

# today's hotelier

June 2020 | todayshotelier.com

Publication of AAHOA

**ADVOCACY AT WORK**  
Follow AAHOA's path as it works to advocate for the industry

## COVID-19 RELIEF

*What more can be done to strengthen small businesses?*

AAHOA Members show their communities what it means to be **#AAHOASTRONG**

**Jim Alderman**  
CEO, Americas  
Radisson Hotel Group

## DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP DURING COVID-19

*How one CEO is leading through uncertain waters*

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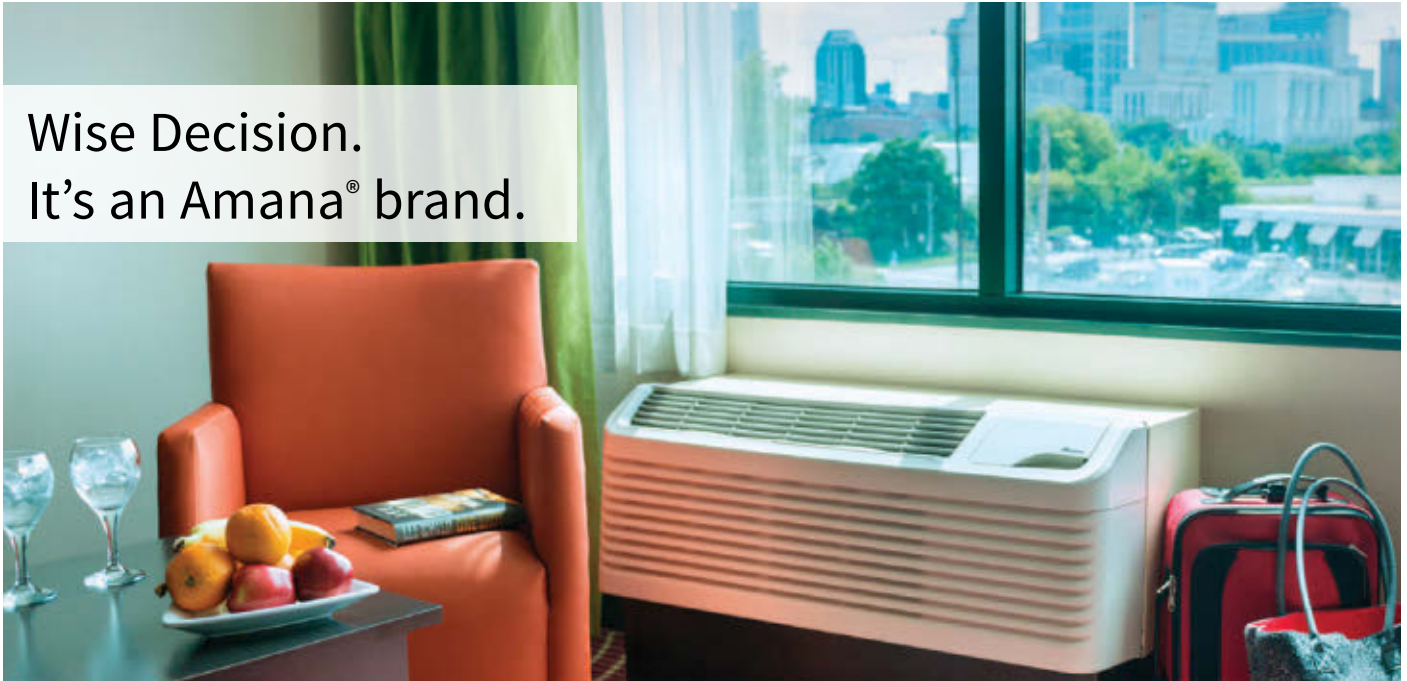
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# contents

June 2020 | todayshotelier.com

## 12

### THE C-SUITE

Leading through uncertain waters

by JIM ALDERMAN



## 16

### SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF: WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE?

As hoteliers faced funding depletion from the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program shortly after they were launched, the question shifted to what more could be done

by ALICIA HOISINGTON

## 20

### ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

AAHOA leads by example by advocating for one of the hardest-hit industries during COVID-19

by NICK FORTUNA

## departments

- 8 LETTER FROM THE CHAIRWOMAN
- 9 LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO
- 10 GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
- 36 AAHOA CLUB BLUE, PLATINUM & SILVER MEMBERS
- 38 AAHOA MEMBERS IN ACTION
- 40 AAHOA VENDOR PARTNERS
- 47 CLASSIFIEDS
- 50 ADVERTISERS INDEX

## columns

- COMMON GROUND ..... 11  
Replenishing the Paycheck Protection Program  
by SEAN GROSSNICKLE
- FINANCE ..... 24  
What options do CMBS borrowers have for relief from the economic effects of COVID-19?  
by RUSHI SHAH
- SMALL BUSINESS ..... 28  
Small businesses are important now more than ever before  
by ALFREDO ORTIZ
- CITY SPOTLIGHT ..... 30  
San Jose  
by ASIF LAKHANI
- SECURITY ..... 32  
Wading into the next decade  
by JOHN WELTY
- LEGAL CORNER ..... 35  
Top five COVID-19 FAQ for HR  
by DEEPA N. SUBRAMANIAN

# 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT AAHOA THIS MONTH

## 1.

**Webcasts Turning Toward Recovery:** As some states begin to reopen, AAHOA is providing hotel owners with the resources and information you need to meet the new standards and protocols that are being implemented to keep guests and employees safe. Our latest webcasts in our COVID-19 series, "Conquering COVID-19," will help you do just that. Learn more at [www.aahoa.com/webcasts](http://www.aahoa.com/webcasts).

## 2.

**AAHOA Helps Lead Industry-Wide Standards:** Last month, AAHOA was instrumental in helping draft two industry-standard recommended guidelines on cleaning and safety post-COVID-19 and is proud to represent America's hotel owners in these initiatives. Stay Safe, led by AHLA, and Travel in the New Normal, led by the U.S. Travel Association, will help hoteliers safely and confidently welcome back guests and employees as we move forward.

## 3.

**New Resources on Recovery:** As the nation slowly starts to turn toward recovery, AAHOA launched a new recovery-focused page on its COVID-19 website that features a list of internal and external resources to help guide members through what is likely to be a long and arduous process. Learn more at [AAHOA.com/COVID-19](http://AAHOA.com/COVID-19).

## 4.

**We Are #AAHOASTRONG:** AAHOA Members have truly been the silver lining during this crisis, participating in AAHOA advocacy campaigns, volunteering in your communities, and uniting to weather the storm together. Check out [AAHOA.com/AAHOAstrong](http://AAHOA.com/AAHOAstrong) to learn more about these extraordinary efforts and what it means to be #AAHOASTRONG.

## 5.

**Professional Development in the Age of Social Distancing:** With social distancing still the norm in many areas across the U.S., now is a great time to continue your commitment to professional development by taking advantage of nearly 500 free webcasts on [AAHOA.com](http://AAHOA.com), FREE human trafficking awareness training, and AAHOA's new CHO all-digital program.

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**JAGRUTI PANWALA**  
AAHOA CHAIRWOMAN (2019-2020)

## AAHOA Members lead by example

**D**URING TIMES OF AN UNPRECEDENTED CRISIS AND UNCERTAIN FUTURES, IT helps to step back and celebrate the exceptionalism of our AAHOA community. Like so many of our members, I am greatly impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19, yet the resilience and generosity of my fellow hoteliers reaffirms the pride and gratitude I hold dear as your AAHOA Chairwoman.

Dozens of our members are providing food to those in need, donating personal protective equipment to their local hospitals, and even housing college students who are unable to return home overseas. All of these charitable acts, and countless others I could reference, reaffirm what it means to be #AAHOASTRONG. We are proud of our membership and the significant contributions they make to their local communities. Your charitable efforts are a shining testament to the leadership and professionalism the AAHOA community upholds.

As the hotel industry recovers, there won't be an immediate return to normalcy, but that is a reality we are prepared to face. In early May, AAHOA launched a post-COVID recovery page on our COVID-19 resource center, which is accessible via our AAHOA website's front page. We constantly monitor the pandemic situation closely, and I want to assure you that we will continue to provide our members with the information needed to navigate the months to come.

We have always had a strong culture of perseverance in our association. And now, more than ever, AAHOA and our valued members are finding ways to endure and empower America's hoteliers, their employees, and their communities.

Though our normal course of operations is distant, the AAHOA community's generosity and strength will not falter. Thank you for all you do to support the AAHOA community. My thoughts are with all of you and your families throughout these trying times. ■

“

We have always had a strong culture of perseverance in our association. And now more than ever, AAHOA and our valued members are finding ways to endure and empower America's hoteliers, their employees, and their communities.”



**CECIL P. STATON**  
AAHOA PRESIDENT & CEO

## AAHOA advocates for you and your community

**A**S OUR NATION CONTINUES TO NAVIGATE THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF THE COVID-19 pandemic, AAHOA is prepared to undertake the challenges ahead. In fact, we refer to our resilience, in evidence as the crisis has evolved, as “AAHOA strong.” Our association was created out of the need to address discrimination and inequality Asian Americans faced in the hospitality industry more than 30 years ago. AAHOA’s founding members did not succumb to the circumstances of their time but rather collaborated to reshape the reality they faced.

Today, the challenges our industry faces are unprecedented, yet I maintain the utmost confidence in our ability to use that same original AAHOA determination to confront those challenges. At AAHOA we lift each other up, and the efforts of countless members, volunteers, and our AAHOA team continue to embody what makes us great. Over the past few months, we have adapted to unprecedented need and we have fulfilled our role as the voice of America’s hoteliers at every turn. Throughout the crisis, AAHOA has not only monitored but has acted to address the needs of our members and the hospitality industry as a whole.

AAHOA Members are dispersed throughout the country, yet my experiences throughout this difficult time constantly reaffirm the unity and resiliency of the AAHOA community. Hotel owners across the country are experiencing challenges unique to their properties and state guidelines as regions of the country begin to reopen. With our AAHOA team working at both the state and federal level, we constantly monitor and update AAHOA Members with the information, guidance, and services unique to every situation.

If you are experiencing challenges with your business, I encourage you to visit our COVID-19 resource center or contact us at [covid19@aahoa.com](mailto:covid19@aahoa.com).

The AAHOA community is here for you, and we thank you all for everything you do for our industry. We are all in this together. And yes, I’m confident we’ll all pull through these times AAHOA strong. ■

“

At AAHOA we lift each other up, and the efforts of countless members, volunteers, and our AAHOA team continue to embody what makes us great.”



**S**INCE EARLY MARCH, THE unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have mobilized Congress and the White House to provide emergency relief for the nation’s economy while also adopting measures to curtail the spread of the virus. The pandemic has created common ground for Democratic and Republican lawmakers where swift, bipartisan action has resulted in a series of COVID-19 relief packages.

### PHASE 1

U.S. lawmakers first responded to the impacts of COVID-19 on March 6 with “Phase 1” of pandemic relief. H.R. 6074 – the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act – providing \$8 billion of funding to the nation’s public health response to treat and lessen the spread and negative effects of the virus. This “Phase 1” package contained measures to expand testing capabilities, vaccine research, and stockpiles of medical supplies. Although a portion of this fund was designated for an international aid, this phase primarily focused on funding the Centers for Disease Control and the Department of Health and Human Services as the agencies rushed to coordinate state and local efforts to respond to the virus.

### PHASE 2

Days after passing “Phase 1,” lawmakers quickly turned their attention to providing relief to businesses and individuals affected by the pandemic. On March 14, H.R. 6201 – the Families First Coronavirus Response Act – became law, adding \$3.5 billion in emergency supplemental appropriations. This “Phase 2” measure contained paid leave requirements and resources for small businesses as well as funding for states to process and pay unemployment

claims. It also allocated funds to food programs to ensure that important services and meals are available to families and individuals in need.

### PHASE 3

Next, Congress and the White House enacted “Phase 3,” passing the single largest stimulus package in U.S. history. H.R. 748 – the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act – is a \$2.2-trillion bill designed to provide emergency assistance to sectors of the American economy and individuals severely impacted by the pandemic. Signed into law on March 27, the CARES Act includes numerous measures to stabilize the economy, aid small businesses, financially assist individuals, and support national health care.

For hoteliers and other small business owners, the nearly \$350 billion allocated to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is the most critical component of the “Phase 3” stimulus. The PPP provides loans to small businesses to cover payroll and other operating costs. As millions of eligible small businesses sought loans under the PPP, the initial funding ran out within weeks, pressing Congress to pass an interim relief bill.

