



GENERAL MANAGERS NEWSLETTER (October 2016)

“An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive business advantage.”... Jack Welch, corporate leader and author

Global Soap Calls for Massive Help in Getting Soap to Storm-Ravaged Haiti

As you've seen, Haiti was ravaged by Hurricane Matthew, a strong category 4 storm that dumped up to 40 inches of rain in the hardest-hit regions. *Clean the World* (our CAHA preferred partner in soap recycling) is preparing to send soap and hygiene supplies to the impacted regions of Haiti, as well as the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and the Bahamas, which also have been impacted by the storm. They report they will have tens of thousands of bars of soap on the ground in the next few days, and even more in the weeks and months to come. But they need financial help to get the shipments there. If you can help, click on this link to make a donation <https://cleantheworld.org/forms/donation-form/>.

And after getting the soap they already have delivered down there, they will need more in their warehouse in Orlando, FL. While there is a small fee to participate in their recycling program, it's worth it. Once you sign up, they ship you a container to collect and store the used soap in. Once it's full you simply send to them and they send you another container. Their need for used soap will continue; but you will also be getting these soap bars out of your solid waste disposal, which is of course, charged by the weight, so you're also helping your bottom line. To get started, contact Riki Iverson at: riverson@cleantheworld.org.

CAHA's Annual "Christmas Blankets for Children" at Levine's Children's Hospital

For the last several years, the CAHA HR Committee has orchestrated the participation by all of our hotels in the Levine's Children's Hospital "*Holiday Carnival*" (usually the Friday before Christmas). Organizations are invited to have a table and give away gifts to the children that are, and probably will be, in the hospital over the holidays.

The hotels have always made fleece-tied blankets, and last year we set a new record with over 300. They are made by taking two pieces of fleece (the bottom one usually plain and the top one with some kind of characters or print); then you cut them in sizes for infants, small children and even teenagers; lay one piece over the other; cut a slit every few inches around all four edges of both pieces of fabric; then tie the resulting strips into knots to hold the two pieces together;...and you've got a blanket!

Hotels have set up tables in their employee dining areas, or a vacant room, and over a period of weeks, employees stop by and make a blanket or two. Then on the day of the “Carnival” they bring them over to Levine’s Children’s Hospital and hand them out to the kids that come by; some walking or in wheelchairs with IV drips; others with their parents; sometimes the child is too sick to come down and their parents or their nurse come down for them. This is the BIGGEST thrill and joy for all of the hotel folks that are there, handing out the blankets!



So, it’s time to start thinking about participating this year. Instructions on how to make a fleece-tied blanket are shown at the end of this newsletter. Let’s set another new record this year...and you sure don’t want to miss being there.

Another Way to Help Kids at Levine’s

Another great way to help children in Levine’s Children’s Hospital is the ***Annual Torch Relay for Children’s Miracle Network***, which will take place on ***Saturday, November 5, 2016*** at the ***Charlotte Motor Speedway***. The theme for this run/walk relay is “***Be an Everyday Hero.***”

By giving to this amazing cause, you’ll be supporting local children and helping put smiles on their faces while they receive the medical care they need at one of the top 5 hospitals for children in the country. The goal is to raise \$25,000 for this phenomenal local facility. But to do that, the ***Torch Relay*** needs participants...***lots of participants***. This is where our regional hotels and their employees can not only help, but have a great, fun day.

Hotels (and our Supplier Members), want to get a team together and participate? To register go to www.torch-relay.org. Would you consider a sponsorship donation of \$1,000? Your donation will be recognized at the event in several ways. As a sponsor, your name will be placed on all materials and banners that publicize the event as well as announced verbally at the event itself.

If you want more information or have any questions, contact our own Crissy.wright@marriott.com.

US Economy: Retail Sales Down in August; Holiday Sales Forecast Up Strongly

Retail sales continued to zigzag in August after a strong June and a relatively flat July. The National Retail Federation (NRF) announced that retail sales, excluding automobiles, gasoline stations and restaurants, decreased 0.3 % over July. On a year-over-year basis, however, NRF calculates that retail sales have increased 4.1 %. This pattern of

summer slowing was evident last year. In August, the three-month moving average of retail sales on a year-over-year basis increased 3.6 % unadjusted.

