



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Peter Clerkin
202-945-4950
peter@aahoa.com

Florida Hoteliers Play Offense Against Human Trafficking

ATLANTA, Ga., Feb. 5 – As Tampa prepares to host the Super Bowl this weekend, Florida hoteliers remain committed to keeping human trafficking out of their hotels and their communities. Every year, thousands of football fans converge on the event’s host city in the runup to the game. Unfortunately, sex traffickers who exploit the most vulnerable in our society are all too eager to bring their illicit enterprise to the party. That is why hotel owners are going on offense to protect their guests, their employees, and trafficking victims by completing AAHOA’s Human Trafficking Awareness Trainings (HTAT). These trainings play a crucial role in empowering hoteliers and their employees to identify and respond to trafficking situations. Owners are keeping their guard up against traffickers even though the number of fans and attendees at this year’s Super Bowl will be significantly lower than in years past due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The sheer number of people at high-profile events like the Super Bowl are an attractive draw to human traffickers. These criminals prize anonymity and seek out low-profile locations to exploit their victims. That is why it is so important for hoteliers and their teams to understand what trafficking looks like and know how to respond if they see something amiss,” said AAHOA President & CEO Cecil P. Staton. “To date, thousands of hotel employees and owners across the country have completed AAHOA HTAT, and our recent training blitz across Florida could not have come at a better time.”

In December, AAHOA held the HTAT Florida Compliance Series to ensure its members in the sunshine state satisfied Florida’s human trafficking awareness training requirement that went into effect on Jan. 1. The Series, held in ten cities throughout the state, offered AAHOA members and their employees a free developed in partnership with Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST). Successful completion of the training, BEST Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training sponsored by AAHOA, brings hotels into compliance with the mandate.

“Unfortunately, instances of trafficking are on the rise as criminals exploit people struggling with the multitude of hardships the pandemic imposes on our communities,” said Staton. “Hoteliers must remain vigilant, and AAHOA is proud to give them the tools they need to protect their guests and employees and, potentially, save lives.”

About AAHOA:

AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world. The nearly 20,000 AAHOA members represent 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.

###