### PHASE 3.5

Having felt the urgency to re-fund programs like the PPP, Congress moved to

pass an interim COVID-19 relief bill as “Phase 3.5.” This phase was enacted on April 24 under H.R. 266 – the PPP and Health Care Enhancement Act – following a period of debate between Democratic and Republican lawmakers. This bill allocated an additional \$321 billion to the PPP while funding other disaster loan programs, hospitals, and COVID-19 research.

In a press release covering the passage of “Phase 3.5,” AAHOA President & CEO Cecil P. Staton noted his gratitude for Congress’s swift action while advocating for vital measures to be considered in subsequent phases of relief legislation.

“The stimulus also does not address the reality that this crisis will not be over in a matter of weeks. That is why we continue to call on Congress to extend PPP through the end of 2020,” Staton said. He noted that “hotels are a signal industry,” meaning they are the first to feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and they will be the last to recover.

### THE NEXT PHASE

As Congress moves to draft its next phase of COVID-19 relief, Staton calls for targeted support for the hotel industry. “We also encourage policymakers to give more consideration to a business’s debt obligations, such as mortgages, as they formulate relief loans and determine how they can be spent,” he said. ■

“  
The pandemic has created common ground for Democratic and Republican lawmakers where swift, bipartisan action has resulted in a series of COVID-19 relief packages.”

# Replenishing the Paycheck Protection Program

*Common Ground profiles members of opposing parties who are working together to advance issues important to hoteliers.*

by SEAN GROSSNICKLE



RED BOW TIE PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## THE ISSUE

Within weeks of passing the CARES Act, Congress convened once again to address the rapid depletion of the emergency relief programs, namely the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The \$350 billion allocated to the PPP in the CARES Act was a lifeline for millions of small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, yet the large number of applications quickly exhausted the program's funding. The PPP is backed by the Small Business Administration and provides approved applicants with eight weeks of cash-flow

assistance through federally guaranteed loans. These loans will be fully forgiven provided that a majority of the fund goes toward making payroll and covering other operating expenses. Congress had initially planned to discuss "Phase 4" of its emergency relief legislation in early May.

## COMMON GROUND

As the hundreds of billions allocated to the PPP ran dry by mid-April, Congress quickly passed interim COVID-19 relief under H.R. 266 – the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act. This "Phase 3.5" bill provides \$484 billion in additional funding to the small business loan programs, hospitals, and testing for COVID-19. More than \$300 billion was allocated to the PPP to replenish its funds. The Senate passed the PPP and Healthcare Enhancement Act with a unanimous voice vote, and the House then approved the bill with a recorded vote of 388 to 5. President Trump signed the bill into law on April 24. ■

### Rep. Betty McCullum (D-MN), Sponsor of H.R. 266

First Elected: 2001

*"The interim COVID-19 funding bill provides a much-needed \$310 billion replenishment to the Paycheck Protection Program, including \$30-billion set aside for community-based lenders to get critical funding into the hands of small businesses who need it most. At the insistence of Democrats, added to this bill is \$25 billion for coronavirus testing and \$75 billion for front-line health care facilities and personal protective equipment for our health care heroes putting their lives on the line."*

### Sen. John Thune (R-SD), Majority Whip

First Elected: 2005

*"I wish so many businesses and workers didn't need to use the Paycheck Protection Program, and I wish it hadn't taken Democrats nearly a week after it ran out of money to put workers ahead of politics, but I'm glad the program is one step closer to reopening and helping more businesses stay afloat. I remain committed to doing all I can to ensure small businesses and their workers in South Dakota and throughout the country have the tools they need to weather this storm."*

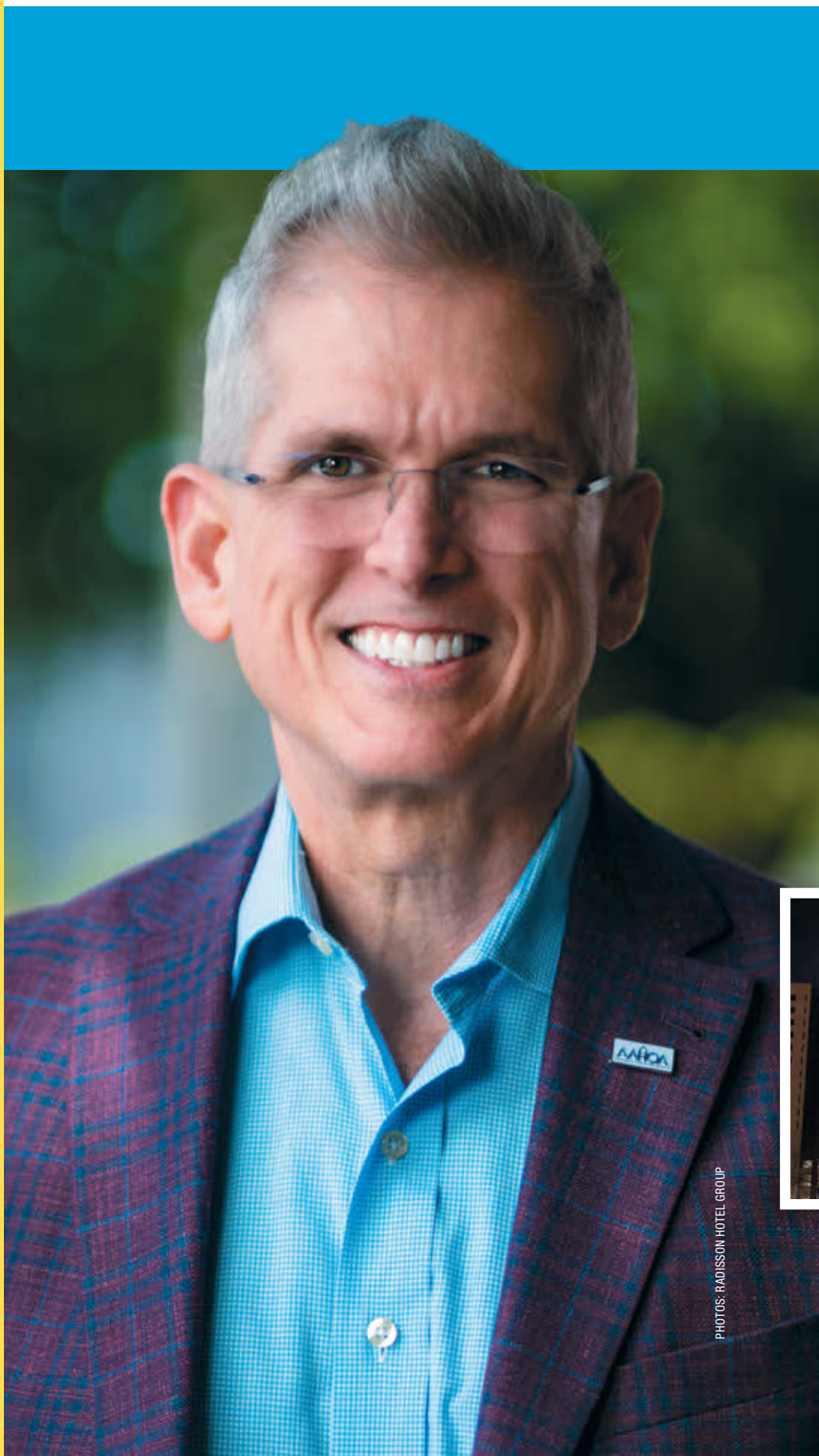
**JIM ALDERMAN** is the newly appointed chief executive officer Americas for Radisson Hotel Group and is based at the company's U.S. headquarters in Minnetonka, MN. Alderman is responsible for the corporate offices and more than 680 hotels in the company's portfolio throughout the Americas. He also is a member of the Global Steering Committee for Radisson Hotel Group.

With more than 34 years of experience in hospitality real estate, Alderman has an extensive background in hotel and restaurant development, private equity fund investment, management contracts, franchises, public/private partnerships, and investor relations. Most recently, he served as Executive Vice President for Extended Stay America (ESA), where he was instrumental in driving the company's franchising strategy. In just 18 months, he took ESA from zero to 150 franchise deals. He was responsible for their next-generation product through new construction and franchise sales, and asset management of existing real estate portfolio, as well as acquisitions/disposition, and future redevelopment.

Alderman joined ESA from Kimpton Hotels, where he was chief development officer. Prior to joining Kimpton, he held various senior leadership positions with Wyndham, Starwood Capital, IHG, and Ernst & Young.

Throughout his career, Alderman has been involved in the acquisition, development, joint venture, and financing of more than \$15 billion of hotel real estate projects globally. He has helped guide the strategy and branding of hundreds of hotel projects from limited service and extended stay to independent boutiques and ultra-luxury properties with branded residential components.

He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Real Estate from Florida State University. He is an Executive Board Member for The Center of Real Estate Education and Research at Florida State University.



PHOTOS: RADISSON HOTEL GROUP

# Leading through uncertain waters

Q&A with Radisson Hotel Group's Jim Alderman

## YOU HAVE WORN MANY HATS IN THIS INDUSTRY. WHY RADISSON HOTEL GROUP? WHY NOW?

As you can imagine, I never expected to be joining Radisson Hotel Group right as the COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on our industry. However, I'm beyond excited for this leadership role, even during these unprecedented times. Throughout my 34 years in this industry, I have been fortunate enough to work for some amazing companies in a variety of different roles. Now, I hope to leverage all that experience to lead the Americas for Radisson Hotel Group, one of the top hotel companies in the world – and the last job I ever intend to have in the hotel industry. Regardless of what we as a company, industry, and world are facing, I'm grateful for the opportunity to lead this organization, which has undergone a complete transformation of its business over the past few years. I am confident that the company's vision, revitalized plans, and dedicated team members will deliver on our strategic five-year plan and beyond.

## HOW HAS STARTING A NEW POSITION IN THE MIDST OF A CRISIS INFORMED YOUR NEW ROLE?

Let's just say I was very fortunate in that regard. When I joined Radisson Hotel Group back in early March, I immediately stepped into a role where I was surrounded by a seasoned leadership team that is experienced, strategic, and resourceful. Not everyone is that lucky. I am thankful that the team had already begun making immediate operational plans and adjustments to our business and were in contact with our franchisees to see how we could help them. My main task was to continue to facilitate these procedures and help open any other doors I could. We also had an experienced global leadership team, led by Federico González, helping navigate us through this pandemic along with the support of our shareholders.

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH AAHOA. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED WITH AAHOA AND WHAT IS YOUR FONDEST AAHOA MEMORY?

As I have come in and out of different organizations such as Holiday Inn Worldwide, long before it was renamed several times, I have become keenly aware that franchisor success is distinctly tied to full and robust participation with AAHOA. Having watched the success that Mike Leven brought to Holiday Inn and how that was inexorably tied to AAHOA support, I feel like I learned at the feet of the master. Transitioning to becoming a franchisee myself while at Bristol Hotels, I found that even though we were the largest owner of a particular brand's hotels, we did not enjoy the power of AAHOA's unified voice as a franchisee advocate. When I think about my



In late February, AAHOA Chairwoman Jagruti Panwala attended Radisson Hotel Group's 2020 Americas Business Conference to participate in the Women In Leadership Luncheon. Frances Gonzalez, Vice President, Latin America Operations, Radisson Hotel Group conducted a Q&A with Jagruti for conference attendees.

fondlest memories of participating with AAHOA, I think they are still developing. I find myself enjoying my time at regional meetings and AAHOACON even more at each occurrence. Memories that resonate with me more than anything have come at regional meetings – once the business is done and the trade shows have run their course, it is usually late in the afternoon. At that time, when schools are out and the extended families with kids all show up, you really get to see the essence of the community. You know that these kids you are greeting and handing out pens or other fun little branded items to will one day likely be signing a franchise agreement with you. So, I would have to say it is the family aspect and ultimate advocacy from AAHOA that I have come to admire most.



