



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION

## **CHTA Update to Members**

### **JANUARY – MARCH, 2017**

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## **Note from the CEO Frank Comito**

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Much has transpired since our last update to you. Detailed activity reports were shared in the Committee and Board meetings in Nassau this past January. We received excellent feedback and recommendations in our Committee meetings. In this update, we'll report on key areas of activity and recommendations coming out of our recent meetings, and brief you on follow up matters we've been working on during the past two months. Among the areas covered in the update are:

- Message from the President
- Key Upcoming Events and Meetings
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## **Message from President Karolin Troubetzkoy...**

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### **Moving Closer to a True Sustainable Regional Tourism Development and Marketing Initiative**

- **Heads of Government Give Green Light to Developing Initiative**
- **Can It Work This Time Around?**

Dear Members:

It has been a busy yet very rewarding two months. We wish to thank those of you who participated in our various meetings and at Marketplace in The Bahamas. We are encouraged by the positive feedback which we received from exhibitors and buyers alike and pledge to continue to build upon the improvements we put in place.

## **Save the Date!**

At this time intense preparations have begun to bring to you an exciting combined CHIEF (Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum) and Taste of the Caribbean in June in Miami. Those who have attended our first two years of CHIEF will attest to its incredible value, bringing people, ideas and opportunities together, with a focus on helping our members to save money, make money and be more effective. Layering it with our Taste of the Caribbean event, celebrating our region's rich cuisine, culture and culinary talent.....the two events are a rich recipe you won't want to miss.

## **A Promising Start to Re-energizing Public-Private Sector Collaboration**

Following Marketplace, we also put in place final plans for our meeting with the CARICOM Caribbean Heads of Government in Guyana around developing a regional tourism development and marketing initiative. Our intention was to showcase to many of the region's Governments the incredible potential of marketing our brand, improving our product and realizing far greater returns from tourism than our Governments, companies and the people of the Caribbean presently get.

The outreach to heads of Government has been a public-private sector effort 18 months in the making. On February 17th, 2017 CHTA and CTO representatives presented at the CARICOM heads of government meeting in Guyana a proposed way forward for the broader Caribbean to create a sustained public-private sector initiative to market and develop tourism. While we believe any regional effort should embrace the entire region and not just CARICOM countries, we felt it appropriate to start first with CARICOM with the view of broadening engagement beyond that.

The region's leaders concurred with our recommended action steps, which have been developed with input from CHTA's members since last June and feedback from Ministers and Commissions of Tourism through a CTO consultative process. Details of the action steps are further described in this Update.

But key questions should be instructive as we go about the task over the coming months to put 'teeth' into the actions agreed to at the heads of government meeting. Among them are:

- How do we financially sustain a regional effort?
- How should a sustained effort be structured, governed and managed?
- How do we broaden participation beyond the CARICOM countries?
- How do we create fairness, ensuring that those destinations and businesses which support the regional effort are getting their fair share of exposure and return?

Since 1976, several attempts have been made to bring the region's public and private sector tourism interests together around the common goals of developing and marketing Caribbean tourism. In his recent book titled 'Caribbean Tourism', Jean Holder, former Secretary General for the Caribbean Tourism Organization, recounts the vision 'to create a single, powerful Caribbean tourism body, of both the public and private sectors. It was to involve all the Caribbean countries, all the hotel associations in

the Caribbean Basin, and the existing Caribbean and non-Caribbean private sector membership. It would have been a formidable force in global tourism. Regrettably, in 1976, it was a vision the time of which had not yet come.”

The public and private sectors took another stab at a regional marketing initiative in 1993, when, led by American Airlines, they pooled their resources to fund a \$15 million Caribbean marketing program known as the ‘Kokomo’ campaign. Immediately, the region saw a considerable spike in tourism arrivals and hotel occupancies while employment rebounded and tax revenues increased.

Post 2001, when arrivals to the region and hotel occupancies plummeted, the public and private sectors came together raising \$10 million for the ‘Life Needs the Caribbean’ marketing campaign, which quickly stimulated arrivals and bookings, pulling the industry and many of the countries out of what otherwise would’ve been a prolonged recession.

We know from this, as well as from other successful collaborations by the region’s public and private sector tourism interests that when we come together to tackle matters like the unfair UK Air Passenger Duty, remove travel obstacles to support World Cricket, and collectively address regional health threats, that we can make a difference.

So why are we still not realizing our tourism potential as a region?  
Coming together for a quick fix simply isn’t enough.

The fundamental reasons why previous regional efforts have been short-lived might fall under what one could refer to as the ‘3 Ms’.... Money, Management, and Moxie.

Will we be able to create the formulas to sustain a regional effort financially? Will we overcome obstacles of egos, turfdom, and divisiveness which have stymied earlier efforts? Will we have the courage to commit and engage at unprecedented levels?

We simply must give this our best shot, learning from past successes and challenges, and moving forward. Stay tuned and stay engaged.