The US Department of Commerce also reported a decline in August of 0.3 % from July, the first drop in five months, after a revised 0.1 % advance in the previous month. The median projection of economists surveyed by Bloomberg called for a 0.1 % decline.

The NRF has also announced it expects sales in November and December, excluding autos, gas and restaurant sales, to increase a solid 3.6 % to \$655.8 billion — significantly higher than the 10-year average of 2.5 % and above the seven-year average of 3.4 % since recovery began in 2009. Additionally, NRF is forecasting non-store sales to increase between 7 and 10 % to as much as \$117 billion. Holiday sales in 2015 increased 3.2 % over the previous year.

Pay Attention to Your ADA Compliance Concerning Pregnant Employees

The EEOC has filed a lawsuit against a New Orleans motel company asserting it violated the ADA when it placed a pregnant employee on leave solely because of the fact that she was pregnant. The suit alleges that the employee told management that she was pregnant and that her pregnancy was considered high-risk.

The Employee later called her manager to inform him that she would be unable to work one day due to a pregnancy-related illness. Her manager told her that he was modifying the work schedule and taking her off the schedule for the entire week, despite the fact that she only needed one day off.

Six days later, the employee contacted her manager to ask when she would be placed back on the schedule but received a text message from him stating that she was being placed on a leave of absence until her pregnancy was over. The EEOC lawsuit says the company placed the employee on forced leave of absence without pay due to her pregnancy in violation of Title VII as amended by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act.

Nationwide Hotel Demand Softening?

Successful Meetings magazine published a report from the hotel consultancy firm TravelClick that suggests hotel demand across all of North America may be softening. Based on July numbers, while ADR held solid with a 2% increase over last year, the pace of new future bookings was down. New July bookings (overall) decreased by 3.6% compared to last July. Year-over-year future bookings through July still show growth, but many of those future bookings were made in the first and second quarters of this year. Individual business traveler bookings have fallen 4% in the last 30 days, even though ADR is up 2.8%. For the group sector, bookings are still up strongly at 6.1% for the month and ADR up 3.2%.

The article suggests that the fear or concern going forward is if bookings continue to soften, the lower tier limited or no-service, none-meeting and convention hotels tend to start cutting rates. TravelClick advises the middle and top-tier hotels that now is the time to “...become more proactive...in your online presence with consumers and travel agents alike...” to maintain or shore-up bookings in order to maintain ADR.

Yes we know this is common sense and we all know it. But sometimes it's good to get a reminder in relation to what's going on in the larger picture.

Federal Contractors Get Hit with Double Whammy on January 1

The Wage and Hour Division of the US Department of Labor (USDOL) has announced the applicable minimum wage rate to be paid to workers performing work on or in connection with federal contracts. (Many hotels are considered federal contractors by the size and number of government meetings they host each year.) Beginning January 1, 2017, the minimum wage rate will increase to \$10.20 per hour and to \$6.80 per hour for tipped workers. Executive Order 13658, "Establishing a Minimum Wage for Contractors," signed by President Obama on February 12, 2014, raised the hourly minimum wage paid by contractors to workers performing work on covered federal contracts to \$10.10 per hour, beginning January 1, 2015; and annually thereafter by an amount to be determined by the Secretary of Labor. The applicable minimum wage under EO 13658 is currently \$10.15 per hour (or \$5.85 for tipped employees), having been in effect since January 1, 2016.

USDOL has also released its final rule implementing Executive Order 13706, "Establishing Paid Sick Leave for Federal Contractors." The Final Rule implements the requirement that certain parties contracting with the federal government provide employees up to seven days of paid sick leave annually. Employees will earn one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked that may be taken if they are sick, need to care for a sick family member, or must see a doctor or take a family member to a medical appointment. Paid sick leave may also be taken for reasons related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The Final Rule applies to all covered contracts solicited and awarded on or after January 1, 2017.

Local hotels should check with their corporate headquarters and/or legal counsel on these issues.