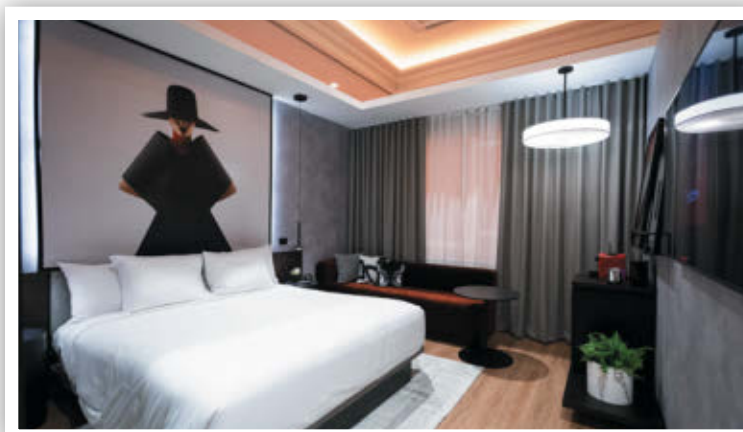
Hotels all over the world are lighting up hearts on their buildings, like this one at the Radisson BLU Mall of America, to show love for their communities, guests, health care workers, and team members around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### WHAT CAN INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS DO TO SHOW TRUE LEADERSHIP DURING A CRISIS SUCH AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC? WHICH OF YOUR SKILLS HELPED DRIVE YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE DURING THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES, ESPECIALLY GIVEN HOW NEW YOU WERE TO THE TEAM AND THE COMPANY?

I have been in this industry a long time and I have been fortunate enough to join a well-oiled machine here at Radisson Hotel Group. Our leadership team brings an owner-centric mentality to everything we do. I fully respect the groundwork that was laid before I joined the team and I am excited to use my experience to further bolster our growth in the Americas. I am not new to dealing with crises and issues within our industry or in business in general. Growing up in Florida, my father was the head of crisis management for the largest employer in our region with more than 17,000 employees, and we endured numerous hurricanes. I learned early on the importance of remaining calm, having a dedicated plan, and being resilient and positive to get us all through those tough days ahead.

### RHG IS OWNED BY A CHINESE COMPANY. SINCE CHINA WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY IMPACTED BY COVID-19, WAS RHG ABLE TO PREP U.S. OPERATIONS OR ANTICIPATE ANYTHING FROM THAT STANDPOINT?

When COVID-19 started to develop into an unpredictable situation in China, our Radisson Hotel Group team members in Asia-Pacific had to quickly develop a game plan to manage hotel operations, communications, guest relations, and employee impact immediately. From the onset of the situation, they were informing our Americas and Europe-Middle East-Africa teams as to what was happening in real time so we could not only support them in all facets of their business but also prepare ourselves for what could potentially lie ahead as this situation unfolded. With that said, all of the major hotel companies,



The model room for the Radisson RED brand hotels.

regardless of ownership, were paying attention to these developments and preparing for what was to come. We are fortunate to have our shareholders recognize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our business and provide us with the support we need, as we need it. As a global company, we deployed region-specific crisis response teams that have also been collaborating on a global scale to share key learnings, best practices, and resources.

### WHAT IS RHG DOING TO HELP ITS FRANCHISEES DURING COVID-19?

Supporting our franchisees is one of our highest priorities. Since we own and manage hotels, too, we understand the severe impact COVID-19 has had on our franchisees. We have been regularly communicating revised policies, strategies, and best practices that can be implemented during this historic crisis. So far, we have implemented or deployed more than 20 measures designed to assist franchise owners operationally, commercially, or through cost and expense savings. A wonderful example of this is our virtual regional meetings that have proven to be successful in addressing specific COVID-19 measures related to operations, sales, and revenue generation. To date, we have held 10 virtual meetings with more than 1,000 attendees hosted by our veteran team of Regional Directors. This format also provides an open forum for peer-to-peer interactions. We also have offered to work with our owners on a case-by-case basis regarding franchise fee deferral options.

### RHG'S BRAND PROMISE IS EVERY MOMENT MATTERS. HOW DOES THAT GUIDE RHG THROUGH THIS CRISIS?

We are living in unprecedented times right now, and even in the difficulties, we are seeing our hotels do their part to keep employees and guests safe. Many of our hotels are trying to make a positive impact. In some situations, this has meant ceasing operations out of an abundance of caution, but it has also meant finding a way to make a difference in their communities and supporting their local government's efforts to mitigate the pandemic. While there is no doubt our business has taken an unexpected blow, we still see the resilience of our team members protecting guests and employees while simultaneously finding a way to keep moving forward. Even in these challenging times, our hotels are making every moment matter in some way or another.

### THIS INDUSTRY HAS NAVIGATED CRISES BEFORE. WHAT DID THOSE CRISES TEACH YOU ABOUT LEADING RHG THROUGH THIS ONE NOW?

I began my career 34 years ago in the middle of a crisis, and Radisson Hotel Group has been through both sudden and prolonged events that have dramatically affected what is considered "business as usual." We have always come back stronger, and we will this time, as well. When it comes to COVID-19, we are all on a level playing field, so it's more important than ever to rely on organizations like the AHHA and

the American Hotel & Lodging Association to keep us informed and connected better than ever as we move through uncharted waters together.

**WE KNOW THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IS UNITED LIKE NEVER BEFORE. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS YOU'VE WITNESSED IN NAVIGATING COVID-19 THAT REMIND YOU HOW RESILIENT WE ARE AS AN INDUSTRY?**

This is a crisis that affects all of us, regardless of our respective size and scope. Additionally, many of us have been in the industry for decades, working alongside one another for the same hotel brand or competing ones. Regardless, we still have common goals for our industry. What I'm noticing is the overall desire to work together for the greater good of the hospitality and travel industry, which might mean more collaboration and inclusiveness. We need to help be a voice for our hotels – together, we can be even stronger.

**WITH LAYOFFS BEING A HUGE CURRENT IMPACT FROM COVID-19, WHAT WILL THE INDUSTRY SEE ONCE WE'RE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS? WILL THE INDUSTRY BE PERMANENTLY CHANGED IN ANY WAY? ARE THERE ANY SILVER LININGS TO THIS CRISIS?**

Travel will always be a priority for the world's diverse population, and maybe even more so coming out of "shelter in place" rules due to COVID-19. While this experience may require permanent operational changes, Radisson Hotel Group believes that our team members are the ones that truly deliver our "Yes, I Can" spirit in our hotels. But with challenging times, hotel companies will now be better prepared to rethink our future preparedness models to account for unexpected issues and recognize the value of collaboration. Our guests will have different expectations than ever before, so we must collectively use this situation to successfully shape our businesses for the future. ■

The Country Inn & Suites by Radisson, Charlottesville-UVA, VA, is owned by AAHOA Treasurer Vinay Patel.



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# Small business relief: What more can be done?

*As hoteliers faced funding depletion from the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program shortly after they were launched, the question shifted to what more could be done.*

by ALICIA HOISINGTON





JACK\_THE\_SPARROW/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**O**VER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, THE UNITED States government has been working to provide relief to small businesses affected by the loss of business due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But the question remains: Has it been enough to help small-business hoteliers, who in many cases have seen record-breaking occupancy plummet to single digits almost overnight?

### PPP LIMITATIONS

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which was first launched in March, depleted its \$349 billion in funding in less than two weeks. Reports started circulating that larger businesses were receiving millions of dollars through the program intended for small businesses. In fact, Shake Shack, which has 189 locations, announced its intent to return \$10 million it had received. The confusion centered around whether the company was eligible to apply, with the CEO stating that the company applied because loans were open to any individual restaurant with no more than 500 employees.

Deborah Friedland, managing director of EisnerAmper’s Financial Advisory Services and Real Estate Groups, said some of the issues that arose from the first round of funding cropped up due to that lack of clarity around the program. As a result, some hotel owners faced some hiccups during the application process.

“I’m working with a couple of hoteliers who did not get applications in during the first round. There was an issue related to the employees and whose employees are they: Are they the owner’s or the [third-party] manager’s?” she said. “Because there was a scramble to get this legislation out, it wasn’t clear. Some lenders will just look at the face value and say you can’t apply.”

In late April, another bill passed that saw an additional \$321 billion going to the PPP and \$60 billion to the Small Business Administration’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. The SBA stopped accepting new applications for the EIDL on April 15 and announced Monday, May 4, that only agricultural business applications will be accepted for the program.

AAHOA Member and Past Chairman Bhavesh Patel, principal of ADM Hotels & Development, applied for funding from both the PPP and EIDL program during the first round. He went through his regional bank in New Jersey for the process, and it didn’t go off without a hitch.

“The application seemed like it went through, but then what happened was the website crashed,” Patel said. “We had to go back in and send them a manual copy that we had. But besides that, we didn’t experience many issues. We got approved.”

AAHOA Member Shreyas “JR” Patel, President and COO of Helix Hospitality, said his application process for the PPP was mostly smooth; however, he found that not many lenders



FGC/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

were ready to go by the time the program opened up shop for applicants. As a result, he lost about 10 days waiting for the process to be sorted out, and his application was submitted the same week that reports began circulating that funds had been exhausted.

“We spoke with different lenders we have relationships with, and we found one willing to take on multiple properties,” he said, adding that he ended up working with a regional bank that his company has a few loans with. “Then, we had to wait for them to iron out their internal process. After that, it was streamlined.”

### IS IT ENOUGH?

Setting aside the fact that many hoteliers who were approved for these programs were given little clarity on when the funds would arrive, the question then became whether the money would be enough to help small businesses. The answer? Perhaps, on a short-term basis. And that doesn't always build confidence during a time when no one is quite sure when normalcy will return in a global catastrophe.

“For us, it would be enough to get us through the next few months,” JR Patel said. “We are lucky enough to be geographically spread out. Our portfolio can balance out risk and a recovery time frame. Others who are in one market, it's going to take longer.”

Bhavesh Patel, who applied for funding for a couple of the company's properties, said the relief won't be enough.

“It doesn't even pay a quarter of it. If you have \$100,000 in expenses and 25 percent is on payroll, the PPP doesn't come close to taking care of that plus our other debt or property taxes,” he

said. “Both loans offer just a little bit of relief, but nowhere close to where they need to be. It's going to be a struggle.”

A report released by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) in late April echoed those sentiments, saying the PPP loan limits cover less than one month of average hotel operating costs. AHLA stated the relief may not be enough to save more jobs, as industry revenues had dropped 20 percent compared to 2019 and were only expected to rise to 40 percent later this year. The association said that if hoteliers couldn't pay their fixed costs, including mortgages, hotel jobs would continue to be lost. Thus, the report noted that 250-percent payroll loans would not be enough; instead, the PPP loan limits would need to be raised to almost 800 percent of covered costs.

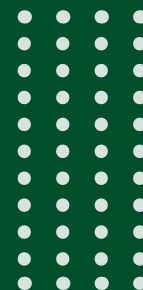
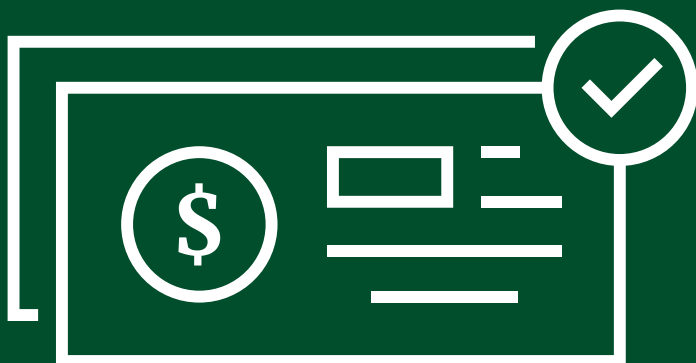
Bhavesh Patel also pointed back to the reports of larger businesses being awarded funding from the programs. According to the SBA, the owner of the Ruth's Chris Steak Houses chain got \$20 million even though it counts more than 5,000 employees and had \$468 million in revenue last year. The company, which has since agreed to return the money, was one of more than 50 publicly traded companies that had disclosed receiving approximately \$250 million in PPP funds. Ashford Inc. also came under fire in late April for receiving \$69 million, though the company has since said it would return the funds.

“The bigger companies got the brunt of the loans as we started hearing that [round one] funding had run out,” Bhavesh Patel said. “I thought this was going to be more for small businesses. It's hurting the small businesses that are trying to keep people's jobs in place.”



Unless there is some understanding in the CMBS world, we're not going to be able to work through the challenges. We're going to see a lot of hard defaults in the next six to nine months. We have to get together with servicers. It's one thing to keep everything open, but are we delaying another crisis?"

—SHREYAS "JR" PATEL, PRESIDENT AND COO OF HELIX HOSPITALITY, AAHOA MEMBER



PRANCH/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## A SECOND WAVE

While the additional funding for the PPP and EIDL program was a start, he said there's still more the government can do to help small businesses specifically.

"The government needs to somehow cover net debt, that's the biggest thing. I know some properties if they have SBA loans, they've got six months of net debt paid for by the SBA," Bhavesh Patel said. "But then these conventional banks that are willing to do deferments, but at the back end, you're still going to have to pay those as well. Then, you have the CMBS loans that are just in deferral right now. The biggest thing is somehow if there's a way for the government to pick up debt on small businesses, especially in the hotel business and the restaurant business because those are the ones that have been hit the most."