Sincerely,  
Karolin Troubetzkoy  
President

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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### Important CHTA Dates and Links for Additional Information

- April 26 - 28, 2017 - [Caribbean Hotel & Resort Investment Summit \(CHRIS\)](#), Miami, FL
- June 1-2, 2017 - CHTA Committee/Board/Annual General Meeting
- June 2-4, 2017 - [CHIEF](#), Miami, FL
- June 2 - 6, 2017 - [Taste of the Caribbean](#), Miami, FL

## CHTA EVENTS

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### Caribbean Travel Marketplace 2017

Based upon attendee feedback, Marketplace was a great success and continues to facilitate connectivity between suppliers and buyers. Our final registration figures are: 228 supplier companies/633 supplier delegates representing 31 companies, 113 buyer companies/292 buyer delegates representing 20 countries and 59 marketing/media representatives.

Marketplace featured a record number of new buyers with 27 new companies in attendance representing the following markets: Bulgaria, Canada, Curacao, Germany, Italy, Poland, Qatar Romania, Spain, St. Lucia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States. In our efforts to expand the buyer participation, CHTA and the Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board hosted 5 MICE buyers. We are in the process of collecting feedback from both MICE buyers and also suppliers, however the preliminary feedback from buyers was that they got some connections, however we need to acquaint our members more on this market so they are better prepared.

Looking ahead to 2018, we are in discussions with several destinations which have expressed an interest in hosting and plan to finalize the venue within the next month. We will build upon our success in 2017 attracting new buyers, incorporating a MICE component, adding luxury exhibit space, offering complementary best practice workshops, and weaving in niche market support services like the successful spa and wellness lounge. Other ideas for enhancing Marketplace will continue to be explored and we welcome member recommendations.

### Caribbean Hotel Resort and Investment Summit (CHRIS)

CHRIS is shaping up to be one of the most exciting tourism investment conferences in recent years. The summit is set for April 26-28 in Miami at the Marriott Marquis. A stellar lineup of presenters are in place. This year CHRIS has added a 'Deal Hall' component which will allow for Caribbean hoteliers looking to expand, renovate, retro, sell or brand their property to meet with prospective interested parties. Several awards will be presented, including a Lifetime Achievement Award which will be given

to Butch Stewart, Chairman and Founder of Sandals Resorts International. CHRIS brings together investors, owners, lenders, developers, hoteliers, chain/management company executives, government tourism and investment officials and others to review the investment climate and consider, broker and advance deals. For additional information [CLICK HERE](#).

### **CHIEF 2017 Moves to June and Miami**

Development and planning for CHIEF 2017, scheduled for June 2 – 4 in Miami, is underway with registration opening by March 10th and launch of the session content the following week. We are expecting increased participation at the event due to the relocation to Miami as it provides better accessibility but also because of time of the year. The program will continue to feature general sessions, round tables, a trade show component and tracks addressing topics on the areas of operations, sales & marketing, sustainability and technology. Since CHIEF is coinciding with Taste of the Caribbean, we have developed the event schedule in such a way to allow both events to complement and enhance each other with some activities scheduled concurrently.

### **Taste of the Caribbean....More Than a Competition**

Taste of the Caribbean, our signature culinary event, will feature educational sessions geared towards the food and beverage professionals with Johnson & Wales once again partnering with us on providing experts to address the topics impacting the food and beverage professional. In addition to the educational component, Taste participants get to connect with chefs, bartenders, mixologists and pastry chefs from all over the region, facilitating the sharing of best practices but also learning about Caribbean cuisine overall. Once again, the top Caribbean culinary teams from 13 countries will demonstrate their skills and local cuisine during the various competitions at Taste of the Caribbean.

The consumer activation, previously known as Taste of the Islands, will be launched under its new name by mid-March. This event will provide a great opportunity for marketing Caribbean cuisine but also our region. You should plan to join us at Miami in June for CHIEF and Taste of the Caribbean.

## ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ACTIVITY

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### **Regional Approach to Marketing and Tourism Development Passes First Hurdle CARICOM Heads Give Green Light**

Eighteen months in the making, CHTA and CTO received the go ahead at February's CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in Guyana to proceed with advancing recommended action steps presented around creating a sustained region-wide tourism marketing and development initiative.

Considering the fact that tourism has never been given prominence by many regional Governments, this is a significant step which may very well signal a new era of interest by the region's Governmental leadership to place greater focus on utilizing tourism as a major tool for growing their economies, reducing unemployment, reducing debt, stimulating entrepreneurial activity, and creating more linkages between tourism and areas like the creative industries and agriculture. The fact that the region's public and private sectors are moving forward together led by CHTA and its public sector counterpart organization the Caribbean Tourism Organization, bodes well.

Following a presentation, prepared by CHTA and CTO, the Heads of Government supported the advancement of a series of steps addressing transportation and the facilitation of travel, human resource development, building the creative industries, and the marketing of the Caribbean brand. They also invited CTO and CHTA to come forth with additional information to address the region's competitiveness and financing for the sustainability of the tourism initiative.

