



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

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**CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION MOVING QUICKLY
IN HUB & SPOKE DIRECTION FOCUSED ON LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Will Launch CHIEF Oct. 2-4 in Puerto Rico with Networking, Education Opportunities

THE CARIBBEAN (Aug. 25, 2015) – Emil Lee, president of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), reported progress during his first year in office as CHTA continues its evolution into a Hub and Spoke organization. He said he is pleased that the focus on strengthening the National Hotel and Tourism Associations (NHTAs) throughout the region is evolving quickly. He also cites a new era of public-private sector collaboration between CHTA and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) which has emerged as a point of optimism for the industry's future.

Lee recently visited with local CHTA members and Ministers of Tourism in various countries including Antigua, The Bahamas, Barbados and Belize.

"CHTA is actively working to strengthen the national associations, facilitating and empowering them and improving their effectiveness and efficiency," said Lee. "The CHTA is in the process of fundamentally restructuring by evolving from a traditional top down hierarchy to a hub and spoke model where the CHTA becomes the hub for the Caribbean's National Associations allowing the easy sharing of information especially on the best and worst practices in the region."

Lee believes the membership of CHTA is embracing the changes taking place within the organization and is encouraged by a growing dialogue that is drawing hoteliers, allied members and the public sector together to proactively look at improving tourism.

"I see more members that support what we are doing and are hungry for the changes in leadership that is moving CHTA to the prominent position it has held in the past," said Lee.

This transformation comes as the Association is about to launch CHIEF (the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum), a new annual event designed to focus on hotel industry operations and marketing with an eye on sustainable tourism.

CHIEF takes place Oct. 2-4 in Puerto Rico. Its focus is to facilitate exchanges between hotels, tourism industry leaders and allied members to help attendees network in a fun environment and learn how to increase revenue, save money and improve efficiency.

"CHIEF has ignited a renewed excitement among the membership as both independent hoteliers and chain hotels around the region are viewing this as an opportunity to network with industry colleagues and learn about best practices that both small and large hotels are using to become more successful," said Lee.

"We have also reached out to our allied membership and they are embracing this opportunity to renew and strengthen their relationship with the hoteliers," he added.

But Lee cautions that the revival that is afoot across the region's hotel and tourism industry is much more than CHIEF. He has spent much of his first year in office traveling throughout the Caribbean meeting with local hotel association executives and presidents, a position he too has held in the past, and in strategic discussions with CTO officials.

"I am more convinced than ever, we are on the right path," Lee said, adding: "Our recent Annual General Meeting generated a lot of positive feedback from attendees and many of the officers of the NHTAs are reaching out to me to discuss some of our proposals and plans for the future, a future that can have a positive impact on their local association."

Lee has also seen a continuation of the cementing of the relationship between the hotel industry and the government tourism agencies, starting at the top with the cooperative work being done with the CTO and the fact that several tourism ministers have reached out directly to him to discuss a variety of tourism related matters.

Lee said: "Enhanced public-private sector collaboration is essential for the region to maximize its tourism potential. There is no doubt that there is a clear correlation between successful destinations and the level of cooperation and synergy between the public and private sectors. Each destination needs to build effective and vibrant public-private partnerships.

"When we look at how Puerto Rico is suffering from economic malaise, we see an opportunity to show how tourism can create employment, not just in the hotels, but in the local shops, at the seamstress, on the farms, in the fishing boats and even within the construction trades as new facilities are needed to fuel tourism growth. Tourism is truly key to the future of our tourism dependent nations here in the Caribbean."

Dialogue on tourism is happening across the region within CHTA and the public sector and Lee and the officers and executives of the Association are very happy with this. "It is the beginning of the future," Lee adds.

Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association

The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) is a federation of 32 National Hotel Associations with more than 600 member hotels and over 300 allied members. CHTA is the largest representative of the private sector in the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry. We are the voice of the Caribbean hospitality industry for the development of the region in the highly competitive and sophisticated environment of international tourism. Today, tourism is widely recognized as a pivotal industry in the economy of the region – and CHTA functions as the common denominator for this industry in a region of diverse nationalities, languages and styles, identifying mutual problems and marshaling the resources of the active and allied members to devise solutions.

CHTA, including the events staged by the association, is supported by Strategic Partners Cable & Wireless, HVS, Interval International, MasterCard, OBM International, Tambourine and TravelZoo.

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