JR Patel said the issue around CMBS loans is really the next part to the crisis for hoteliers, beyond getting funds in hands.

"The second issue is the looming CMBS crisis that will come out because of defaults where owners didn't hit their debt coverage ratio or liquidity requirements," he said. "Unless there is some understanding in the CMBS world, we're not going to be able to work through the challenges. We're going to see a lot of hard defaults in the next six to nine months. We have to get together with servicers. It's one thing to keep everything open, but are we delaying another crisis?"

Besides that, Bhavesh Patel said if there's a way for the government to address property tax relief, it would be critical for hoteliers. "I understand property tax relief is sort of hard because this is what the government relies on to keep government operations going," he said. "But maybe there's some relief on the county or

school level as far as property taxes are concerned. I don't know where else they can maybe chip in."

Friedland agreed that more needs to be done. "I think whether it's more funding or other ways to assist small businesses and the employees related to hospitality, I think you're going to see there will be more need," she said. "That changes if we get a vaccine or some type of treatment for COVID-19. That's a game changer; everything's off the table if a company finds a cure or a vaccine."

## SECOND ROUND OF PPP: WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?

According to a May 1 report on the second round of the Paycheck Protection Program released by the Small Business Administration, more than 2.2 million loans were given out to businesses. Following are five things to glean from the report.

1. In terms of number of loans awarded and dollars issued, California received more than any other state (320,156 loans) with a total approved amount of more than \$33.2 billion.
2. New York, which approved the fourth-highest number of loans at 164,271, awarded the second-largest dollar amount of any other state at more than \$17.6 billion.
3. Of the total number of approved loans, the majority (70.8 percent) were for \$50,000 or under. Less than 1 percent of the loans were for more than \$5 million.
4. Of the total dollar amount awarded, the majority (about 18.6 percent) was for the \$350,000 to \$1 million range. Overall, the average loan size was \$79,000.
5. In an interim update on round-two funding released on May 5, the SBA approved 2,378,057 loans worth more than \$181 billion. With \$320 billion appropriated for round-two funding, funds were continuing to go quickly. ■

# ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

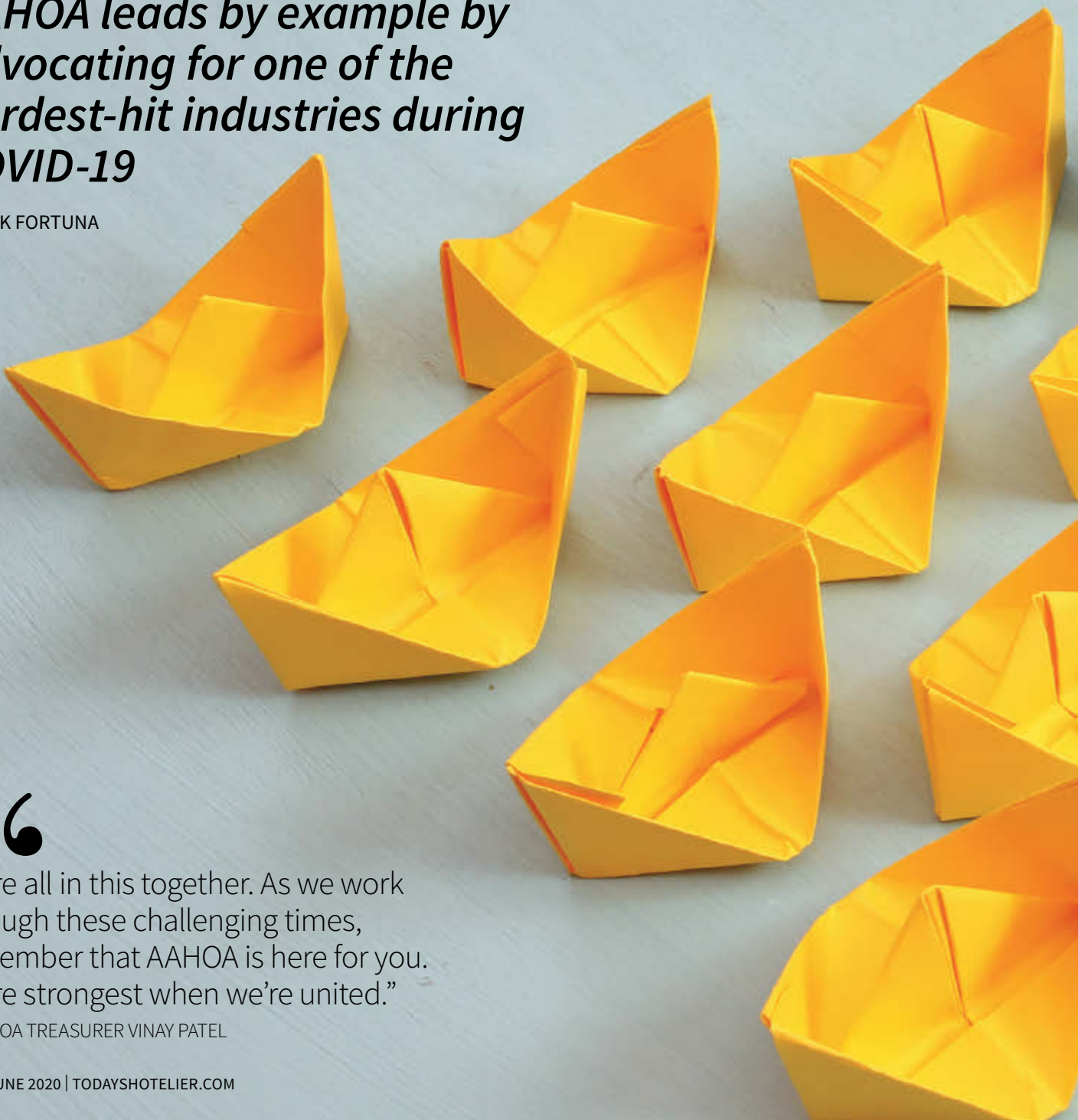
*AAHOA leads by example by advocating for one of the hardest-hit industries during COVID-19*

by NICK FORTUNA

“

We're all in this together. As we work through these challenging times, remember that AAHOA is here for you. We're strongest when we're united.”

—AAHOA TREASURER VINAY PATEL



**H**AVING ENDURED CRISES SUCH AS THE 2001 TERRORIST ATTACKS AND THE GLOBAL financial collapse of 2008, AAHOA Members know a thing or two about perseverance, and right from the start of the new coronavirus pandemic, the association has reflected its members' moxie.

Buoyed by its approximately 20,000 members, AAHOA has been a tireless advocate for hoteliers and the broader hospitality industry since the first news reports of the pandemic. AAHOA's leadership and government affairs teams have been a constant voice in the ears of lawmakers at every level, pushing for emergency financial assistance, the loosening of regulations, and other aid to keep hotels operating.

At the same time, AAHOA has been in constant contact with hotel brands and online travel agencies (OTAs), seeking the relaxation of brand standards, a reduction and postponement of royalty fees and lower commissions for OTAs. In a video message on April 23, AAHOA Treasurer Vinay Patel reassured members that the association has their backs during this time of unprecedented hardship for the industry.

"We're facing some tough times right now, something we've never dealt with in our entire lifetime," Patel said. "But I want to assure you that AAHOA is doing everything we can to come out on the positive side."

Patel urged members to contact their elected officials, tell them how the pandemic has impacted their businesses, and let them know that they are working hard to keep their businesses open and retain their employees. He said members should encourage their employees to call or write their legislators and share their stories as well.

When a broad cross-section of industry stakeholders makes their voices heard, they bolster the case for aid to the hospitality industry in subsequent stimulus bills, Patel said.

"We as a community rarely ask for help, but in these dire times, we need to look to our government for assistance," he said. "One of the things I've learned over time is that to make a difference, we all need to be involved. Now is the time to use your relationships and your role in your community to make sure that we're maximizing all of the resources that we have."

Patel asked members to be on the lookout for state-specific action alerts from AAHOA, which offer an easy way for members to advocate for the industry. In addition, he encouraged members to engage with their state lodging associations, which can leverage their relationships with city and county officials to address issues, and to contact their local utility providers to see if there are any programs that would help them save money.

"We're all in this together," Patel said. "As we work through these challenging times, remember that AAHOA is here for you. We're strongest when we're united."



In letters to legislators, hoteliers should include the following information:

- ➔ Occupancy rates before and since COVID-19
- ➔ General COVID-19 concerns as they relate to your business
- ➔ Your solutions to these concerns
- ➔ How you have managed your workforce
- ➔ What you expect to see on your property in the next four weeks

Here is a summary of AAHOA's advocacy efforts on behalf of members from the start of the pandemic through May 4, with more certain to follow in the months ahead.

#### STATON SOUNDS THE ALARM FOR THE INDUSTRY

Staton appeared on Fox Business Network and said that with occupancy rates cratering, the industry is facing a liquidity crisis and needs emergency financial assistance.

"Right now, we're in a world of hurt, and it has to do with occupancy," he said. "Our members are going to be facing severe challenges to make the payroll and pay the mortgage every month."

The association also set up a new email address – covid19@aahoa.com – to field members' questions.

MARCH  
13

#### AAHOA SENDS LETTER TO CONGRESS

The letter calls for a robust package of tax cuts, tax credits, regulatory relief, and financial assistance for the hard-hit hospitality industry.

"Hoteliers and their employees are suffering at levels that have not been seen in recent memory and, in some cases, ever," AAHOA President & CEO Cecil P. Staton wrote. "This is not simply a storm that the industry will eventually weather. It is a shockwave that will have consequences and repercussions for years to come."

MARCH  
16

#### AAHOA CALLS ON MEMBERS TO CONTACT LAWMAKERS

AAHOA issued an action alert calling on members to contact their local, state, and federal representatives to advocate for the industry. AAHOA provided letter templates for members to use, pointing out that its members own almost half of the hotels in the United States, employing approximately 600,000 workers and accounting for more than \$10 billion in payroll annually.

In a show of solidarity and strength, members sent more than 21,000 letters to legislators in the first week, a figure that would subsequently swell to 25,000.

MARCH  
18

#### AAHOA AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS CONTACT LEGISLATORS

AAHOA, in partnership with the National Association of Black Hotel Owners, Operators and Developers and the Latino Hotel Association, urged Senate leadership to include the hospitality industry in the proposed CARES Act stimulus package. The associations pushed for significantly higher funding levels for assistance programs, as well as for a loan-guarantee program, a period of loan forbearance with lenders, and an extension of loan maturity dates.

Separately, AAHOA sent a letter to governors urging them to recognize hotels and motels as essential businesses that should be allowed to remain open. In addition, AAHOA and its industry partners continued to pressure Congress to act as negotiations stalled on the CARES Act.

"America's small businesses and their employees are running out of time while Washington insiders play politics with their futures," Staton said in a statement. "Congress needs to come together and deliver critical financial assistance to the industries and workers hit hardest."

MARCH  
23

#### AAHOA APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF THE CARES ACT

In a statement, Staton lauded the stimulus package, which created the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and expanded the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, both administered by the Small Business Administration. However, Staton made it clear that the bill doesn't do nearly enough to address the impact of the pandemic on hoteliers and their employees.

"The formula for determining maximum loans still does not provide enough liquidity for hotel owners," Staton said. "We will continue to work with our industry partners and leaders in Washington to strengthen the loan and grant program in subsequent legislation to allow hotel owners to continue meeting their payroll, operational, and mortgage obligations during this pandemic."

MARCH  
27

#### AAHOA AGAIN SENDS LETTER TO GOVERNORS

The letter urged governors to temporarily suspend property taxes, penalties for late payments, and fees for hotels; temporarily postpone the various taxes hotels are subject to; and consider enacting a bridge-loan program for businesses.

APRIL  
8

#### AAHOA LAUNCHES BRAND SURVEY TO ADVOCATE ON THE BEHALF OF FRANCHISEES

AAHOA has been working around the clock to seek immediate financial relief for hoteliers from every possible source, including from franchisors, government officials and organizations, vendors, OTAs, and others. On April 9, AAHOA launched a Brand Survey to ask franchisees to share their perspective on the relief they've received from franchisors thus far and specific requests they think will provide the greatest additional relief in the long- and short-term. Based

on the feedback, AAHOA has been engaging in high-level discussions with the brands in order to improve communications and relationships between them and our members.