The Heads supported our recommendation to establish an interim tourism working group to coordinate with regional public and private sector stakeholder groups the development of specific solutions which can be advanced in priority areas. The group will comprise representation from the CARICOM Secretariat, the CTO and the CHTA and driven by CTO and CHTA. Its mandate includes the preparation of a pilot region-wide public relations and marketing initiative for 2017/2018 for presentation to the Heads at their next meeting in July.

Over the coming months CHTA and CTO will broaden the involvement of industry and government representatives in the development of specific action steps agreed to by the Heads. The outreach will go beyond CARICOM destinations, in fulfilling the intention that every effort be made to develop a region-wide public-private sector initiative.

The support of the leaders is a progressive and positive move and a welcomed commitment towards furthering the industry's and destination's development. CHTA and CTO thanked the leaders for placing tourism on their agenda. Tourism will now be a standing item at future CARICOM meetings. We are particularly appreciative to Prime Minister Perry Christie of the Bahamas, who has

responsibility for tourism in the CARICOM quasi-Cabinet, Minister of Tourism Obie Wilchcombe and Minister of Foreign Affairs Fred Mitchell for advancing the proposed initiative at the meeting. To review the information presented at the CARICOM meeting [CLICK HERE](#).

### **Efforts to Address Sharing Economy Issues Continue**

As reported to us at meetings in January and during a subsequent conference call with NHTA Executives, hoteliers and destinations are continuing to grapple with how best to address the growing impact which vacation rentals through sites like Airbnb and HomeAway are having on hotels and destination revenue.

While the region's stopover arrivals for 2016 as recently released by the Caribbean Tourism Organization shows 4.2% growth over 2015, alternatively, STR data shows hotel occupancies in the region in 2016 declined by 4.5% and average daily rates by 1.3%.

Much of the difference is displacement, as we are seeing shifting by a small segment of the travelling public from hotel stays to vacation rentals.

There is growing concern about the creeping impact this can have on the profitability of hotels, the appeal of the region to hotel investors, employment levels, and tax revenues. As pointed out to us in January, the most vulnerable hotels to this scenario are small to mid-sized hotels, many which are independently owned and operated by Caribbean nationals.

Some Caribbean NHTAs and Governments have moved towards putting in place measures to tax and regulate these alternative accommodations. CHTA's white paper on the sharing economy released last year offered detailed guidelines locally for addressing the issues to regularize these accommodations and examples of jurisdictions which have done so. And we have put some NHTAs in touch with Airbnb, the sharing economy platform which has been most amenable towards addressing local issues,

CHTA will be amending its white paper, as we seek to add information and case studies about those jurisdictions in the region which are moving towards taxing, regulating and engaging the sharing economy. We will also be providing NHTAs with information to support their arguments locally showing the growing impact on hotel's contribution to employment and tax revenue. We will also be working together with CTO to develop recommended areas for regulatory and legislative changes.

Building upon the training sessions we've done with Airbnb at CHIEF and Marketplace for member hotels to assist them in looking at how to create opportunity out of the new environment, CHTA also plans to conduct webinar training for NHTAs and member hotels this year. Added focus will also be placed on looking at how we can best engage the owners and operators of vacation rental accommodations as bonafide members of the hospitality industry in marketing and product improvement activities so destinations are more competitive and the pie grows.



## **Passage of US-Caribbean Engagement Act and Assessing the New US Administration's Potential Impact on Tourism in the Region**

In a flurry of legislative activity last December during the closing days of Congress, CHTA joined its partner, the Washington-based Caribbean Central American Action (CCAA) group in their efforts to successfully lobby for the passage of the US-Caribbean Engagement Act. This sets the stage for a review of US policies and support regarding the Caribbean and calls for private sector nonprofit organizations like CHTA to be part of the review. Later in March CHTA will participate in planning sessions and briefings in Washington organized by CCAA with representatives from the US and Caribbean public and private sectors around advancing the mandate in the legislation and also beginning to get a better reading in the early stages of the new US Administration and Congress about issues which may impact the region or which we should be looking to advance.

## **PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT**

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### **CHTA Playing More Active Role with Education Foundation**

Last fall CHTA led efforts with CSHAE and CHTAEF through a joint task force to review the activities of the foundation and recommend areas where engagement and support can be improved. Concurrently, CHTA also stepped up its efforts to support the Foundation. Among the outcomes from this have been:

- **A significant increase in NHTA and hotelier support for the NY Times Travel Show auction**, resulting in one of the highest numbers of donated room nights by member hotels for the travel auction. To view a listing of this year's donors [CLICK HERE](#).
- **Recognitions at Marketplace Opening Ceremony of Interval International and Virgin Holidays** for their corporate support of the Foundation; **and Ernest Dwight**, long-standing Foundation Trustee and supporter and CHTA Allied member who has been the passion, energy and brawn behind the highly successful NY Times Travel Show Auction.
- **Adoption of Recommendation by CHTAEF Board of Trustees that the CHTA President and CEO/Director General serve as Ex-Officio members of the Board** aimed at creating greater connectivity between CHTA and CHTAEF.
- **Agreement by CHTAEF Board to Contract to CHTA for Administrative Support Services** to manage designated activities of the Foundation including the NY Times Travel Show and the scholarship application and award process.
- **Development of a Pilot Project to Provide Scholarships for Employee Professional Development** courses, credentialing and certification.

