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AAHOA and Polaris Launch New Human Trafficking Awareness Training

ATLANTA, Ga., May 2 – AAHOA, in partnership with Polaris, a global leader in the fight against modern slavery, launched a new digital training for members and their employees that focuses on raising awareness of human trafficking in the hospitality industry. The AAHOA Human Trafficking Awareness Training (HTAT) is available exclusively to AAHOA’s nearly 18,000 members and the over 600,000 employees at member properties at no cost.

“Hoteliers have a moral imperative to prevent human trafficking at their properties,” said AAHOA Chairman Hitesh (HP) Patel. “Unfortunately, the privacy and anonymity that are inherent in the hotel industry, as well as the frequent turnover of clientele, make hotels an attractive venue for criminals looking to exploit trafficking victims. This new training developed with Polaris will go a long way to help hoteliers and their employees identify the signs of sex and labor trafficking, assist victims, and work with law enforcement to keep this criminal activity out of our communities.”

Patel made his remarks today in Houston, Texas, where he participated in a roundtable discussion about raising awareness of and preventing human trafficking. The roundtable, hosted by House Homeland Security Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX), also included representatives from the Department of Homeland Security’s Blue Campaign and Polaris.

“This training is a vital tool in the fight against sex trafficking and forced labor,” said Joe Racalto, Director of Government Relations at Polaris. “Education is one of the keys to ending modern slavery and restoring freedom and dignity to survivors. By making it freely available to so many hoteliers and hotel workers, we can quickly raise awareness of the issue.”

The AAHOA Human Trafficking Awareness Training provides an overview of sex and labor trafficking, discusses red flags, and provides case examples. Participants are also informed about appropriate steps to respond to suspected instances of trafficking. Upon completion of the training, participants earn a certificate which may satisfy state and/or local training requirements.

“With a membership that owns about one in every two hotels across the United States, AAHOA is capitalizing on that reach to promote education and awareness of human trafficking. This important training not only focuses on sex trafficking, but also on labor trafficking, which can be difficult to spot. Being a conscientious employer means understanding how labor brokers and recruiters exploit workers and requesting supply chain transparency to ensure that no one is being forced to work against his or her will. Hoteliers are uniquely positioned to disrupt the criminal networks and individuals that exploit society’s most vulnerable through human trafficking, and they can save lives in the process,” said AAHOA President and CEO Chip Rogers.

AAHOA Human Trafficking Awareness Training is available through AAHOA’s website (<http://www.aahoa.com/htat>). Non-members can register for and complete the training by either renewing their AAHOA membership or joining the association.

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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.