APRIL  
9

### AAHOA CALLS FOR MORE PPP FUNDING

With the PPP's funding of \$350 billion set to run out within two weeks of the program's launch, AAHOA urged Congress to return to Washington. Lawmakers weren't expected back until May, and Staton said the nation's hoteliers can't afford to wait that long.

"Hotel owners and their employees are hurting now and scraping by week to week," Staton said in a statement. "Hotels across the country are furloughing or laying off employees and shutting their doors, and unless Congress acts, we could see thousands more close their doors before the end of April."

APRIL  
14

### NEW WEBPAGE FOR VENDOR DEALS

AAHOA set up a webpage offering deals to members from industry partners. The special offers are aimed at helping hoteliers save money during the pandemic.

APRIL  
16

### AAHOA PRAISES PASSAGE OF THE MOST RECENT STIMULUS BILL

Staton said AAHOA is grateful for the passage of the bipartisan Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, which replenished PPP funding. But he urged Congress to extend PPP funding through the year's end, saying the bill still doesn't provide hotel owners with enough liquidity to weather the pandemic.

On average, PPP loans cover only about 47 percent of a hotel's operating costs, and many hotels are seeing single-digit occupancy rates, he said. Staton said policymakers also should give more consideration to a business's debt obligations, such as mortgages, as they formulate relief loans and determine how they may be spent.

"The stimulus does not address the reality that this crisis will not be over in a matter of weeks," Staton said. "Public caution and conflicting messages from government officials about reopening will mean a slow return to travel, tourism, conventions, and meetings. This means that hotels will be one of the last industries to recover."

"Without targeted and meaningful support, policymakers run the risk that thousands of hotels and the millions of jobs they create may not be around when the recovery from this pandemic begins."

APRIL  
21

APRIL  
22

APRIL  
23

### AAHOA JOINS OTHER INDUSTRY GROUPS IN ESTABLISHING MINIMUM RECOMMENDED STANDARDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

AAHOA is proud to represent America's hotel owners on the advisory council that developed Safe Stay, an industry initiative focused on hotel cleaning standards. Safe Stay, led by AHLA and in partnership with AAHOA and other members of the advisory council, is an industry-wide enhanced standard of health and safety protocols designed to prepare America's hotels to safely welcome back guests and employees as the economy reopens. Also released the same day, AAHOA was a contributing organization to the Travel in the New Normal guidelines, issued by the U.S. Travel Association, which describes vigorous measures the travel industry will follow to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and help to communicate across each and every step of a traveler's journey. ■

APRIL  
24

MAY  
4

### AAHOA AGAIN URGES CONGRESS TO ACT

With PPP funding exhausted, AAHOA again called on Congress to pass another stimulus bill immediately. Hotels and restaurants made up only 8 percent of businesses receiving the first batch of PPP loans.

In a statement, Staton said the hospitality industry was among the first to feel the economic effects of COVID-19 as thousands of events were canceled, and it will be among the last to recover because of barriers to travel.

"Hotel owners and their employees are among the hardest hit by the economic effects of this pandemic," Staton said. "Congress must immediately authorize additional funding for this crucial capital lifeline and direct the Small Business Administration to permit lenders to continue submitting applications into a queue so that valuable time is not lost while we wait for Congress to act."

"The virus and its effects on our economy continue to make millions of Americans suffer, and congressional inaction is only compounding that pain. I've spoken with countless hotel owners, and many are still awaiting action on PPP loan applications."

### AAHOA OFFERS FREE HEALTH RESOURCES

With almost half of American adults saying the pandemic has impacted their mental health, AAHOA, in partnership with UnitedHealth Group, offers several free health resources to members, their employees, and their families, including hotlines for mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention. More information is available on the Health and Wellness section of AAHOA's website.

### AAHOA CALLS FOR PASSAGE OF INSURANCE BILL

A bipartisan group of House lawmakers introduced the Never Again Small Business Protection Act. The bill would require business-interruption insurance to cover businesses and nonprofits for losses stemming from all government-ordered shutdowns following the declaration of a national emergency. Coverage would support businesses impacted for at least 30 days as long as they retain their workers and maintain their health-insurance coverage.

In a statement, AAHOA Chairwoman Jagruti Panwala stressed the importance of the bill, saying many hoteliers who had faithfully paid their premiums for years have been blindsided by fine print in their policies or by the unprecedented government measures aimed at flattening the curve, which devastated the industry.

"As government travel restrictions to curb transmission of COVID-19 began to take their toll on the nation's hotel owners, we expected to rely on our business-interruption insurance to help pay our bills and keep our staff employed," Panwala said. "Unfortunately, so many of us have been told our policies do not cover shutdowns such as those ordered by the government in response to this pandemic."



# What options do CMBS borrowers have for relief from the economic effects of COVID-19?

by RUSHI SHAH

**A** **S OWNERS IN ONE OF** the hardest-hit industries, many hoteliers who have enjoyed a long run of healthy growth are now scrambling to cover loan payments, support employees, and maintain operations. Even those able to wait out the current crisis will face uncertainty on when demand drivers will return to levels necessary to stabilize cash flow. Government programs can provide some relief to small businesses, including many hotel owners, but borrowers with loans through the Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities (CMBS) market face specific challenges as they navigate these unprecedented economic conditions.

## CMBS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

There are clear reasons why commercial real estate owners, including hoteliers, have turned to CMBS loans instead of bank and other conventional loans; the top driver being that they couldn't get what they needed from their current lender. For example, CMBS loans have historically provided owners with the highest leverage loans at the lowest personal risk in the form of non-recourse. This scenario is equivalent to owning stock in a company and having a put option as an insurance policy. Savvy hotel owners have also used non-recourse CMBS loans to create liquidity for their personal balance sheets.

For most CMBS borrowers, however, this loan mechanism was chosen because it afforded low interest rates, longer fixed-rate terms, longer amortizations, and allowed them to pull tax-free cash out to use for growth and to distribute to their partners. This is similar to a corporation issuing bonds and then using the proceeds to execute stock buy backs.

CMBS has been proven to be an effective tool for calculated growth, allowing borrowers to continue to keep the upside with almost no downside. Post pandemic, however, no one knows if every borrower will only need three to six months to successfully weather the proverbial storm. This creates an ambiguous environment.



The fact that many property values have already dropped or will fall below the CMBS loan amount only contributes to this ongoing uncertainty. This ambiguity is particularly problematic to CMBS loans because special servicers, who are appointed by the b-piece buyers and control any loan modifications, are wary about restructuring terms. For assets where the disruption due to the COVID-19 crisis is truly temporary and are therefore expected to bounce back and preserve value as countries re-open for business, special servicers may grant short-term relief through forbearance or deferment. As a result, it is critical for borrowers to understand the role and motivation of the master and special servicer

before requesting any temporary concessions or permanent modifications.

**MANAGING EXPECTATIONS**

Unlike bank loans that are kept on a balance sheet, CMBS loans are governed by securitization agreements. In exchange for non-recourse, long-term lower rates, higher leverage, and the ability to pull cash out, borrowers pledge to satisfy the loan in a predictable manner as outlined upfront in the loan documentation. To ensure this predictability, CMBS loans have strict servicing guidelines that are not at all flexible and involve multiple layers of decision-makers that each have their own incentives. This is somewhat done by design

to prevent fraud and serve as checks and balances for the ultimate bond investors. Under normal circumstances, this setup works. In a time of wide-spread crisis, however, it can break down. And likely because of the potential political optics of the government bailing out Wall Street, there is no wholesale government action to provide relief for CMBS borrowers or bond investors. Borrowers remain at the mercy of the special servicers representing the b-piece buyers’ best interests.

**SERVICERS’ STANCE**

Master servicers are borrowers’ primary contacts for day-to-day business. Their main role is to provide ongoing cashing service and they have little control over the actual mechanics of the loan.

Subsequently, master servicers are not staffed to handle an influx of inquiries due to a mass event like the COVID-19 pandemic. Master servicers are currently inundated with requests from hotel owners with diverse situations and needs, making it extremely difficult to keep track. Some borrowers are asking for forbearance or deferment. Others want to reduce their principal balance or have reserves waived, while some want a lower interest rate, an interest-only period, or a combination of concessions. All of these requests are being made in the same timeframe, borrowers need answers now so they don’t miss payments, and the master servicers have to obtain consent from the special servicers to respond with any solutions. This also runs the clock because in order for the special servicer to grant a relief, it will need to take time to review the loan, the borrower history, the asset history, that particular market’s conditions, and the specific hotel’s data.

**TEMPORARY RELIEF VS. LOAN MODIFICATIONS**

Changes such as adjusting the principal payment schedule, making the loan interest-only, or taking principal reductions in the loan amount are considered substantial restructuring or modification of the loan and require that the loan be transferred into special servicing by the master servicer. They also typically carry



Borrowers seeking relief should communicate with their master servicer. However, they need to be extremely careful how they communicate and should engage an expert to guide them.”

additional fees for the borrower because the special servicer must re-underwrite the deal, re-appraise the property, and potentially re-inspect the asset from a structural and environmental standpoint to ensure the integrity and the quality are consistent with when the loan was originated. When the loan is in special servicing, there are likely other costs associated such as default interest, late charges, and/or modification fees.

A special servicer can authorize other forms of relief that do not require modification of the loan documents. These may include the ability to use FF&E and seasonality reserves toward loan payments. Typically, these concessions can be used for a temporary period and do not require the loan to be transferred to special servicing. Additionally, the special servicer may consent to temporarily halt the collection of reserves. B-piece buyers are discussing collaborating to create a fund to make loan payments on behalf of the borrowers on certain loans that are truly only temporarily disrupted. Implementing this program may not be feasible, however, as it would require a coordinated effort among all b-piece buyers and would require altering the special-purpose entity guidelines.

Borrowers seeking relief should communicate with their master servicer. However, they need to be extremely careful how they communicate and should engage an expert to guide them. Under CMBS loan documentation, if a master servicer has reason to believe that there will be an imminent default, they could move the loan into special servicing and the borrower will start incurring special-servicing fees.

The minute you tell them you won't be able to make a payment they, will queue

you for special servicing, whether you wanted to take that leap or not. In order to avoid automatically triggering this move, borrowers that are well-capitalized, have healthy reserves, or may be eligible for other options should not be overly pessimistic or imply that they are going to default in their communication to the master servicer. Borrowers should instead tell the master servicer that they are looking for temporary relief due to the COVID-19 crisis.

When requesting either temporary relief or a loan modification, borrowers will need to compare current and historical revenue for the same period, outline booking cancellations, and prove direct COVID-19-related impact. Borrowers also will need to demonstrate their willingness to manage out of this crisis and their intention to hold onto the asset for a long period of time. Arguments must be backed up with facts and data, and expert support can help.

#### PRE-PAYING A CMBS LOAN

Many CMBS borrowers are considering paying off their loans to avoid using their assets for non-payment default. Because interest rates are at historical lows, the cost of defeasance or yield maintenance to prepay the loan may be high. To help borrowers avoid these heavy pre-payment penalties, legal experts are lobbying to allow borrowers to pledge similar maturity investment-grade corporate or government-sponsored bonds as substitute collateral for the subject property. At first glance, this seems like a possible solution. Unfortunately, in the current market, there are few lenders who are willing to finance a hotel to take out the CMBS loan. Most banks or bonafide lenders aren't financing hotel assets right

now. Special servicers believe the substitution of collateral with risky bonds (other than Treasury bonds) increases the risk of the bond holders and is a cost-prohibitive proposition.

#### PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Many hotel owners are looking to take advantage of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and other SBA relief loans offered under the CARES Act. SBA loans are sure to conflict with CMBS loan documents, which means servicer consent is required before putting one on. There are mixed feelings in the industry on whether PPP loans also conflict and require that same consent. Some people believe because PPP loans are unsecured, they do not present a conflict, while others argue that the PPP loan is being made to the entity that holds the CMBS loan and therefore could conflict. To avoid potential future fallout, it is best for borrowers to confirm consent with their master servicer in all instances. ■



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*financing, Shah specializes in structuring and placing high-leverage, non-recourse bridge and permanent debt with cash out for full – and limited-service hotels nationwide. Since joining the firm's predecessor, Aries Capital, in 2015, Shah has structured and closed hundreds of millions in financing for all property types. Shah has held previous positions at Northern Trust and has an MBA from the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business.*

# The Impact of COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES FOR AMERICA'S HOTEL OWNERS

In these uncertain times, we're committed to keeping you informed on how COVID-19 is affecting our members and the hotel industry.

Visit [bit.ly/AAHOACOV19](https://bit.ly/AAHOACOV19) to read the latest news and to catch up on AAHOA's previous daily updates.