## **Training Programs Roll Out - More Being Planned**

CHTA and Springboard Caribbean rolled out F&B and HACCP certification training for members at a discount late last year. Additional course offerings, online and onsite, will be introduced this year. Through the People Development Initiative, we will be surveying members this month to identify priority topic areas for training and from that we will develop additional programs with Springboard and other partners. At CHIEF, in addition to the various sessions which will be offered, we are finalizing plans for at least three professional development workshops. These will be announced by mid-March.

## **CHTA Teams Up with CTO to Provide Globally-Recognized Hospitality Assured Program for Small Hotels/Businesses**

CHTA has teamed up with the Caribbean Tourism Organization to launch a second phase of the Hospitality Assured program, with the support of a grant provided through the Caribbean Development Bank. Hospitality Assured was created by the Institute of Hospitality (U.K.) specifically for the tourism and hospitality sector to improve service quality and operational efficiency. The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) owns the license to operate the program in the region.

In Phase I of the program, Hospitality Assured reached 17 Caribbean destinations, with 70 companies having enrolled in the program and 33 companies having attained certification. The process of achieving certification engages management and employees who undergo a rigorous and engaging assessment of the business, guided by a trained facilitator. The overall objective of the program is to promote a culture of quality, service excellence and continuous improvement, driven by international standards in order to strengthen business performance and overall competitiveness. Becoming Hospitality Assured tells tour operators and customers that high service excellence standards have been met.

Hoteliers who have participated in the program have attested to its value in building their resilience and strengthening their internal systems, processes and procedures. [These testimonies can be found HERE](#). Hospitality Assured is a recognized service quality certification owned by the Institute of Hospitality based in the U.K., where it has received wide acclaim from the 4,000+ certified businesses. Phase II will be rolled out over the next several months.

## MARKETING

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### **Framework for Regional Marketing Initiative Developed: Details to Be Worked Out with Industry and Government Partners**

Last year we started a process to invite and engage member thinking about the value of a regional marketing effort, what it might look like, and how it might be sustained – with funds and management. We had candid discussions about why similar attempts have not gained traction in the past. We have had input from a cross-section of members representing small and independent hotels, chains and brands, national hotel and tourism associations, DMOs, airlines, tour operators and allied members. We've worked with the Caribbean Tourism Organization, our partner in this effort, to secure input from Ministers, Commissioners and Directors of Tourism. Almost unanimously, there has been support for a sustained and resourced regional public-private sector initiative.

Armed with feedback and ideas, we shaped a proposed way forward, with the intention of presenting it to public and private sector leaders to secure formal support. At the CARICOM Heads of Governments meeting last month, CTO and CHTA received the green light to develop and present concrete recommendations to them around five proposed action steps to present at their July Heads of Governments meeting. We are now embarking upon a more deliberate and defined outreach to industry leaders as well to formalize their support and finalize our recommendations. We will also be reaching out beyond the CARICOM member nations to other regional heads of government for their feedback as well. In addition to regional marketing, other areas where specific actions are being addressed focus on: transportation, human capital development, the creative industries, and improving our data and intelligence gathering on tourism's economic impact .

A cornerstone of the regional marketing strategy is the establishment of a multi-million dollar annual fund, through a combination of sources. This strategy, fueled by the fund, would focus on:

- A Massive social media and traditional media campaign
- A regional public relations campaign
- The use of CaribbeanTravel.com to drive bookings and referrals
- Intensifying consumer and trade show participation including Caribbean roadshows
- An online system to enable entrepreneurs - especially those in the creative industries - to sell their creations beyond their shores; and
- Assembling an inclusive group to implement the strategy

To deliver the regional vision of creating a Caribbean that is the most desirable, year-round warm-weather destination – and one which will produce strong, sustainable financial success, it needs to be adequately funded and professionally managed. Lessons can be learned from our global competitors – chief among them being the United States Brand USA - who have designed and implemented

public/private partnerships which are properly funded and are able to generate significant returns on investment.

Guiding our process over the coming months we are reaching out to our industry stakeholders, CTO and public sector stakeholders, around the following:

- Developing a proposed public-private sector mechanism to manage and sustain a regional tourism marketing and development effort
- Identifying financial resources to sustain the effort, provided jointly by the public and private sectors
- Recommending a short-term marketing initiative to stimulate arrivals and occupancies (for next two years)

CHTA and CTO will consult with the CARICOM Secretariat throughout the process and will report on progress and advance specific recommendations at the July 2017 meeting of the Heads of Government.

### **Travel Insurance Program for Hotels to Offer with Bookings**

CHTA has entered a partnership with Trip Assure, a TripMate company, so that our member hotels can offer trip insurance in their own website booking paths. As hoteliers look to diversify their booking channels and drive more direct bookings, TripAssure offers a way for hotels to become more competitive with their direct offerings. The packages offered through our partnership, with a combination of coverages and limits is a much more comprehensive set of benefits than would otherwise be available. Please contact Kelly Sahrer [ksahrer@tripmate.com](mailto:ksahrer@tripmate.com) 800.888.0432 ext. 345.

