



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

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**CARIBBEAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY EXCHANGE FORUM OPENS
NEW ERA FOR CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION**

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (Oct. 7, 2015) – The just completed successful Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF) taking place in Puerto Rico has emerged as a milestone setting the tone for a new era for the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA), according to the CHTA President Emil Lee.

"The success of CHIEF is a reflection of our new vision and a validation that we have moved in the right direction," said Emil Lee as more than 250 attendees participated in three days of networking and learning best practices at El Conquistador Resort, A Waldorf Astoria Resort in Puerto Rico. Many of the attendees were next generation employees. "Besides seeing increased participation from middle management, we are seeing a new generation of hoteliers becoming involved and enthusiastically engaged," Lee added.

"We intend to continue applying this new vision of CHTA as the central facilitator and curator in a hub and spoke model at Caribbean Marketplace in January in the Bahamas when tour operators from across the globe join with hoteliers and tourist office officials to establish new business ties, strengthen existing relationships and equip themselves with new tools and information to better market their businesses," Lee said.

"We are in the process of building a Caribbean Tourism Community that unites us all to work together, learn together and play together," Lee said, adding: "One of the main focuses of CHTA is to strengthen the national hotel and tourism association executives which are the glue that holds us all together."

William “Bill” Clegg, regional vice president, Franchise Services & Programs for Choice Hotels International, and CHIEF Chairman, said: “It’s been a long road, but we had a great three days with fact-filled general sessions to standing-room-only breakouts to peering deeply into the crystal ball to see what tomorrow, next week and next year holds. We leave here with our bellies full, minds full and the best intentions for implementing what we learned and discussed here.”

Gonzalo del Peon, president of AMResorts said: “It is very good to have the opportunity to discuss the region’s challenges with our colleagues. In many of our Caribbean nations the environment is dynamic and we must move quickly to minimize the challenges. We need to focus on concepts that are unique to the Caribbean to compete with the rest of the world.”

Clegg added: “This is a new CHTA, with new leadership, new focus and a determination to be and remain relevant for the tourism industry throughout the Caribbean. This event is just one component of our broad focus to represent and service the industry in advocacy, business development, hotel operations, marketing, information dissemination, networking, allied member engagement, and professional development.”

Lee closed with: "Feedback from the attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many pointing to takeaways which they project will help them to drive business, make more money, reduce costs and create efficiency. I call that a success."

CHIEF was organized with the support of patron sponsors Interval International and MasterCard; platinum sponsors Cable and Wireless, JetBlue Getaways, Travelzoo and TripAdvisor, gold sponsors Adara, Aireko, AskMe, Best Doctors, Bonnier Corp, Cape Air, CaribbeanJobs.com, Choice Hotels International, Expedia, JackRabbit Systems Inc., Lutron Electronics, MobiManage, OBMI, Oracle, Sojern, STR, The New York Times, travAlliancemedial and World Media, wine sponsor Wines by Esser Wines and Education Partner Florida International University.

Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association

The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) is a federation of 32 National Hotel Associations, with more than 600 member hotels and over 300 allied members. CHTA is the largest representative of the private sector in the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry. We are 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, Cable & Wireless, HVS, Interval International, OBM International, 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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