# Small businesses are important now more than ever before

by ALFREDO ORTIZ

**T**HERE'S NO DENYING THAT **BUSINESSES**, especially small ones, have taken a financial hit in the past few months. But in the days after the initial economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak and containment precautions, we were quickly reminded of the vital role these businesses play in our communities.

In the United States alone, there are more than 30 million small businesses that employ nearly 60 million people. Small businesses are the engine of the economy and the livelihood of so many Americans. And in an instant, there was great uncertainty for many of those individuals.

Small businesses operate on modest budgets and economic disruptions can easily push operations over the cliff.

## REPRESENTING MAIN STREET

My organization, the Job Creators Network, worked tirelessly with government officials and the White House to ensure that small businesses were represented and supported in every relief package that was passed by Congress. As each phase of relief was negotiated, we elevated the voice of Main Street, expressing their needs and desires, and worked closely with our partner organizations like AAHOA to amplify our collective voices.

During the initial safeguards, like social distancing and crowd limitations, local communities came together in support of the most vulnerable. We were all reminded of the great importance of small businesses.

## SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES

Many Americans supported their local restaurants by purchasing gift cards or



ordering delivery. Through campaigns like The Great American Takeout, a social media push that encouraged diners to support local businesses by ordering takeout, restaurants received a boost in sales.

Restaurants had to adapt quickly when limited to delivery and takeout services; many had to join third-party delivery apps like Grubhub and UberEats in order to survive. Even fine-dining restaurants resorted to delivery, adjusting their menus to provide food that could be transported. Other restaurants opened “markets” that provided customers with pantry staples that weren’t readily available at grocery stores, like dry goods, dairy products, and even toilet paper.

## MADE IN THE USA

Additionally, we were reminded of the importance of American-made products over foreign, mass-produced items. This crisis halted the availability of many necessities, but we saw U.S. companies

rise to the occasion. In the effort to fill product gaps, businesses around the country were adjusting to the needs of the market, specifically, the needs of health care workers.

In Texas, Bendt Distilling, Co. halted production of whiskey in order to provide hospitals, law enforcement, and first responders with free hand sanitizer. In Boston, New Balance announced it would be manufacturing masks for hospital workers. The country’s oldest clothing company, Brooks Brothers, did the same.

Moreover, Facebook launched a program pledging \$100 million to aid small businesses during the crisis. Following suit, Google also announced that it would provide \$800 million to small businesses and other groups.

The list goes on.

These are just a few examples of the efforts communities have made to support peers, small businesses, hourly employees, first responders, and hospitals.



### NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY

The COVID-19 crisis provided vast uncertainty for small business owners. But with swift action from politicians, support and sacrifice from communities, and the use of technology, many owners were able to gain traction and adjust to this new way of doing business.

Recovery from this recession for small businesses is crucial. As businesses and the economy rebuilds, politicians should continue to have Main Street’s best interests in mind as they continue to draft legislation. Moving past this catastrophe will take time, but mom-and-pop shops are resilient and unstoppable when smart policies support and allow them to be.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

There are several focuses that should have the attention of lawmakers and voters alike. Freezing minimum-wage hikes is one example. Adding additional financial burden to the backs of small business

“During the initial safeguards, like social distancing and crowd limitations, local communities came together in support of the most vulnerable. We were all reminded of the great importance of small businesses.”

owners will only make the fallout of the pandemic worse.

Some states and localities that had planned on raising the minimum wage later this year have placed that legislative item on hold. For example, Hayward, CA, was supposed to implement new minimum-wage legislation starting on July 1. As a result of recent events, they have postponed this measure. Other localities should take note.

Instead, lawmakers should focus on ensuring small businesses are prepared to reopen and quickly get employees back

to work. Early efforts passed by Congress, such as the Paycheck Protection Program, helped small businesses weather the initial stages of the crisis. But now we need to get them past the finish line.

The next few months will be a time of rebuilding for the economy and our communities. We must continue to encourage smart policies while continuing to support small businesses. After all, small business is too big to fail. ■

*Alfredo Ortiz is the president and CEO of the Job Creators Network.*

# San Jose

by ASIF LAKHANI



**I**N MID-MARCH, THE BAY AREA WAS one of the first areas in the country to see positive cases of COVID-19, and subsequently, one of the first places to move forward with a shelter-in-place order. California became the first state in the country to initiate a statewide lockdown just three days later.

## PROJECT ROOMKEY

In early April, California Gov. Gavin Newsom announced an initiative called Project Roomkey, which had the goal of providing 15,000 rooms and more than 1,300 trailers plus meals, security, and custodial services for the state's homeless in the fight against COVID-19. That move also was the first of its kind in the nation. FEMA will provide up to 75 percent of the cost-share reimbursement to the state and local governments, according to the release. Local

governments had already secured more than 6,800 rooms when the announcement was made.

San Jose had the highest number of COVID-19 cases, at least 1,000 both in Santa Clara County and the San Francisco Bay Area as well.

In response to the pandemic, the city has been housing first responders at local hotels and converted two event centers into temporary shelters and clinics for the homeless equipped with showers, beds, outlets, and laundry stations.

Furthermore, the San Jose convention centers' F&B staffs also have been working tirelessly to provide 10,000 meals per week – breakfast, lunch, and hot dinners daily – to the city's first responders and the homeless being housed at the local hotels and two convention centers. The latter is the city's commitment to the Project Roomkey initiative.

## LOVE SAN JOSE

As the city's tourism and travel organization, Visit San Jose is responsible for keeping a pulse on the town's tourism and event industries in addition to much more. Shortly after the pandemic hit, the Visit team launched Love San Jose campaign online that includes a regularly updated list of hotels that are open to the public during the pandemic, plus virtual engagement activities and easily accessible ways to support local small businesses and restaurants during the lockdown. Additional resources listed include a list of restaurants open for takeout, industry resources, and a consolidated list of good news happening in the community.

Visit San Jose leadership has been communicating with local hotel partners daily about the number of hotel rooms available and the status of the inhabitants and resources to make sure all needs are

In its 2018 Annual Report, Team San Jose, which is the nonprofit economic development organization of Visit San Jose, concluded **973,500** international visitors spent **\$856.3 million** in Santa Clara County's largest city that year while domestic visitors accounted for **19.1 million** trips and **\$1.77 billion** in visitor spending. San Jose also has six city-owned venues in its portfolio total, the Annual Report said. Although the pandemic certainly disrupted cash flow and income that may take years for local businesses to recoup, it's fairly safe to say that Silicon Valley's headquarters will have to be one of the first to rebound. Simply too much is at stake here for it not to be.

# SAN JOSE

“

Recognized by Bay Area locals as the true home of Silicon Valley, San Jose is crucial to the global economy and the livelihood of multiple industries in a myriad of ways, thus making containment of the virus as it pertains to the region at large crucial on multiple levels.”

addressed before the situation becomes even more urgent.

### POPULATION CONCERNS DURING THE PANDEMIC

With more than one million residents, San Jose is California's third-largest city by population in the state – behind Los Angeles and San Diego, respectively – and, by the same metric, the 10th-largest city in the country. Recognized by Bay Area locals as the true home of Silicon Valley, San Jose


is crucial to the global economy and the livelihood of multiple industries in a myriad of ways, thus making containment of the virus as it pertains to the region at large crucial on multiple levels.

### NUMBERS FOR A REBOUND

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largest city that year while domestic visitors accounted for 19.1 million trips and \$1.77 billion in visitor spending. San Jose also has six city-owned venues in its portfolio.

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# Wading into the next decade: Risk outlook for the hospitality industry

by JOHN WELTY

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**T**HE START OF EACH NEW decade brings with it a time to reflect on the 10 years prior, as well as the opportunity to contemplate what the future might bring. Looking back at the 2010s, the hotel industry faced several challenges, including devastating hurricanes, terrifying active-shooter situations, and far-reaching cyberattacks. While we may have been hoping for a fresh start to 2020 with fewer headline-making incidents, we instead were walloped with a pandemic, the COVID-19 virus, which has painfully disrupted not only the hotel industry but our global economy and our way of life.

That said, the hotel industry, like many others, is always facing challenges and reinventing itself in the face of adversity. Weathering major events is really nothing too out of the ordinary for our industry. In this article, we'll look at some of the challenges the industry has faced and how business leaders can prepare for new challenges in the years ahead.

## WEATHERING STORMS

As Mother Nature has reminded us time and time again, weather events can do significant damage to businesses in the hospitality space in terms of physical damage to the property, potential injuries to

staff and guests, as well as business interruptions leading to lost revenue.

Record-breaking weather events such as hurricanes like Harvey and Sandy, major tornadoes in the Midwest, and wildfires in California demonstrate the negative impact these natural disasters can have on businesses. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, from 2010 to 2019, weather disasters cost the U.S. \$802.2 billion. From 1980 to 1989, that number was just \$127.7 billion.

While the pace at which these events are growing is alarming, it also begs the question – is there more the industry can



The hotel industry, like many others, is always facing challenges and reinventing itself in the face of adversity.”



**WEATHER READY**

Are your staff and leadership prepared for the next major weather event? Ask yourself the following questions and take the necessary actions:

- Are my emergency manuals up to date with checklists for natural disasters?
- Do I have the necessary equipment for each event on property?
- Are my employees trained on what to do in the event of an emergency?

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**CYBER SECURE**

Your general property insurance may not cover cyber attacks. Look into your policies and run a cyber-risk assessment to see how your SOP can protect your guests, your staff, and yourself.



REDLINEVECTOR/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

do to protect itself? The answer is yes. Fortunately, technology for tracking these events has greatly improved how scientists can predict and gauge how the climate is changing and shifting year to year. With the right natural disaster plans in place and this forecasting information, hotel owners can take action to mitigate their risk exposure.

To combat weather-related risks, hotel management may find it beneficial to create, review, or update emergency manuals and checklists for disasters. Further, owners and operators can consider training staff on the plans, ensuring needed supplies and equipment are on hand, and having proper weather reporting tools and monitoring them. Additionally, they can have a system set in place for alerting staff, informing guests of plans, and when to take action to secure loose objects and board up windows, among other things. These steps won't guarantee protection from all weather-related events, but by having a plan in place and trained staff that understands how to implement it, hotel managers can be confident that they have put their hotel, its staff, and guests in a much better position to weather the storm.

**CYBER CRIME**

Another increasing threat to global businesses that we've experienced over the past decade and one that doesn't seem to be subsiding as we move forward is cyber-crime – and the hospitality industry is no exception. In 2018, Marriott International Inc. experienced a cyberattack that cost the company \$72 million as of May 2019.

Common network security threats are social engineering schemes, third-party or vendor exposures, ransomware,

point-of-sale intrusions, and phishing attempts, among others. A cyberattack could result from something as simple as an employee receiving a phishing email from a hacker and responding by downloading malware that brings down the system.

For hotel owners looking to mitigate their cyber risk, they should first take steps to understand the problem. Further, they need to understand that a cyberattack is not typically a risk covered by their general liability insurance. Additional insurance may be beneficial.

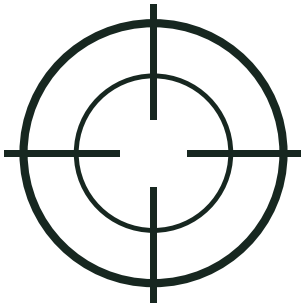
Once they understand their risk, business owners in the hospitality space should assess their risks and take steps to protect their business. These steps could include conducting cyber-risk assessments, training employees on how to identify phishing attacks and how to respond to ransomware attacks, as well as simply making sure virus protection software is up to date. Additionally, owners and operators should evaluate their current cyber insurance policy and consider whether coverage including business interruption and lost wages may be beneficial. When applicable, these policies can potentially allow hotel owners to continue to pay employees' wages and cover other operational expenses.

**ACTIVE SHOOTERS**

Active-shooter incidents have sadly reached new heights in recent years, peaking in 2017 with 30 incidents reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The top-five venues targeted in these active-shooter cases continue to be schools, workplaces, stores/malls, entertainment, and government buildings. However, in 2017, the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas provided the venue to gunman

Steven Paddock to stockpile weapons and serve as a sniper perch for him to kill 58 people and injure hundreds more.

The hospitality industry and many others have taken significant action in response to active-shooter incidents. These changes have been primarily focused on Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training, where more than 144,000 law enforcement first responders have been trained. Further, hotels have made policy changes regarding their do-not-disturb signs, allowing staff to enter at will if more than 24 hours pass without response from a guest. Some hotels are even considering luggage scanners to look for weapons and more. That said, all hotels should consider implementing staff training programs to help them recognize and report suspicious activity and make sure security systems are properly maintained. Due to the higher-than-average employee turnover in the hospitality industry, quarterly training and updates could be beneficial.



