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CONTACT: Peter Clerkin

202-945-4950

peter@aahoa.com

AAHOA 2018 Convention Recap: Advocacy, Education, Leadership, and Development

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md., Apr. 4 – AAHOA’s three-day annual convention and trade show, the largest gathering of hotel owners in the country, concluded Friday.

“The 2018 AAHOA National Convention and Trade Show surpassed our highest expectations,” said AAHOA President and CEO Chip Rogers. “AAHOA continues to grow tremendously as an association, both in membership and in our advocacy efforts. Our focus on advocacy, industry leadership, education, and professional development continues to drive our record membership growth and influence. AAHOA is the voice of America’s hotel owners.”

The annual meeting held at the Gaylord National Convention Center featured three days of keynote speakers including Hall of Fame football coach Jimmy Johnson, Administrator Linda McMahon of the Small Business Administration, Deputy Secretary Elaine Duke of the Department of Homeland Security, Manoj Bhargava, the founder of 5-hour Energy, Olympic gold medalist Sanya Richards Ross, and entrepreneur Michael Hyatt.

“Our keynote speakers’ engaging presentations provided our members with insights into business and leadership from a variety of fields and experiences,” said AAHOA Chairman Hitesh (HP) Patel. “We are grateful that Administrator McMahon and Deputy Secretary Duke were able to address our members about how government and business can work together, particularly in the areas of small business development and human trafficking prevention.”

The presidents and CEOs of 15 major hotel brands shared their personal stories of achieving excellence and success in life and in business. Brands represented include Best Western Hotels & Resorts, the Carver Companies, Choice Hotels International, G6 Hospitality, Hilton, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), La Quinta Inns & Suites, Magnuson Worldwide, Marriott International, Radisson Hotel Group, RLH Corporation, Red Roof Inn, Trump Hotels, and Wyndham Hotel Group.

The event also featured one of the largest trade shows in the industry. The trade show, which opened on Wednesday and Thursday afternoon, featured hundreds of companies and booths. Convention-goers also attended educational sessions which addressed topics such as advocacy and legislative engagement, the role of big data in hospitality, franchise law, social media use, reputation management, and human trafficking awareness and prevention.

Rogers also congratulated Vinay Patel of Sterling, Va., for being elected to the officer position of secretary by the AAHOA membership. The group’s officers are elected to the position of secretary and automatically ascend to treasurer, vice chair and chair annually, meaning Patel will become chair in 2021.

“Our member-driven association chose wisely in electing Vinay as our next secretary,” said Rogers. “In keeping with the Association’s tradition of electing forward-thinking leaders, we are confident that he will help AAHOA as we continue expand our offerings to members and grow as an association. Congratulations to Vinay.”

Hitesh Patel of Austin Texas took the reins as chairman on Friday, with Jagruti Panwala of Ivyland, Pa. becoming the association’s first-ever female vice chair. Biran Patel of Irving, Tx., became treasurer.

Bhavesh Patel of Cinnaminson, NJ, stepped down from his four-year term as an officer of AAHOA. He will continue to serve on the board as an immediate past chairman.

Rogers thanked the staff of the Gaylord National Resort and Conference Center for their amazing hospitality this week.

“The staff at the Gaylord were outstanding and made this convention run extremely well. The facilities and views of the Potomac River and our nation’s capital are stunning,” said Rogers. “We appreciate the hospitality shown to our members by the restaurants, shops and other businesses in the area.”

Lastly, the group announced the location and dates of its 2019 convention: April 24-27 at the San Diego Convention Center in sunny San Diego, Calif.

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AAHOA is the largest hotel owners’ association in the world. The nearly 18,000 AAHOA members own almost one in every two hotels in the United States. With billions of dollars in property assets and hundreds of thousands of employees, AAHOA members are core economic contributors in virtually every community. AAHOA is a proud defender of free enterprise and the foremost current-day example of realizing the American dream.