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CITY APPLAUDS LATEST ADDITION OF GREEN HOTELS
Number of Green Seal Certified Hotels Rise to Thirteen, Tops in the Nation

The City of Chicago is recognizing eight newly certified green hotels in addition to five hotels previously honored during an event last October. These latest environmental designations by the nonprofit organization, Green Seal, bring Chicago's total of certification to thirteen. Portland, Oregon has the second most certified hotels with four.

The Green Hotels Initiative challenges hotels to obtain the Green Seal certification, an environmental lodging standard with requirements in waste minimization, energy efficiency, water conservation, waste water management and green procurement. The program also offers resources, best practices and recognition to the certified hotels.

The most recent hotels to have achieved Green Seal Certification include:

Essex Inn;
Four Seasons;
Hilton Chicago;
Ritz-Carlton Chicago;
Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers;
Sofitel Chicago Water Tower;
Silversmith Hotel & Suites;
and Westin Michigan Avenue.

These hotels join Hotel Monaco Chicago, Hotel Burnham, Hotel Allegro Chicago, InterContinental Chicago, and the Talbott which were certified last October.

"This program highlights the private sector's willingness to do what's environmentally and financially responsible. These decisions provide hotel guests with well deserved environmentally friendly options," said Environment Commissioner, Suzanne Malec-McKenna. "The guests staying in Chicago's green hotels will certainly appreciate the efforts taken to provide them with a hotel stay that has a less harmful impact on the environment."

Research data from the Chicago Climate Action Plan shows that 71 percent of green house gas emissions in Chicago result from buildings. With its 24 hour operations, the hotel industry can be carbon intensive. As a result, hotels can play an important role in helping reduce emissions and providing tourists and visitors with world-class accommodations that also reduce carbon emissions.

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The twelve additional hotels that have been audited now have the baseline requirements to become Green Seal certified and will hopefully move forward in gaining certification. The hotels need to implement a host of environmental practices including:

- Install energy efficient equipment in the office, kitchen, and laundry facilities;
- Install water conserving devices such as 2.2 gallons per minute faucets, 2.5 gallons per minute showerheads, and 1.6 gallons per flush toilets;

Implement a successful recycling program that is monitored on a monthly basis for waste reduction targets;

- Use non-phosphate, nontoxic, biodegradable cleaning products and detergents;
- Offer guest a towel/linen reuse option;
- Use a minimum of 30 percent post consumer recycled paper;
- Establish a purchasing policy that incorporates environmental goals and preferences; and
- Minimize use of chlorine.

Green Seal certified hotels will find that they can also save money while being more protective of the environment. For example, a 300-room hotel switching to a bath tissue with 100 percent post-consumer content would save approximately 4 tons of virgin paper, 48 trees, 16,400 kwh of electricity, 28,000 gallons of water and 240 pounds of air pollutants annually.

In addition to Green Seal certification, the City encourages hotels to pursue other environmental certifications such as the EPA's Energy Star program and the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership for Environmental Energy and Design (LEED) certification.

Chicago Green Seal Audited Hotels include:

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|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Drake Hotel | 7. Park Hyatt |
| 2. Fairmont | 8. Peninsula Hotel |
| 3. Four Points Hotel | 9. Renaissance |
| 4. Hard Rock Hotel | 10. Residence Inn |
| 5. Hyatt Regency | 11. Swisshotel |
| 6. Marriott Courtyard | 12. Westin River North |

Chicago's Most Recent Green Seal Certified Hotels

Essex Inn

- Uses biodegradable PVC key cards, which will decompose in a landfill or compost within 18 months
- Changed lighting in guest rooms to energy efficient light bulbs during renovation earlier this year
- Changed laundry process to a single-solution system which meets GS-33 standards and uses less water and energy and minimizes packaging.

Four Seasons

- Engaged in \$200,000 worth of energy retrofit projects, which involves changing the hotel's HVAC equipment. Energy improvements in the hotel will result in \$400,000 of annual savings in heat, light and power.
- All used guest room bath amenities (shampoo, conditioner, bath gel and lotion) are collected and reused in employee locker rooms. The empty bottles are then recycled.
- As a tenant of 900 N Michigan, the hotel executive chef enjoys the green roof on the 10th floor by planting and harvesting an herb garden for the hotel restaurant.

Hilton Chicago

- Demonstrated leadership in the industry by hosting a city wide Green Vendor Fair in early February 2008
- Received the Outstanding Business Recycling Program award from the Illinois Recycling Association
- Uses plants and trees that are tolerant to the climate. Landscape is watered in the early morning or evening to avoid evaporation and conserve water.

The Ritz-Carlton Chicago

- Initiated an environmental purchasing policy that includes a steering committee, environmental preferences, lifecycle cost analysis, and yearly evaluation of the policy
- Conducted an extensive study on light fixtures and bulbs. All guest rooms will have energy efficient lighting by end of 2009.
- Scheduled guest room floors closures to maximize the heating, lighting and energy conservation during low occupancy periods. This centralizes guest service and conserves energy. Installed the Inncom Energy Conservation system that will help with heating conservation in unoccupied rooms as well.

Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers

- Timers are installed in all low traffic linen rooms.
- Uses energy efficient windows with an energy conserving film
- Instituted a comprehensive recycling program that involved maximizing dock space and waste removal efficiencies, identifying opportunities to save money through a waste calculator, and conducting monthly compliance audits.

Sofitel Chicago Water Tower

- Uses ozone in the laundry process to reduce hot water and chemical usage.
- Uses single stream recycling; can recycle all things in one container for ease of recycling.
- Purchases 60% of the dinner ingredients locally for Café des Architectes, the restaurant located within the Sofitel Chicago Water Tower. In January 2009, the Executive Chef is committed to purchasing 60% of the hotel's overall ingredients locally from local sources.

The Silversmith Hotel & Suites

- Uses water conserving devices such as 2 gallons-per-minute showerheads, 2 gallons-per-minute faucets, 1.6 gallons-per-flush toilets.
- 100% of lights used in the hotel (except for historic lights) have been retrofitted to be energy efficient.
- Replaced disposable cups with ceramic cups for complimentary coffee service in the morning and evening hours. Cream and sugar are served on silver dispensers as opposed to individually packaged cream and sugar.

The Westin Michigan Avenue

- Retrofitted dual shower heads to use water at 2 gallons per minute.
- Implemented two successful energy-saving programs.
 - "Big 74" rewards the housekeeping staff to turn off all lights and electronic equipment, close the shades, and set the thermostats to 74 degrees before leaving the room. Those who had consecutively performed these measures win prizes. During the winter months, the temperature would be set at a few degrees cooler.
 - "Don't call me, I've gone Green" was a program that removed light bulbs that were not necessary to have on. Guests and hotel associates have not noticed a change, and the hotel has saved nearing \$23,000 this year for instituting this program.
- Converted a standard guest room into a "Green Room," where environmental technologies and practices are piloted. These practices include a key card system that starts the HVAC and lighting within the room, a 1.75 gallons-per-minute showerhead, bulk amenity dispensers, post consumable toilet paper and tissue, organic foods in the mini bar, and free parking for hybrid.

Founded in 1989, Green Seal provides science-based environmental certification standards that are credible, transparent, and essential in an increasingly educated and competitive marketplace. Their industry knowledge and standards help manufacturers, purchasers, and end users alike make responsible choices that positively impact business behavior and improve quality of life.

Please visit www.chicagoclimataction.org for more information on the Green Hotels initiative and the projects they undertook and to learn more about Green Seal go to www.greenseal.org.