**PHYSICAL SAFETY**

Law enforcement first responders have undergone updated training to handle an active-shooter event, but has your staff? Take the following steps to ensure staff and guest safety in the event of an active-shooter situation:

- Implement staff training to help recognize and report suspicious activity
- Make sure security systems are maintained and working
- Make any necessary policy changes to do-not-disturb signs and checking luggage

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**A GLOBAL PANDEMIC**

The COVID-19 virus has changed the world and guest expectations are following suit. How will you ensure health and sanitation for your guests? Take a look at your sanitization processes, employee sick policies, and even rules on how to handle ill guests to build guest confidence in a post-COVID-19 world.

GHRZUZUDU/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**THE COVID-19 VIRUS**

The COVID-19 virus is at the forefront of every person’s mind. Hotels have felt the brunt of this pandemic through decreased or non-existent occupancy as state governments have closed non-essential services. It remains unclear how long the crisis will last.

It is also unclear how hotels can rebuild business once the pandemic has calmed. Now, we are starting to read about hotels serving as make-shift hospitals for COVID-19 patient overflow, as temporary residences for health care workers, and as shelters for homeless persons, among other things.

Likely, after the pandemic subsides, reopening and rebuilding business will be a slow process, particularly when compared to how quickly things were shut down. In order to rebuild bookings, guest confidence will need to be restored – a challenge like no other.

There will be many factors involved in helping guests to feel comfortable traveling again and in adjusting back to their normal routines. Room reservations, restaurant and bar seating, and spa visits will take time to get back to normal. The hospitality industry will have to work collectively and look to each other to rebuild guest confidence after the government removes COVID-19 restrictions.

Transparency for guests will likely be a key part of the equation – providing information on cleaning and sanitizing, as well as rules on employee, and guest sick policies and more.

Many of us hope for a new decade to bring a fresh start or clean slate, not a pandemic that threatens lives and the global economy. But the hospitality industry is strong and resilient. It has overcome challenges throughout its history and will no doubt find ways to continue to tackle the challenges ahead and come out stronger than ever.

*Policy terms and conditions differ. Nothing contained herein guarantees coverage will be afforded under any given fact scenario or policy language.* ■



John Welty is the President of SUITELIFE Underwriting Managers, LLC, a series of RSG Underwriting Managers, LLC, an all-lines insurance and risk program for

premier hotels, resorts, luxury boutiques, gated communities, and hotel management companies. RSG Underwriting Managers is a subsidiary of Ryan Specialty Group, LLC, which is an international specialty insurance organization that provides innovative solution for brokers, agents, and insurance carriers. In California: RSG Insurance Services, LLC License # 0E50879.

# Top five COVID-19 FAQ for HR

by DEEPA SUBRAMANIAN – OGLETREE, DEAKINS, NASH, SMOAK & STEWART

Below is a list of 5 FAQ that addresses a variety of COVID-related legal topics. Please keep in mind this is general federal guidance. Many states and localities are issuing executive orders and ordinances that may have different restrictions based on where your hotel is located. The information should not be construed as legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship.

**Q May an employer count an employee’s time away from work due to the employee’s own COVID-19 illness against the employee in terms of the employer’s attendance policy?**

Yes, as long as the illness is not an FMLA-qualifying serious health condition, in which case the employer should comply with the FMLA’s prohibition on counting these types of absences against an employee. Note that there may be times when complications arising from COVID-19 (or COVID-19’s effects on a preexisting medical condition) could be considered a disability, in which case the ADA may be implicated and a reasonable accommodation may be required.

**Q Are employees of small businesses (i.e., those with fewer than 50 employees) exempt from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)?**

The DOL’s temporary regulations allow for this exemption if an authorized officer of the business has determined that:

1. Providing the leave would result in the small business’s expenses and financial obligations exceeding available business revenues and cause the small business to cease operating at a minimal capacity;
2. The absence of the employee or employees requesting paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave would entail a substantial risk to the financial health or operational capabilities of the small business because of their specialized skills, knowledge of the business, or responsibilities; or
3. There are not sufficient workers who are able, willing, and qualified, and who will be available at the time and place needed, to perform the labor or services provided by the employee or employees requesting paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave, and these labor or services are needed for the small business to operate at a minimal capacity.

Remember, this exception is only for the EFMLEA and EPSLA leave for child care and school closure-related leave.

To elect this small business exemption, the employer must document that a determination has been made pursuant to the above criteria. The employer is not required to send such documentation to the DOL but should retain the records in its files for four years.

**Q What if an employee is furloughed? Does he or she qualify for FFCRA leave?**

No. The DOL’s position is that the EPSLA and EFMLEA are designed to cover hours the employee is expected to work. If an employee is not expected to work (because of a layoff, furlough, temporary business closure, or otherwise) the employee is not entitled to leave.

**Q May an employer require an employee with COVID-19 to use his or her vacation time and/or other paid time off for the absence?**

Yes, subject to (a) the provisions of the employer’s current vacation time, paid time off (PTO), and other applicable policies, and (b) any state laws (e.g., implied contract of employment) restricting an employer’s ability to interpret or amend those policies. However, employers with fewer than 500 employees should review obligations under the FFCRA.

**Q May an employer disclose an employee’s actual or probable COVID-19 diagnosis to others?**

Employers should inform fellow employees of their potential workplace exposure but only to the extent necessary to adequately inform them of their potential workplace exposure, while maintaining confidentiality under the ADA (i.e., without revealing the infected individual’s name unless otherwise directed by the CDC or applicable public health authority).

Employers also may communicate to non-exposed employees and non-employees (e.g., customers) generally that there has been a potential COVID-19 exposure, without sharing additional identifying information.

Employers also should evaluate any applicable state privacy laws or state mini-ADA. ■

*Deepa Subramanian represents employers in all aspects of employment law, including employment litigation and counseling. Subramanian advises and defends clients in federal and state employment-related lawsuits, including actions alleging discrimination, harassment, retaliation, violations of wage and hour law, and breach of contract. In addition, Subramanian provides advice to employers, including hoteliers, concerning litigation avoidance, leaves of absence, employee discipline, hiring and termination issues, reductions in force, and other personnel matters. Subramanian also has experience reviewing and creating employee handbooks and policies, drafting and negotiating employment agreements, severance agreements, covenants not to compete and non-solicitation agreements, in addition to providing training for employers and employees on employment-related issues. Subramanian earned her undergraduate degree at Emory University and her Juris Doctor at Vanderbilt Law School.*



# Covid-19

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**Dickson Furniture Manufacturers**  
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**DIRECTV, Inc.**  
Jeff Fox: (310) 560-0323



**DISH Business**  
Tyler Floyd: (303) 723-1854



**Ferguson**  
Brian Winterble: (954) 597-3163



**Foliot Furniture**  
Mahesh Parekh: (702) 278-7380



**Fresh Air**  
Matt Hanson: (603) 643-7181



**Friedrich Air Conditioning Company**  
Dave McDonald: (210) 546-0500



**Gallagher Affinity**  
Jennifer Parker: (703) 461-5200



**GreenTree Hospitality Group**  
Scott Pokorny: (952) 240-8181



**HD Supply Facilities Maintenance**  
Stratton Michaels: (800) 431-3000



**Hodges Ward Elliott**  
Clint W. Hodges: (404) 233-6000



**The Home Depot Pro**  
Susan Wright:  
(866) 412-6726 x105540



**Hospitality1**  
Dhar Patel: (714) 473-9813



**Hospitality Designs**  
Ruben Cohen: (877) 468-3588



**Hospitality Success**  
Anthony Melchiorri:  
(917) 295-1628



**INFINITI HR**  
Daniel Mormino: (623) 455-6234



**Just In Time Communications**  
Justin Jones: (855) 565-1432



**Lodging Concepts**  
Jinesh Naran: (714) 694-5980



**Macrotech**  
Dipak Patel: (650) 376-2163



**Marcus & Millichap**  
Alexis Hummel: (630) 570-2225



**Margaritaville**  
Rick Cunningham: (470) 698-2273



**Mass Mutual**  
Ana Lucia Divins: (980) 293-8124



**Matrix Telecom**  
Ashu Upa: (800) 283-0539



**My Place Hotels of America**  
Terry Kline: (605) 229-8684



**Nimble Accounting**  
Rahul Kumar: (576) 870-9131



**O'Connor & Associates**  
Andrew Choy: (713) 375-4224



**P&G Professional**  
Rohan Varty: (609) 933-2925



**PMC Commercial Trust**  
Kristi Lewis-Hodge:  
(972) 349-3200



**Prem Sales**  
Deepak Panchmia:  
(806) 745-6651



**Primrose Schools**  
Blair Burdette: (404) 423-4247



**Rheem Water Heating**  
Dave Hanley: (817) 680-4117



**Rinnai**  
Dipesh Parekh: (800) 621-9419



**Shaw Hospitality**  
Robert Stuckey: (888) 448-7878



**Showtime Networks, Inc.**  
Doug Markott: (770) 698-6937



**Simmons Hospitality Bedding**  
Andrea Hochworter:  
(770) 353-0122



**Sonu Satellite**  
Neil Doshi: (877) 999-7668



**Spectrum Enterprise Solutions**  
David A. Fitts: (212) 379-5826



**State Bank of Texas**  
Sand Patel: (678) 520-7263



**SurferQuest**  
Kathryn Konig: (814) 342-3120



**Tara Energy**  
Ashar Jafri: (713) 890-2222



**Ten-X**  
Anthony Falor: (973) 727-0314



**Tyson Food Services**  
Dennis Bell: (513) 284-0485



**United Insurance Agencies**  
Ron Thomas: (800) 899-0000



**Universal Financial Consultants**  
Vincent Munno: (727) 669-0109



**USA Digital, Inc.**  
Aaron Gomez: (909) 200-5445



**Vertically Integrated Projects**  
Trela Hendrix: (303) 552-8814

# AAHOA Members in Action

AAHOA Members support their communities, showing what it means to be #AAHOASTRONG!



1. Lifetime Members Pintu and Manisha Patel, owners of the Holiday Inn Express Santa Fe, answered an urgent plea for medical equipment and supplies for the Christus St. Vincent Medical Center in Santa Fe, NM. AAHOA Member Vinay Patel, Principal of SREE Hotels, also provided meals to inactive employees and their immediate family members during the COVID-19 downturn.
2. To meet the high demand for face masks, Florida Region Ambassador Rakesh Patel and his friends and family pulled out all efforts to support their community in Fort Myers, FL.
3. Lifetime Member Vibhu Joshi, along with his friends and family, handcrafted more than 2,000 facemasks, which are needed in the region. On behalf of the Gujarati Samaj of WNY and AAHOA, Vibhu sent masks in hope to help those who may not be able to readily receive them and to honor the work of our health care workers who are on the frontlines.
4. AAHOA Chairwoman Jagruti Panwala and Anthony Melchiorri were guests on the No Vacancy Podcast with host Glenn Haussman to discuss the COVID-19 crisis.



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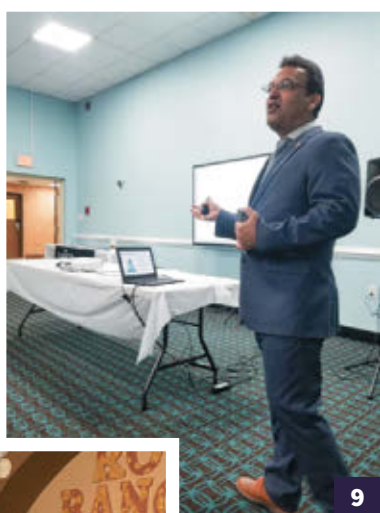
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5. North Carolina Regional Director Akshat Patel and the Regional Ambassadors hosted a Town Hall in Fayetteville.
6. North Central Regional Director Bhavesh N. Patel and the Regional Ambassadors hosted a Dinner & Learn sponsored by O'Connor & Associates in Dayton, OH.
7. Central Midwest Regional Director Hitesh Patel and the Regional Ambassadors hosted a Dinner & Learn sponsored by O'Connor & Associates in Oklahoma.
8. Arkansas Regional Director Girish (Gary) Patel held his last Town Hall as RD in Little Rock. We thank him for his service in Arkansas.
9. Washington, D.C., Area Regional Director Sandip Patel hosted a Town Hall Tour through his region.
10. South Pacific Regional Director Mike Riverside welcomed CHLA Chairman Bijal Patel at a Lunch and Learn in San Diego, CA.
11. Treasurer Vinay Patel shared his expertise on the "Hotel Due Diligence" panel at the California Lodging Investment Conference – CLIC in Orange County, CA.

