

NEWS RELEASE

COBBLESTONE HOTELS, LLC CELEBRATED THEIR ANNUAL BRAND CONFERENCE IN MUSIC CITY – NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



October 1, 2024 – Neenah, WI - Hotel ownership, investors, operators, general managers, and Cobblestone Hotels leadership gathered at the Renaissance Hotel – Nashville on September 28th and 29th to celebrate another successful year for the Cobblestone brand. 2024 brought significant changes, including the addition of 6 new hotels to the franchise and the launch of the new Riverstone Suites brand. Another major focus was the property management system change that was implemented across 139 properties since May of this year. Though there was a large emphasis on managing and expecting change throughout many of the franchise-led presentations, another major focus revolved around the brand’s desire not to stray from the tried-and-true formula that has made it so successful today, namely the principle of “Big City Quality...Small Town Values” that Cobblestone was founded on.

ADDRESSING THE RUMORS

Jeremy Griesbach, President of Development for Cobblestone Hotels, shared a segment with Brand President Josie Kilgore on Saturday, where he addressed rumors related to Cobblestone being bought out by a larger chain. Jeremy assured the crowd that these rumors were absolutely unfounded, a point he drove home by bringing out a large “Not For Sale” sign during his speech. Griesbach emphasized that the franchise is being kept alive and well by a dedicated core group of people, and that there is no intention of that changing. Griesbach underscored that the growth of the brand is not slowing, by introducing 25 active projects that are in the pipeline for the coming years, including the potential to expand into 2 new states. While the brand has faced major challenges in recent years, including the loss of their founder and CEO Brian Wogernese in October of 2022, the passion for forwarding the development of small-town America through lodging continues to drive Cobblestone’s leadership into the future, with no signs of stopping.

GROWING THE RIGHT WAY

While growth remains a major focus of the hotel chain, another central theme throughout Cobblestone’s presentations was on growing the right way. This comes in the form of maintaining the culture of the brand, which centers around doing everything possible to ensure the success of the hotels that hold their flag, from the initial development phase to beyond opening day. While Griesbach introduced exciting statistics related to growth, he also cautioned that numbers are not the most important thing to the brand right now, and that turning inward to ensure that the hotels that are currently operating are doing so optimally will be a major focus in 2025 and beyond. “Change is guaranteed” Griesbach said, referring to change in markets, interest rates, technology, construction and operation costs, and staffing considerations. However, Cobblestone plans to tackle these challenges by improving conditions at established hotels, strengthening brand standards, and pursuing projects in states that currently house Cobblestones to increase brand recognition and grow from within.

Josie Kilgore, Cobblestone Hotels Brand President, addressed the brand’s intention to improve the current conditions at the open properties by approaching quality assurance inspections with a renewed

energy, becoming more actively involved in facilitating Property Improvement Plans for those locations that need them, and tightening up expectations related to brand standards to further differentiate the Cobblestone franchise from its competitors. Kilgore also shared that the brand is actively pursuing technologies that can alleviate the burden on hotels posted by staffing issues, including being open to exploring artificial intelligence options in hospitality and strategically partnering with companies that provide creative technological solutions to common problems related to providing excellent customer service in an ever-changing environment.

STAYNTOUCH PARTNERSHIP

A major change that took place brand wide this year was the transition to the Stayntouch property management system. The successful conversion of 135 properties over 90 days, and 139 properties total, has been the major focus for the brand throughout Q3. The partnership with Stayntouch represents Cobblestone's ambition to remain proactive when it comes to finding creative solutions to problems in a constantly changing world, and to better cater to guest preferences as well as franchisee needs. The number of Stayntouch's integration partners as well as their willingness to forge new partnerships on an individualized basis for their customers were major reasons that Cobblestone was attracted to this property management system in the first place. While Cobblestone is adamant about sticking to its roots when it comes to culture and business strategy, the franchise's leadership is also fully aware that growth is not possible without change, and the Stayntouch partnership is a step forward in that regard.

2023 BRAND AWARDS

Each year, the conference concludes with an awards ceremony that recognizes the standout individuals and hotels who were examples of excellence throughout the past year. The entire brand gets the chance to vote on these award recipients, who are announced during this final event of the annual gathering. Winners of the 2023 Cobblestone Brand Awards include

Investor of the Year: Nicole Lemens, Cobblestone Hotel & Suites – Little Chute and Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Fremont

General Manager of the Year: Melissa Mueller, Cobblestone Hotel & Suites - De Pere

Employee of the Year: Glenda Ellis, Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Cambridge

Property of the Year: Cobblestone Hotel & Suites – Little Chute

Top Ten Guest Experience Award Recipients

- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Yuma
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Ord
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Maryville
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Lamoni
- Cobblestone Hotel & Suites – Knoxville
- Cobblestone Hotel & Suites – Andrews
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Pine Bluffs
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Soda Springs
- Cobblestone Hotel & Suites – McCook
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Manchester

Top Five Cobblestone Rewards Recognition Awards Recipients

- Cobblestone Hotel & Suites – Two Rivers
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Ashland
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – St. Marys
- Cobblestone Inn & Suites – Soda Springs
- Cobblestone Hotel & Suites – De Pere

These recipients will be recognized for their achievement with plaques to be displayed onsite at their properties. If your travels take you to any of these cities, be sure to stop by and say congratulations!

About Cobblestone Hotels

Based in Neenah, WI Cobblestone Hotels, LLC is a leading upper-midscale hotel brand with over 165 hotels open, under construction, or in development in 28 states. The company continues to pride itself in filling the lodging needs of communities through its upper mid-scale new build brand. Signature amenities include high-speed Internet access, complimentary breakfast, convenience store, fitness centers, business centers, and more.

Cobblestone Hotels includes Cobblestone Hotels & Suites, Cobblestone Inn & Suites, Riverstone Suites, Boarders Inn & Suites, Centerstone Hotels, and KeyWest Hotels. For development information please visit www.CobblestoneFranchising.com.

Cobblestone Hotels offers the Cobblestone Rewards frequent stayer program where guests receive ten points for every dollar spent, and can be redeemed as award nights, or with other redemption partners. For more information visit www.CobblestoneRewards.com

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