### **CHRIS, CHIEF and a Fresh Taste Event Present Sponsorship Opportunities**

We are actively seeking sponsors for CHIEF and Taste of the Caribbean (for the competition and the consumer night). Any interest, insight, suggestions or leads you can provide would be greatly appreciated. We are powered by so many partners, including a growing list of sponsors who enable us to make great events even better. For CHIEF, we are looking for companies that sell goods and services to our hoteliers – the “pots and pans guys” -- an array of textiles, vector control, locks and security systems and technology companies who offer integrations and innovations in sales and marketing, operations and sustainability. For Taste, we seek companies dedicated to anything related to food, and drink and the distribution on both sides. For the consumer event Saturday night (formerly Taste of the Islands), we are asking for support from Government tourist boards and hotel companies alike who are interested in supporting a true Caribbean cultural celebration and selling travel to the more than 1,000 affluent Miami consumers in attendance.

We have also partnered with the Caribbean Hotel and Resort Investment Summit (CHRIS), helping to shape one of the conference's most exciting programs, including a 'Deal Hall' component as reported earlier. CHTA is offering sponsorships opportunities for companies directly tied to the resort investments. For more information, please contact Matt Cooper [matt@caribbeanhotelandtourism.com](mailto:matt@caribbeanhotelandtourism.com). 786.476.8620.

### **CaribbeanTravel.com: Features Added, Invite for Content, Updates Underway**

We are in active recruitment of blog writers and journalists willing to contribute to our recently established Travel Log on Caribbeantravel.com. Within the last two months we have featured new posts on Caribbean food, rum, mangos, an analysis of Carnival celebrations in several destinations, and other perspectives, each one uniquely celebrating the Caribbean. For more information on submitting a post or recommending a writer, please contact Karolin or Matt.

We have also engaged with PR executives who have clients in the region and they have already begun to populate our newly created "News" tab on the navigation bar at the top of the home page. This allows our partners in the public and private sector to post the latest news about their destinations and hotels. Please submit entries to [news@caribbeantravel.com](mailto:news@caribbeantravel.com).

### **Call for Content**

As we created opportunities for regional marketing and calls to action that lead to Caribbeantravel.com, the call for content to our hotel and destination partners and value of the site takes on added value. Member with listings should ensure they are providing current and relevant content on the site to provide consumers with information and inspiration that can lead to a booking. Please have a look at your listing to make sure all information is accurate and up to date, including any specials that you wish to offer. Please encourage your fellow hoteliers and tourist boards to do the same. [CLICK HERE](#) to update your information. Contact [dana@tambourine.com](mailto:dana@tambourine.com) should you need assistance.

## MEMBERSHIP

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### Welcome – New Members

We wish to welcome those new members to date who have joined the organization this year:

A La Turca Textiles  
Association of Bahamas Marinas  
Azingo Hospitality LTD  
Beach Enclave  
Carnival Corporation & PLC  
Deja Resorts  
Elite Airways  
First View Digital Content Inc.  
Gharieni USA  
Hospitality Advisors Group  
Hostal Casa Culebra  
Ilike Organic Skin Care  
International Finance Bank  
Iredale Mineral Cosmetics, LTD  
Keyonna Beach Resort

Platinum Services Limited  
PlayStudios  
Lexicon Travel Technologies  
Luxury Weddings Worldwide  
Mangos Jamaica  
Miles Partnership  
Revmac T/A Avvio  
Silversands  
Skin Kare Industries Rx Clinical  
Soleil Toujours LLC  
Travel Market Report  
TravelWeek Group  
VB Cosmetics Inc.  
Worth International Communications Corp.

### Call for Awards Nominations

The CHIEF Awards showcase the Caribbean's best practices in four main areas of business: Environmental Sustainability, Operations, Sales & Marketing and Social Responsibility. This year, nominations deadline is Thursday, March 30, 2017 and finalists will be announced on Friday, May 5, 2017. The top three finalists in each category will be invited to present their best practice at CHIEF where the winners will be announced. [CLICK HERE](#) to submit your nomination.

At CHIEF, we also recognize employees who have exceeded expectations in their roles of Supervisor of the Year and Employee of the Year. Candidates for these awards are nominated from the National Hotel and Tourism Associations and exemplify leadership skills in their respective roles that allow their departments and hotels to shine. Applications will be sent out in early March with a deadline scheduled for early April.

### New Database-Members Only Online Portal

We are in a testing stage before the launch of the Members Only portal and are adjusting parameters to make sure the process of payment and member records are as seamless as possible for all our members once the platform launches. We will be communicating a launch date sometime in March and emails will be sent out to all members to make sure they are able to log in and view/edit their company profiles.

Once the new Members Only page launches, members will be able to update their company information and teams, review payment/membership status, go online and browse member exclusive offers and search through online directories with company specific information. In efforts to increase engagement for allied members, we will be launching Check CHTA First, a campaign that promotes the positive relationships that have been built through the networking activations of CHTA and which begin with the initial connections made online and at our signature events. Check CHTA First will encourage all members to use the CHTA Member directory to source new products and services that are available in the region.