# AAHOA Vendor Partners

**A** AHOA IS PLEASED TO PROVIDE this list of its Club Blue, Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Allied members as a resource for members. AAHOA, however, does not endorse these companies or the products or services they offer, or any of the discounts, deal terms or other offers related to the price that any of these companies may advertise, market, or promote to AAHOA members. AAHOA strongly encourages all of its members and any users of this list to conduct all reasonable and necessary due diligence and research prior to selecting a company with which to do business.

Gray shading denotes Platinum (Dark Grey) & Silver Members

Blue shading denotes Club Blue Members

## ACCOUNTING SERVICES

### Nimble Accounting

Rahul Kumar Singh  
866-964-6253  
rahulkumar@nimbleaccounting.com

## ACOUSTICS

### MODIO Guestroom Acoustic Control

Sabina Moeller  
905-332-1730  
smoeller@logison.com

## ADA COMPLIANCE

### Gulati Law, P.L.

Sarah Gulati  
407-900-5054  
sarah@gulatilaw.com

### HOTELSIGNS.com

Crystal Simpson  
888-273-8726  
crystalsimpson@hotelsigns.com

## ADJUSTERS

### Metro Public Adjustment, Inc.

Steve Mccaffrey  
215-633-8000  
sjm@metropa.com

### Rosen Affiliates

Brett Rosen  
732-540-8318  
brett@rosenaffiliates.com

## ADVERTISING/MARKETING

### HotelCoupons.com

Kristina Mielke  
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kristina.mielke@hotelcoupons.com

### Lungsal

Stanley Chen  
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Stanley@lungsal.com

### RealINSIGHT Marketplace

Rakesh Patel  
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rpatel@realinsight.com

### SwayPay

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sevket@swaypay.io

### Travel Media Group

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### TrustYou Inc.

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kevin.kitchen@trustyou.net

## AIR PURIFICATION/WATER FILTRATION

### Aerus Electrolux

Richard Luisi  
678-354-0492  
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### FreshAir Sensor

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### Russell and Dawson Inc.

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### Sharma Law Group

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## BED + BATH ACCESSORIES/SUPPLIES

### Avendra

Mara M. Radis  
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### Guest Supply A Sysco Company

Justin Haggart  
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jhaggart@guestsupply.com

### JDT Worldwide

Daniel Kral  
212-400-7570  
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### Squatty Potty

Keith McQuaid  
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keith@squattypotty.com

## BEDSPREADS/ DRAPERIES/PILLOWS

### Aadiaum, Inc.

Ashvin Parikh  
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### Fabtex Inc.

Sheila Sudra  
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Sheila.sudra@fabtex.com

### Integra Fabrics

Jason Smith  
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jason.smith@integrafabrics.com

### Simmons Hospitality Bedding

Bridget Price  
770-353-0122  
bprice@sertasimmons.com

### Somnum Mattress by Lippert Components

Dan Lechlitrner  
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dlechlitrner@lci1.com

### Star Textile, Inc.

Tanya Hendershot  
586-758-2700  
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## BUSINESS CENTERS

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814-342-3120  
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### The UPS Store, Inc.

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karencrouch@upsstore.com

## CABLE/SATELLITE TV SERVICES

### AdCommTV

Jason Cohen  
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jason.cohen@adcomm.com

### Allbridge

Craig Snelgrove  
888-243-9476  
sales@allbridge.com

### Alvi Satellites

Prashant Ajmera  
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alvisatellites@gmail.com

### Dish Business

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### Flagstaff Satellite & TV

Louisa Fiorita  
847-330-6000  
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### Gold Star Systems

Mark Palmer  
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### Groove Entertainment Technologies

Anthony Fleming  
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Anthony@getgrooven.com

### Home Box Office

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Andrea.Viola@hbo.com

### Just In Time Communications

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### MTV, Inc.

Vik Shah  
818-772-4200  
vikshah25@gmail.com

### Showtime Networks Inc.

Doug Markott  
770-698-6937  
doug.markott@showtime.net

### Sonu Satellite

Neil Doshi  
877-999-7668  
neil@sonutv.com

### Spectrum Enterprise

David Fitts  
212-379-5826  
david.fitts1@charter.com

### TV Asia

Pradeep Hegde  
732-650-1100 x26  
info@tvasiausa.com

### USA Digital Inc.

Aaron Gomez  
888-388-1531  
aaron@usadigital.tv

## CARPET FLOOR CARE

### Aerus Electrolux

Richard Luisi  
678-354-0492  
rluisi@aerusonline.com

### Karcher North America

Leean Bradburn  
877-722-6555

### Shaw Hospitality

Paul Young  
404-556-4110  
paul.young@shawcontract.com

**Tacony Corporation**

Don Mullen  
800-880-2913  
d.mullen@tacony.com

**CARPET/CARPET CUSHIONS****Embassy Carpets & Design Center**

Darabhai A. Jilla  
800-366-7847 11  
dara.jilla@embassycarpets.com

**Hersha Purchasing & Design**

Ben Vaishnav  
717-236-2242  
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**Mohawk Group**

Adam Furth  
770-298-8185  
adam\_furth@mohawkind.com

**PEERLESS CONTRACT**

Umar Rao  
604-354-8316  
urao@peerlesscontract.com

**Republic Flooring**

Amber Huerta  
323-201-4200  
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**Shaw Hospitality**

Paul Young  
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**CASEGOODS****Dickson Furniture Manufacturers**

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**Foliot Furniture**

Mahesh Parekh  
702-278-7380  
marketing@foliot.com

**Hospitality Designs**

Ruben A. Cohen  
877-468-3588  
ruben@hospitalitydesigns.com

**Innovative Furnishings**

Romi Patel  
765-621-1867  
sales@innfurnishings.com

**JTB Furniture**

Jake Brown  
800-654-3876  
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**Kimball Hospitality**

Charles Bastien  
800-634-9510  
Chris.Eckstein@kimballhospitality.com

**Kirti International Inc.**

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409-457-2658  
dharmesh8@hotmail.com

**Lang Furniture Inc.**

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**Lodging Concepts**

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jinesh@lodgingcm.com

**Matrix Hospitality Furniture Inc.**

Kulwinder Deol  
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Kdeol@matrixhospitality.ca

**Neilmax Industries Inc.**

Niranjan B. Patel  
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**Procure Hospitality**

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**Sara Hospitality**

Sangeeta Agarwal  
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sarabizsolution@gmail.com

**Southern Hospitality Furniture LLC**

Brett Ray  
901-552-4662  
brett@sohomemphis.com

**CHEMICALS****Anderson Chemical Company**

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**Auto-Chlor System**

Gene Micci  
901-521-3102  
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**DIVERSEY, Inc.**

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**Ecolab, Inc.**

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**P&G Professional**

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**Poolcorp**

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**Sunburst Chemicals**

Teghan Murphy  
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**UNX Industries, Inc.**

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**VivoAquatics**

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rlindhorn@vivoaquatics.com

**COMMERCIAL CLEANING SERVICES****Karcher North America**

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**Vileda Pro USA**

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800-687-0557  
Juan@viledaprousa.com

**COMPUTERS – HARDWARE****Cox Business**

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404-269-3057  
alea.riley@cox.com

**DELL**

Mobolaji Sokunbi  
1-800-624-6145  
Mobolaji\_sokunbi@dell.com

**Zyxel Communications**

Tri Nguyen  
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tri@zyxel.com

**COMPUTERS – SOFTWARE****Anand Systems Inc.**

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bhavesh@anandsystems.com

**AutoClerk, Inc.**

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**SiteMinder**

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**SwayPay**

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**TrustYou Inc.**

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**CONSTRUCTION****Anatole Exteriors**

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**Best GEN Modular**

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**Carolina Products, Inc.**

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**H&H Construction**

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**Frontline Performance Group (FPG)**

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**Gillis Consulting and Training**

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**GRP Capital**

Krishan R. Patel  
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**Hodges Ward Elliott HWE**

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**Hospitality Success**

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917-295-1628  
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**Hotel Brokers International**

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**ICF**

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**National Tax Group**

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**Peak Development Partners**

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**CONTRACTORS****Amerail Systems, Inc.**

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**CREDIT CARD PROCESSING****American Express**

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800-528-5200  
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**Chase**

Faheem Khan  
972-324-5510  
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**CULTURED MARBLE/SOLID SURFACE PRODUCTS****American Bath Group**

Rick Luders  
800-443-7269  
rluders@abghospitality.com

**Shower Walls SA de CV**

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**Vanities International LLC**

Richard Moore  
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Richardm@vanitiesint.com

**DOORS/WINDOWS****Estelles Lighting**

Saleem Rizvi  
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713-270-6800

**TACC, Inc.**

Diane Farr  
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**EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS****Primrose Schools**

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**Carolina Products, Inc.**

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## ELECTRONIC LOCKING SYSTEMS

### Acculock

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### Dormakaba

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### ID&C Wristbands

Caleb Jones  
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### Onity, Inc.

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## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS/ EMPLOYEE LEASING

### ADP, Inc.

Thomas Bell  
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Thomas.Bell@ADP.com

### Murray Insurance and Financial

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### United Insurance Agencies

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## ENERGY MANAGEMENT

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### Consolidated Laundry Equipment

Bob Erickson  
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### GE Appliances

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### Hamilton Beach Commercial

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### Ice-O-Matic

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Scott.Meyer@iceomatic.com

### Popcake North America

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### Southeastern Laundry Equipment Sales, Inc.

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### TLC Tri-State Laundry Companies

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678-564-1100  
Janice.davis@tlctristate.com

## ESTATE PLANNING

### AtulCFP.com

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Atul@prudentprospera.com

### Goldman Sachs

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### New York Life Insurance Company

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## FINANCING

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### Barot Capital, LLC

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### Creative Lending Solutions

Prajesh N. Patel  
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## Goldman Sachs

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### GRP Capital

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### Hotel Brokers Inc.

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### IncredibleBank

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### Live Oak Bank

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### Mag Mile Capital

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### Marcus and Millichap

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### New Leaf Funding

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### New York Life Insurance Company

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### Pacific Premier Bank

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### Pinnacle Hotel Finance

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### PMC Commercial Trust

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### RealINSIGHT Marketplace

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### Universal Financial Consultants

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## FITNESS EQUIPMENT

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### HydroMassage

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### ProMAXima Strength and Conditioning

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## FLOOR COVERINGS

### Atlas Concorde

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### Embassy Carpets & Design Center

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### First Choice Luxury Vinyl Plank

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### Republic Flooring

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### JTB Furniture

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### Lang Furniture Inc.

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### Carrier Enterprise

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### Friedrich Air Conditioning Company

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### GE Appliances

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### ICE MACHINES/VENDING

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#### Star City Insurance

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#### United Health Group

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### United Insurance Agencies

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### World Insurance Associates LLC

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#### Just In Time Communications

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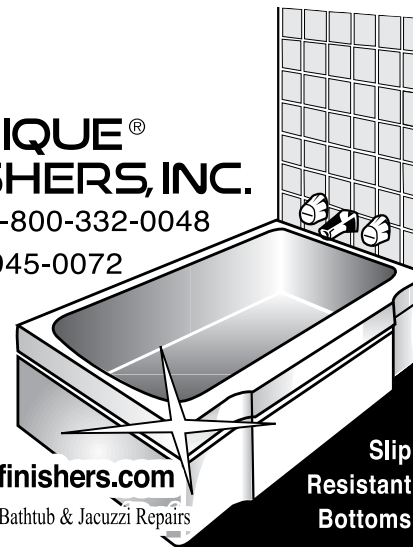
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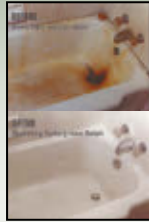
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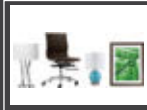
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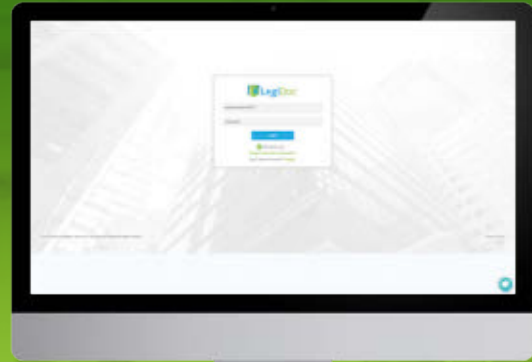
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