



GENERAL MANAGERS NEWSLETTER (March 2015)

"Patience often gets the credit that belongs to fatigue."...Franklin Jones, American journalist

North American Meetings Industry Day – April 16, 2015

Meetings Mean Business is a cross-industry coalition that is spearheading a national "*North American Meetings Industry Day – April 16, 2015*" Meetings and hospitality professionals across the country will use the initiative to publicize the substantial economic and business value of tradeshow, exhibitions, conventions, conferences, business meetings and the incentive travel business to federal, state and local economies.



The coalition has created an extensive toolkit for individual businesses and organizations at all levels to use in promoting "*North American Meetings Industry Day*." The toolkit contains talking points to use in communications, logos like the one above, press releases and templates to use locally, and other good tools. <http://meetingsmeanbusiness.com/namid> is where you go. CAHA certainly encourages all of our local, regional and state organizations to jump on board.

The Last Thing You Want to Hear: "*There's a fire & CFD in on the way!*"

The CAHA Security Committee also covers safety issues and met with Charlotte Fire Department (CFD) personnel at their last meeting to talk about what they need from us (hotels) when they're called to our property. Great discussion for those in attendance, but *very* important information for all of our hotel members, so here's a summary:

Charlotte Fire Department Expectations Upon Arriving to a Fire Alarm Activation:

- A representative from hotel staff must meet CFD at the pre-determined entry point. Some hotels have designated the Main Lobby or Front Door and others prefer the Team Member or Security entrance. Representative may be member of any hotel department, provided the individual possesses the required knowledge and information to assist in a timely manner.

- The hotel representative must have (5) sets of pre-made Fire Department Access Keys “in-hand” upon meeting CFD response team. Keys must be provided and/or programmed to access all areas of the hotel.
- Hotel representative will then escort one member (typically the Engineer) of the CFD response team to the hotel's Fire Alarm Control Room. The Fire Alarm Control Room in most hotels is designated as the room containing the hotel's Fire Monitoring System or Fire Panel.
- In the event that a hotel representative is not available to meet CFD upon their arrival, the hotel must provide a Knox Box on the exterior of the building near the designated CFD entry point. The Knox Box should only contain the necessary items to gain access to the building and the Fire Control Room in the absence of an actual "key-holder." In the event that a hotel representative is not available and the use of a Knox Box is necessary, the (5) sets of pre-made Fire Department Access Keys should be available in the Fire Alarm Control Room in a fairly conspicuous location. *Typically a standard Knox Box is not large enough to accommodate (5) sets of keys.
- In the event of a sprinkler activation, the hotel representative will be expected to escort the CFD response team to the sprinkler stand-pipe location, sprinkler riser, shut-off valves, and the Fire Pump Room. In the event that minimal staffing makes an escort difficult, the hotel representative is simply required to direct the CFD team to the above items and ensure the doors to these areas are conspicuously marked.
- In the event of a Fire Alarm Activation or Elevator Entrapment, the hotel representative will be required to direct the CFD response team to the Elevator Equipment/Control Room(s). In the event that minimal staffing makes an escort difficult, the hotel representative is simply required to direct the CFD team to the above items and ensure the doors to these areas are conspicuously marked.

Additional CFD Expectations Concerning Items of Interest and Accessibility:

- Simple but clear notations located adjacent to the Fire Panel or Fire Monitoring System in order to facilitate the efficient and timely location of the affected alarm points.
- If a property is equipped with a Knox Box, said box must contain any item(s) required to access the building's interior as well as the Fire Control Room. The Knox Box is not required to contain the Fire Department Access Keys as long as item(s) in the box can be used to access said keys.
- Simple but clear notations explaining key access and which keys access specific areas of interest.
- Up-to-date diagrams/floor plans of the hotel provided in a conspicuous location in the Fire Control Room
- KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE AVAILABLE. Hotel representatives and staff need to know the “what and where” of all pertinent items detailed within this list. ALL individuals should be TRAINED in hotel policies and protocol concerning their role in an Emergency Incident. Consider annual refresher training for high visibility associates, i.e. Front Desk and Guest Service Agents, members of management, and Night Auditors.

Corporate Business Travel Managers Get New Tool to Get Post-Booking Savings

The online software company Yapta, which built its business on securing post-booking airfare savings for corporations, has now unveiled its companion tool for hotel rates. Like “FareIQ” does with airfares, “RoomIQ” tracks corporate hotel reservations and alerts users when the rate drops. Yapta is beginning to make “RoomIQ” broadly available, following a six-month pilot with five clients. “RoomIQ” will compete with “TripBam” which is already operational with a number of corporate clients.

CAHA Golf Tournament Almost Here!!! Are You Signed Up?

Have you gotten your foursome together yet for the annual CAHA Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament at Pine Island Country Club on April 15? Well, it’s getting close and you better get moving! The registration form is up on our website at:

- <http://www.charlotteareahotels.org/>
- Then go to "CPCC Scholarship" at <http://www.charlotteareahotels.org/cpcscholarship.html>

You can complete the form right there as an individual golfer or your whole foursome. You can also buy mulligan packages and sign up for sponsorship opportunities. (A number of vendors already have.) You can then email the form to us, or fax or mail it. You can also pay by credit card on the website. Just look for the "Pay Here" link.