## **Member Benefits – Updates**

Member benefits continue to grow and diversify and are communicated to the membership through email, on our monthly newsletter and on our website. Some of the most recent updates to benefits are found throughout this update document and are summarized below:

- A 'how to' webinar on application processes is being offered to association executives and other interested parties on March 16th. This webinar is meant to assist the nominators in presenting viable candidates and submitting stand-out applications for CHTA Education Foundation and for CHIEF Awards.
- The CCAA Disaster Management Workshop which will run throughout the year and are targeting five destinations. This is the second round of workshops that have been scheduled in the region.
- TripMate Travel Insurance Program is rolling out and more information will be provided online as well as through a webinar that will provide a basics overview of the program and how it benefits hotels and guests who purchase this innovative add-on.
- Member Exclusive offers are updated regularly on the Members Only portal and now include offers from: Mastercard and STR (discounts on reports), Cendyn, Springboard Caribbean, among others. We encourage you to check the page often for updates.

## **More Effectively Engaging Chains/Brands**

A concentrated effort has begun in our goal to drive more engagement from the chains and corporate brands in the region. The approach is two-fold—1) Meetings scheduled with regional/corporate offices in Miami throughout March and April; 2) Constitution of task force to address issues of broader benefits of value to chains and membership dues structure that would motivate multiple property additions in the membership. Goal is to present a proposal to the Executive Committee in June to then implement and roll out for 2018 membership.

## **CaribbeanTravel.Com Listings**

With an updated database and membership listing, we are moving our efforts to ensure that hotel members listed on CaribbeanTravel.com are duly represented. Lists are being sent to each national hotel and tourism association to confirm national membership of the hotels listed within the site. We ask all national associations to offer feedback and regularly review the hotel listings to ensure they remain current. Reminders to join and update hotel listings on CaribbeanTravel.com are communicated on the monthly newsletter and on the CHTA website.

## **Outreach to National Hotel and Tourism Associations**

Destination outreach continues to be a priority for the CHTA team and this year we have a full travel schedule where we hope to connect and engage with as many of our members as possible. This year Frank and Karolin have already visited with the association in Guyana in conjunction with the CARICOM meetings held in February. The fruitful meeting introduced our team to the new President of the Association, Mrs. Andrea de Caires, and opened a dialogue for better understanding CHTA and our various programs and services, learning more about local issues and how we might assist, and increasing membership as local members become better aware of our work. Below is a travel schedule with tentative dates for visits to other associations in the hopes of recruitment and building stronger bonds. A complete listing of associations already scheduled for visits as well as those with other CHTA partners is found later in this communication.

## COMMUNICATIONS

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### CHTA Website Updates

[CHTA's main site](#) has been reviewed and updated to provide a cleaner and easier to navigate user experience. The following changes were carried out:

- Simplified the navigation by eliminating superfluous sub-menus throughout the entire site
- Updated the committees, board and team information
- Updated Members Exclusive Offers
- Created a tab menu for easier navigation in the Data Center and the Press page
- Updated sliding headers with new offers
- Linked CHTA events to their respective event sites
- Checked for broken links

### Public Relations

In September of 2016, Marketplace Excellence was contracted as CHTA's agency of record. During this time they have effectively helped strengthened the positioning of CHTA as a leading authority on tourism in the region. Below are the highlights of our public relations efforts from January – February 2017:

- PR Value: \$1,138,032
- Media Placements: 132 stories
- Media Impressions: 110 million
- Ad Value: \$443,912

### Social Media

User following on all CHTA social networks has increased steadily, with minimal monetary investment, confirming that the content provided on social is hitting the mark. Social media engagement during CHTA events greatly boosts reach on all platforms, particularly on Twitter. The use of a twitter board and other social initiatives has proven effective. Social media initiatives such as Photo Challenges on Facebook, Twitter and our newest platform Instagram, have been very effective to boost engagement.



During 2017 Caribbean Travel Marketplace, #CHTAMarketplace17 achieved a record breaking reach on Twitter with **72 million total reach and 8.3 million unique reach**. In addition, Marketplace became a trending topic on Twitter in the Bahamas from January 31 – February 2, 2017 and CHTA’s Facebook page reach grew to over 68,000 impressions throughout the duration of Marketplace. The CHTA social media strategy involved inviting social media influencers with great social reach to attend the event, strategically tagging select regional and international media throughout the event, incorporating video in all social media platforms, and actively engaging Marketplace delegates online while on the trade show floor.

### **The Caribbean Social Star Program**

The objective of the Caribbean Social Star Program is to provide local social media training and support to our National Hotel and Tourism Associations. This training can then be given by the associations to their local members as an added member benefit.

Each NHTA will be required to identify a local member that can go through CHTA’s social media “train the trainer” program. The chosen trainer (social media star) after completing the program, will then provide digital marketing support to the NHTA and social media trainings to the NHTA’s membership. The program is expected to launch before CHIEF / Taste.

