



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION



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**CHTA CEO FRANK COMITO ADDRESSES U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

ST. THOMAS, U.S. Virgin Islands (March 20, 2015) – Frank Comito, the new Chief Executive Officer of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) delivered his first formal presentation at the U.S. Virgin Islands Hotel & Tourism Association Annual General Membership Meeting since assuming the position on March 9, 2015. It was a homecoming for Comito as he began his association management career in St. Thomas in 1980 with the St. Thomas/St. John Chamber of Commerce.

"I am glad to have been given the opportunity by Lisa Hamilton to speak at the U.S. Virgin Islands Hotel & Tourism Association membership meeting," said Comito, who was able to "hit the ground running by meeting the members of the USVIHTA while sharing with them the many benefits of CHTA and the role we play throughout the region and on the global tourism stage," Comito added.

"We have worked in unison with the CHTA to move the Caribbean tourism industry forward and are delighted by the new energy, enthusiasm and direction the Association is offering under CHTA President Emil Lee and the volunteer leadership," said Lisa Hamilton, president, U.S. Virgin Islands Hotel & Tourism Association.



During his presentation, Comito detailed the role of the CHTA which serves a membership of 32 National Hotel Associations and over 600 hotels and 300 allied members. He detailed issues that are important to the USVI as well as the region and highlighted the good news for the destination including a strong image among consumers and increased arrivals, RevPar and hotel occupancy.

Comito also mapped out CHTA's Areas of Focus including:

- **Representation** - through advocacy and government affairs, CHTA is a *knowledge broker* providing comparative information, best practices and position papers. CHTA is a *change agent* impacting US Passport Requirements, the UK Air Passenger Duty, airline costs and visa liberation. CHTA *collaborates* with national hotel associations as well as leading industry associations including the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Caribbean/Central American Action. Through a *bully pulpit*, CHTA utilizes appropriate public and private forums to advance industry views and value of tourism.
- **Growing Your Business** - CHTA provides members many opportunities to grow their business including *Caribbean Travel Marketplace* – a top regional deal-making and networking venue for buyers and suppliers which provides educational sessions from leading industry experts. *Caribbean Travel Website* offers free listings for members on www.caribbeantravel.com. Consumers can easily find what they are looking for in a Caribbean vacation and there are no transaction fees for conversions. The *CHICOS Annual Investment Conference* brings together prospective investors, developers, and financial institutions with existing and potential operators seeking to expand, rebrand, build or adopt a new business model. CHTA also uses *Listings, Special Promotional Offers and Referrals* to showcase properties, reach niche markets and present special value offers.
- **A Primary Knowledge Source** - CHTA provides *Benchmark Data* including regional and national hotel and arrivals performance data. CHTA knows the latest *Trends* and shares information with its members including cutting-edge research from national, regional and global tourism leaders. CHTA employs a

host of *Communications* strategies to reach its membership including webinars, seminars, forums, e-Newsletters, social media and events. Through *member and association surveys*, CHTA solicits, analyzes and shares primary information and best practices. Members have the opportunity to *Shape the CHTA Agenda* through surveys, committees, events and membership meetings.

- **Savings** - CHTA provides opportunities for savings to its members. Through engaging sessions and networking opportunities, the *Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF)* connects members with ideas, information and best practices aimed at helping members earn revenue and reduce costs. Member discounts provide exclusive travel rates and member-to-member discounts on products and services. CHTA connects members to information, policies and resources which will help to lower energy expenditures. Through CHTA's special room exchange arrangement with SkyAuction, CHTA offers a no cash payment option for CHTA dues and events.
- **Improving and Protecting Business** - CHTA offers a Hurricane Preparedness Manual and other resources which help members prepare, prevent and mitigate the impact of hurricanes and other natural disasters on their business. Through allied member Smith Orloff, CHTA members receive a complimentary review of their insurance policy and its protection levels in the event of a claim for hurricanes or other disasters. CHTA is focused on sustainability and connects members to resources, training and credentialing opportunities through the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), a CHTA initiative, the Foundation for Environmental Education, the Blue Flag program and the Green Globe program. CHTA provides online resources which allows members to draw upon a wealth of tools and information available via www.CaribbeanHotelandTourism.com.
- **Building A Quality Workforce** - CHTA's Education Foundation (CHTAEF) has been active since 1987 and has awarded nearly US\$2 million in scholarships and grants to Caribbean nationals who demonstrate a strong commitment to the hotel and tourism industry. CHTA focuses on culinary development with culinary competitions as well as over 2,000 chefs receiving training since the launch of

CHTA's Taste of the Caribbean annual event. Countless others have participated in national training and competitive programs to prepare for Taste of the Caribbean. CHTA offers training support through materials, templates, and comparative wage data which are available to National Hotel Associations and their members. The CHTA Small Hotels Manual is an operational primer to guide hotels. Hcareers Recruitment Service is available to members at a discount.

- **National Hotel & Tourism Associations** - With its Strategic Partner ARDA, CHTA supports the National Hotel Associations through Leadership Development. Offered two to three times annually, hotel association executives are provided with tools and share challenges and best practices. CHTA exchanges information with the National Hotel Associations including sharing data, policies, best practices and other useful comparative information. CHTA relies on the National Hotel Associations to provide feedback on important matter affecting the industry.

Comito also spoke about the opportunities for members to get involved in upcoming industry events including:

- **Taste of the Caribbean** - a celebration of the culinary arts of the Caribbean which is being held June 12 - 14 in Miami, FL. The event helps develop the professional skills of aspiring and established bartenders and chefs while showcasing the region's cuisine and mixology to the public in the "Taste of the Islands" event.
- **Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF)** - scheduled Oct. 2-4, 2015, CHIEF will offer two days of value-packed fun and engaging exchange sessions focused on helping businesses to generate revenue, reduce costs and become more relevant and efficient. The event will be held at El Conquistador Resort, A Waldorf Astoria Resort in Puerto Rico.
- **CHICOS** - the regional investment conference organized by HVS, CTO and CHTA that provides attendees with the opportunity to significantly expand their network while learning the most important trends that can impact their investment decisions. The event is scheduled Nov. 12-13, 2015 at the Ritz-Carlton, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- **Caribbean Travel Marketplace** - scheduled Jan. 21-23, 2016 at Atlantis, Paradise Island in The Bahamas, Caribbean Travel Marketplace is the region's largest and most

important marketing event, where tourism suppliers have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with wholesalers from around the world selling Caribbean vacation travel over the course of two days of business meetings.

Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association

The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) facilitates the full potential of the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry by serving members' needs and building partnerships in a socially responsible and sustainable manner. CHTA is the voice of the Caribbean hospitality industry for the development of the region in the highly competitive and sophisticated environment of international tourism. Today, tourism is widely recognized as a pivotal industry in the economy of the region – and CHTA functions as the common denominator for this industry in a region of diverse nationalities, languages and styles, identifying mutual problems and marshaling the resources of the active and allied members to devise solutions. CHTA represents all facets of the hospitality industry with more than 600 member hotels and over 300 allied members.

CHTA, including the events staged by the association, is supported by Strategic Partners MasterCard, Interval International, OBM International, HVS, Tambourine and TravelZoo.

For more information, visit <http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com>. Follow CHTA on Facebook [Facebook.com/CaribbeanHotelandTourismAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/CaribbeanHotelandTourismAssociation) and Twitter [Twitter.com/CHTAFeeds](https://twitter.com/CHTAFeeds).

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