Also, help us get others signed up and/or sponsoring the tournament. Remember, you don't have to be a member of CAHA to participate, so pass this information to friends, business associates and others.

FMLA Rule Change for Same-Sex Marriage, Regardless of State Recognition or Not

Workers in legal, same-sex marriages, regardless of where they live, will now have the same rights as those in opposite-sex marriages to federal job-protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act to care for a spouse with a serious health condition. The U.S. Labor Department announced a rule change to the FMLA on February 24, 2015 in keeping with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *United States v. Windsor*, that struck down the federal Defense of Marriage Act provision that interpreted "marriage" and "spouse" to be limited to opposite-sex marriage for the purposes of federal law.

Enacted in 1993, the FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. Employees are, for example, entitled to take FMLA leave to care for a spouse who has a serious health condition.

The rule change updates the FMLA regulatory definition of "spouse" so that an eligible employee in a legal same-sex marriage will be able to take FMLA leave for his or her spouse regardless of the state in which the employee resides. Previously, the regulatory definition of "spouse" did not include same-sex spouses if an employee resided in a state that did not recognize the employee's same-sex marriage. Under the new rule, eligibility for federal FMLA protections is based on the law of the place where the marriage was entered into. This "place of celebration" provision allows all legally married couples, whether

opposite-sex or same-sex, to have consistent federal family leave rights regardless of whether the state in which they currently reside recognizes such marriages.

Expedia Buys Orbitz

Expedia announced in February plans to acquire Orbitz Worldwide and all of its holdings, including the corporate travel agency Orbitz for Business. Both companies' boards have approved the deal. While the deal awaits closing, it will be business as usual for clients of both companies. It will probably be the last half of the year before integration will begin to take place in earnest, and even then, the degree of integration is still not been fully determined.

Hospitality House Starting Renovations & You Can Help

Hospitality House will be starting to renovate all of their guest rooms over the coming year and are seeking donations to help. Each room will cost approximately \$5,000 to do and will include a personalized wall plaque on an interior wall naming an individual donor that helped pay for the "new" room. CAHA has pledged to help and we would love to reach that level and have a "CAHA Room." So, if you'd like to make a pledge please send us an email to charlottehotels@aol.com and let us know. We're approaching \$2,000 pledged so far. Pledges can be paid over a 5-year period and CAHA will send you an invoice.

Retail Sales Drop in February

U.S. retail sales unexpectedly fell for a third straight month in February likely as harsh weather kept consumers from automobile showrooms and shopping malls, which could hurt growth prospects for the first quarter.

The Commerce Department said on Thursday retail sales dropped 0.6 % after declining 0.8 % in January. The decline in sales last month was almost broad-based, suggesting that snowy and cold weather that blanketed the country in the second half of February could have been a factor.

It was the first time since 2012 that sales had dropped for three consecutive months. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast retail sales increasing 0.3 % last month.

Retail sales excluding automobiles, gasoline, building materials and food services were unchanged after a 0.1 % decline in January.

The National Retail Federation (NRF) announced that retail sales declined 0.2 % seasonally-adjusted month-to-month yet were up 3 % on an unadjusted year-over-year basis. NRF has forecasted that retail industry sales will increase 4.1 % in 2015.

Americans Plan to Save Their Tax Refunds Not Splurge

Playing it safe and planning ahead, Americans plan to stash their tax refunds into savings this year. According to the National Retail Federation's (NRF) annual Tax Returns Survey conducted by Prosper Insights and Analytics, 47% of those expecting a refund plan to put the money into savings, the highest percentage in the survey's history. Nearly two-thirds (65.7%) of those surveyed are expecting a refund.

Consumers have a plan for how they will use their refunds: 39.1 % will pay down debt and 25.1 % plan to use it for daily expenses. While 13 % say they will splurge on a vacation, 10.5 % plan to spend on a major purchase like a television or car.

Young adults are making wise decisions for their future as 54.9 % plan to put refunds into savings. But not all young adults are headed to the bank: 32.2 % will spend on everyday expenses and 15.4 % will make a major purchase. More than half of Americans ages 25-34 (53.2%) plan to tuck away their refunds in savings or use their refunds to pay down debt (47.6%).

Future CAHA Events

CAHA General Membership Meetings: *April (no meeting due to CAHA Golf Tournament); May 21; June 18; July 16; August 20 (tentative); September 17; October 15; November 19; December 17 (Third Thursday of each month, 3 pm, subject to change.)*

CAHA HR Committee Meetings: *May 14; July 9; September 10; November 12 (Second Thursday of even-numbered months, 9 AM, subject to change)*

CAHA Security Committee Meetings: *May 14; July 9; September 10; November 12 (Third Wednesday of even-numbered months, 10 AM, subject to change):*

CAHA Golf Tournament: *April 15, 2015 noon (Pine Island Country Club)*

Support Our Supplier Members:

Afterdisaster; Charlotte Paint/Pro-Tec Finishes; Environmental Diversified Services; Ipswich Shellfish Group; MSS Solutions; Regency DKI; Show Pros Event Staffing Services; Sun Audio Visuals; Tarheel Linen Service; U.S. Foodservice; Visit Charlotte; and Where Charlotte Magazine

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