### **CHTA Newsletter - Call for Content**

Our upcoming newsletters for the second quarter of 2017 will cover the topics of Environmental Sustainability (April), Food and Beverage (May) and Human Resource Development (June). CHTA members and strategic partners alike are invited to contribute an article to our newsletter, that meet with the following criteria:

- Articles must be educational in nature, not promotional. No company information or boiler plates should be added to your article.
- Articles must provide insight into a topic related to the topic of the month, to the Caribbean or a country within the Caribbean, and the tourism & hospitality industry.
- Maximum 400 words ready for distribution (reviewed and edited). Please provide a title for the article.
- Article to be provided in an editable Word document format.
- CHTA will provide an appropriate image to go along with your article if needed.

[Click here to download our editorial calendar for 2017](#)

### **Updating Online Resources**

The CAST Board is working towards updating a number of toolkits and resources available to members through the CHTA website. This year they will be looking at updating information on: water use, waste management, energy efficiency and health and safety.

### **2017 CAST Webinar Series**

In keeping with CHTA's Wednesday Webinars, CAST will offer four webinars in 2017 covering the following topics:

- April – Climate Challenge Initiative
- June – Health Program
- August – Earth Smart
- October – Energy Update with CARPHA and CHENACT

### **Working with Caribbean BioDiversity Fund**

Discussions have commenced with the CBF on ways in which we can work together and how the industry can benefit from the resources available and being developed through the fund. An initial project is to create and disseminate joint Marine Conservation and Biodiversity Fact Sheets which industry can use. The aim is to formalize a working relationship between CHTA/CAST and the CBF at our June meetings.

### **GreenBean Program**

CAST is looking to develop a sustainable tourism awareness program for children building upon and expanding on existing programs providing resource information and fun activities. Areas of focus would be water conservation, coral replanting, waste management and marine conservation.

### **Climate Change White Paper**

In response to concerns expressed about possible shifting of global agreements around those reached in Paris last year and the need to continue to raise awareness about the region's particular vulnerability to climate change affecting our lives, livelihoods and businesses, CAST, working with CHTA's staff, the Advocacy Committee and CTO, will work on developing a white paper on the issue. This would collate existing research and information on the topic and its impact on tourism, cull together information on recommendations for good business and government practices and policies, and composite existing research and resources which can further support business, NHTA and

government efforts. It is intended to also serve as a support document for advancing regionally and elsewhere CHTA's position on climate change.

### **Crime & Safety Crisis Management and Best Practices**

During CSHAE and other meetings in Nassau, concerns were expressed about the need to remain diligent on matters of visitor safety and security and to better enable businesses, associations, and Government to effectively manage any potential crisis situation or incident, and be better prepared to handle the public relations. CAST, working with CHTA and the NHTAs will gather information on best practices in this area which will be shared with members and the NHTAs.

### **CHENACT and CARCEP Energy Efficiency Projects**

The last phase of the US Agency for International Development supported CHENACT project is winding down. CHTA has been the lead organization for this with administrative support provided by CTO. Workshops have been held this year in Jamaica and The Bahamas with participating hotels to review findings and achievements, and showcase the best practices of hotels which participated in the project. Awards have been made for demonstration projects, with funding support being applied. These will serve as best practice champions going forward, to show other hoteliers, financing institutions and Governments the ROI which is being realized through greater efficiencies and investments. As the project winds down, efforts are well underway to undertake a third phase, with the Inter-American Development Bank leading the way to continue to build upon CHENACT, add additional countries to the next round of beneficiaries, and develop options to better assist hoteliers with financing renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

As this phase of CHENACT winds down, the US Agency for International Development supported CARCEP (Caribbean Clean Energy Project) is revving up. Operated by the consulting firm Deloitte, they have created a benchmarking tool for hotels to track energy and water usage and benchmark their usage against other similar property categories. The tool has been pilot tested with several member hotels and will be rolled out fully shortly and located on the CHTA website. CARCEP has conducted a training workshop in Jamaica. Workshops will be rolled out to hoteliers in the coming months in St. Lucia, Antigua, Dominica, St. Vincent, Barbados and Grenada.

Building upon the audit program from CHENACT, the project will provide for additional audits for hotels and in countries where CHENACT was not able to reach. The project also intends to identify financing opportunities for participating hotels.

### **Disaster Management Workshop Series Rolling Out**

The Caribbean-Central American Action (CCAA) group and Tropical Shipping, working with CHTA and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), is once again bringing its workshop

series to five new destinations. This year's workshops will focus on "Building Community Resiliency through Strategic Private Public Partnerships". The series will launch on March 29th in San Juan, Puerto Rico and will continue throughout the spring in Guyana, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, and the Cayman Islands. For additional information contact Sally Yearwood at [syearwood@c-  
caa.org](mailto:syearwood@c-<br/>caa.org) or 202 464-2029.

