provides assurance that no holes are open for someone to come in and steal corporate information, while still allowing corporate IT to have access into the device.

These are three good solutions, but the best action you can take to protect your company's data from scams like juice jacking is to develop awareness with team members that have company data stored on their mobile devices. Be sure to educate every employee on this issue so they won't willy-nilly plug into every USB port they come across.

Are you concerned about the security of your company's data? Infradapt offers your business additional data security solutions that will protect your sensitive information from hackers, including tools that keep your mobile device safe when connecting to strange WiFi networks.

I Am Human, I Am A Resource Suzanne Baele, Corporate Director of Human Resources

Excerpted from the United States Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division Final Rule: Overtime

On May 18, 2016, President Obama and Secretary Perez announced the publication of the Department of Labor's final rule updating the overtime regulations, which will automatically extend overtime pay protections to over 4 million workers within the first year of implementation. This long-awaited update will result in a meaningful boost to many workers' wallets, and will go a long way toward realizing President Obama's commitment to ensuring every worker is compensated fairly for their hard work.

In 2014, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum directing the Department to update the regulations defining which white collar workers are protected by the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime standards. Consistent with the President's goal of ensuring workers are paid a fair day's pay for a hard day's work, the memorandum instructed the Department to look for ways to modernize and simplify the regulations while ensuring that the FLSA's intended overtime protections are fully implemented.

The Department published a Notice of Proposed Rule-making (NPRM) in the Federal Register on July 6, 2015 (80 FR 38515) and invited interested parties to submit written comments on the proposed rule at www.regulations.gov by September 4, 2015. The Department received over 270,000 comments in response to the NPRM from a variety of interested stakeholders. The feedback the Department received helped shape the Final Rule.

HR CORNER

Key Provisions of the Final Rule

The Final Rule focuses primarily on updating the salary and compensation levels needed for Executive, Administrative and Professional workers to be exempt. Specifically, the Final Rule:

Sets the standard salary level at the 40th percentile of earnings of full-time salaried workers in the lowest-wage Census Region, currently the South (\$913 per week; \$47,476 annually for a full-year worker);

Sets the total annual compensation requirement for highly compensated employees (HCE) subject to a minimal duties test to the annual equivalent of the 90th percentile of full-time salaried workers nationally (\$134,004); and

Establishes a mechanism for automatically updating the salary and compensation levels every three years to maintain the levels at the above percentiles and to ensure that they continue to provide useful and effective tests for exemption.

Additionally, the Final Rule amends the salary basis test to allow employers to use non-discretionary bonuses and incentive payments (including commissions) to satisfy up to 10 percent of the new standard salary level.

The effective date of the final rule is December 1, 2016. The initial increases to the standard salary level (from \$455 to \$913 per week) and HCE total annual compensation requirement (from \$100,000 to \$134,004 per year) will be effective on that date. Future automatic updates to those thresholds will occur every three years, beginning on January 1, 2020.