Future CAHA Events

CAHA Annual Charity Golf Tournament for CPCC Scholarships: *April 26, 2017 Pine Island Country Club*

CAHA General Membership Meetings: *October 20 (Marriott Center City), November 17, December 15 (Third Thursday of each month, 3 pm, subject to change.)*

CAHA HR Committee Meetings: *November 10 (Second Thursday of even-numbered months, 9 AM, subject to change.)*

Support Our Supplier Members:

Afterdisaster-Metrolina; Gordon Food Service; Ipswich Shellfish Group; Moneysworth Linen Services; MSS Solutions; PIVOTek; Rainbow International Restoration; Show Pros Event Staffing Services; Tarheel Linen Service; The Charlotte Destination Group; TruGuard Construction Group; U.S. Foodservice; Visit Charlotte; and Where Charlotte Magazine

(Disclaimer: The information contained herein comes from many reliable sources. Every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, but neither CAHA nor SALCO Consulting can assume any liability for omissions or inaccuracies. We are not attorneys and cannot give legal advice. You are urged to seek appropriate legal or professional counsel on all legal, accounting, tax or employment issues.)

How to Make a Fleece Tied Blanket

Follow these simple directions & you can make a warm, no-sew blanket using two pieces of fleece. The blanket pictured here is baby-sized, but you can use the instructions supplied here to make one of any size. 1½-2 yard-pieces are recommended for a larger child or teenager. The techniques are all the same, just the fabric size changes.

Let's begin by gathering the supplies you need...

What you will need...

Before you start any project it is easiest to gather together all of the supplies. For this fleece blanket project you will need:

- 2 Coordinating Pieces of Fleece (the bottom piece will be up against the body & the top piece can be decorative & fun)
- The size of the pieces of fleece will depend on how big of a blanket you want to make
- [You'll need a ruler](#); a pen or pencil; & some scissors.

Now we can get started...

Lay Out the Back (Bottom) Piece of Fleece...



Start out by laying the piece of fleece that will be the back of your blanket, right side down, on your work surface. Pictured is a baby-sized blanket so it fit on a kitchen counter, but it works better with a larger blanket to lay it out on a floor. Smooth out the piece of fleece using your hand. The next step is to prepare the front piece of fabric...

Lay Out the Front (top) Piece of Fleece



Now, lay the piece of fleece that will be the front of your blanket, right side up, on top of the first piece of fleece. Again, smooth out the piece of fleece with your hands so it lies flat.

Next you need to trim your fabric...

Trim Your Fleece



Make sure you cut through both piece of fleece & trim your fleece to whatever size you want your blanket to be. The cuts do not have to be perfectly even. Please keep in mind, the finished blanket will appear about 8-10 inches smaller than the size you cut because of the fringe!

Now you need to measure the corners...

Measuring the Corners



The first thing you want to do is to prepare your corners to be cut. The key here is to measure in, from the corner, the same length as what you will make your fringe. Here we're cutting the fringe about 4-inches long, so measure in 4-inches from each side in the corner. Mark your lines & repeat this for each corner.

The next step is to cut your corners...

Cutting Off the Corners



Next, simply cut off each corner square that you marked. Hold both fabrics together & cut through both layers. Don't worry about the lines being perfectly even. Once they are tied together you will never notice any differences.

You are now ready to cut fringe around your blanket...

Cutting the Fringe



All you do now is cut fringe along each edge. Make sure you cut through both thicknesses of fleece. This fringe is about 4-inches long & 1½- 2-inches wide. You can make your fringe longer than this, but don't go much smaller...anything too much smaller will be hard to tie.

Once your fringe is cut, you can begin tying it...

Tying the Fringe



To attach the top piece of fleece to the bottom piece of fleece, you simply tie the fringe together. Grab a set of fringe pieces (a back & front piece), & tie a simple overhand knot in them.

Now your fleece blanket is almost done... Continue tying the pieces of fleece together until you have worked your way all around the blanket. Your fleece tied blanket is now done. You can, of course, add some personal touches if you like. We DO NOT recommend adding buttons, plastic or cloth toy ornaments, or even heat-activated crystals as they can become a choking hazard.



Want to join with us in the Charlotte Area Hotel Association (CAHA) in making blankets between Thanksgiving and Christmas...and then join us in delivering them to the Levine's Children's Hospital during their "Holiday Carnival" at the hospital with the children. Wouldn't it be great to give a bright, colorful, fun blanket (that you made yourself) to a child that's probably going to be in the hospital over the holidays? Find out more about how you, your employees, neighbors and friends can participate by contacting us at charlottehotels@aol.com We're inviting everyone in the hospitality industry (and those that are not) to join in and help us deliver some Christmas cheer this year.