### **CARPHA Provide Assurances That Worst of Zika is Behind Us**

CHTA and CTO have continued to work with the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to better understand what the region may expect from the Zika virus in 2017. As reported at CHTA's meetings in Nassau earlier this year by Dr. Lisa Indar, CARPHA's Program Manager for Tourism and Health, CARPHA indicates that the Zika epidemic in the Caribbean is on the decline and will continue to decline significantly in 2017. Throughout 2016 and on ongoing basis, Caribbean countries and the tourism sector in particular have been intensifying vector control measures and increasing public health surveillance to mitigate the impact of Zika.

CHTA, CTO and CARPHA urge countries and hotels to continue implementing the proactive prevention and control measures supported by CARPHA and other stakeholders; to reduce mosquito infections; including environmental clean up and the use of personal protection. CHTA's online Zika Resource Center provides a one-stop for member hotels, offering guidelines, tools and webinar presentations which members can use to guide and reinforce their control efforts.

## CHTA OUTREACH

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As part of our deliberate outreach to members, associations and stakeholders, we have scheduled a number of visits, meetings and presentations this year and more are being developed. Within the confines of time and money, we are making every effort to personally ‘touch, hear, and discuss’ with as many members and stakeholders as possible to ensure our relevance, support and connectivity.

Planned thus far this year are meetings with:

<b>ACTIVITY/EVENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>CHTA REPRESENTATIVE</b>
CARICOM/Guyana NHTA	February 16-17	Guyana	Karolin/Frank
Forbes Global Star Awards/Conf.	March 2	New York City	Matt
ITB and EU Meetings	March 12-15	Berlin/Brussels	Karolin
USVI Hotel & Tourism Assn	March 17	St. Thomas	Karolin
CCAA/Multi-Lateral/Govt Meetings	March 20-23	Washington	Frank
ARDA World Conf/Panelist/Briefing	March 27-29	New Orleans	Frank
CTO/UNWTO Sustainability Conf.	March 27-30	St. Lucia	Karolin
Asonahores Consultation Trip	1 Day early April	Dominican Republic	Frank
PRHTA Membership Meeting	April 17	Puerto Rico	Frank
CHRIS (Investment Summit speak)	April 26-28	Miami	Karolin/Frank
DATE/Asonahores Meeting	May 3-5	Dominican Republic	Frank/Matt/Martha
OECS Council of Ministers/BVI NHTA	May 15-17	Tortola, BVI	Frank/Karolin
CHTA AGM/CHIEF/Taste	June 1-6	Miami	All
CTO Meetings/Caribbean Week	June 6-9	New York City	Karolin, Frank, Matt
SMAART/St. Maarten HTA	June 14-16	St. Maarten	Karolin, Matt, Martha
CCAA Seminar/CI Tourism Assn	June 21	Cayman Islands	Frank/Martha
CARICOM Heads of Government	July?	Grenada	Karolin/Frank
STR Data Conference	August?	Nashville	Matt
Japex/JHTA?	September 24-27	Jamaica	Matt/Martha
CTO SOTIC/Grenada HTA	October 10-13	Grenada	Karolin/Frank/Matt
Cancun Travel Mart	October 16-18	Cancun	Martha/Matt
World Travel Market	November 6-8	London	Karolin/Frank?
UNWTO Global Tourism Conference	November 27-29	Jamaica	Karolin/Frank

Other destinations planned to visit pending scheduling are: Haiti, St. Kitts, Belize, Suriname, Aruba, Bonaire, Martinique and Puerto Rico .

## RECOGNITIONS

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- Ewald Biemans, owner and CEO of the CHTA Member Hotel Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort was recognized with a Gold Adrian Award as the Leader in Sustainable Tourism, presented by the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) and National Geographic Traveler.
- Ernest Dwight, President of Southwood Corp and CHTAEF Auction Committee Chair was recognized as the 2016 Caribbean Allied Member of the Year.
- Stacy Cox, President of the Turks and Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association was named President of The Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives (CSHAE).
- CHTA, Bahamas Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), the Nassau Paradise Island Promotion Board and Sandals Resorts International offered a Special Tribute to tourism development icon and mentor, George Myers at Sandals Royal Bahamian Spa & Resort on Wednesday, February 1st, 2017. [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more.
- Chairman of Sandals Resorts International Gordon 'Butch' Stewart will receive the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award at the [Caribbean Hotel & Resort Investment Summit \(CHRIS\)](#) 2017.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Questions? Comments? Feel free to contact us.

### CHTA TEAM

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- Vanessa Ledesma, COO, 786.476.8618
- Matt Cooper, CMO, 786.476.8620
- Adriana Serna, Director, Communications, 786.476.8622
- Martha Valdivia, Director, Membership, 786.476.8619

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- President, Executive Committee Chair, Karolin Troubetzkoy,
- Finance, Chair, Jim Hepple
- Advocacy, Co-Chairs Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace and Stuart Bowe
- Marketing Chair, Karen Whitt,
- Membership Chair, Bill Clegg
- CAST Co-Chairs Denaye Hinds and Karolin Troubetzkoy
- People Development, Patricia Affonso-Das
- Caribbean Travel Marketplace, Chair, Warren Binder
- CHTAEF, Chair, Richard Kahn