



# The MMI Inn-Spirer

People are our most precious asset.

the newsletter for the employees of  
mmi hotel group & mmi dining systems

Summer 2007

## Recognizing our Roots: Newcomen Society awards MMI with prestigious distinction

by Micajah Sturdivant, Director of Asset Management



MMI continues to receive the recognition it deserves – recognition deserved because you, our associates, continue to serve our guests and thereby our company's mission.

That very mission, "the guest is our number one customer" was celebrated early this summer by a group of MMI representatives and South-eastern dignitaries. On May 2, 2007, The Newcomen Society of The United States honored **MMI Hotel Group and Dining Systems** with one of its top awards as a **successful organization whose achievement best exemplifies the American system of free enterprise.**

Often credited by the **Harvard Business School** as one of the first proponents of business history, The Newcomen Society was initially organized in Great Britain in 1923. Its founding members, who include President Theodore Roosevelt, established the Newcomen Award to applaud American businesses and organizations that embody the same innovation and entrepreneurial spirit embraced by the organization's name-sake. Today, The Newcomen Society of the United States is a non-profit business educational foundation that meets regularly in chapters across the United States to share their individual experiences, honor their peers and colleagues, and apply the insight and wisdom of past leaders to advance their business today.

MMI is thrilled and proud to merit joining such distinguished and well known companies as Coca-Cola, General Electric, Hershey Foods, Merrill Lynch and a host of others in earning the prestigious Newcomen Award. MMI's remarkable associates deserve full credit for their noticed superiority. We're grateful to all of you for bringing such distinction to our name.

## Dining Systems Seeing Great Growth

By Ronnie Cockayne, Jr., President/CEO, MMI Dining Systems

CONGRATULATIONS to the sales team (which includes district managers of operations) of MMI Dining Systems. As of August 15<sup>th</sup>, we will have begun operation of our 7<sup>th</sup> new contract of the year and have several possibilities to make proposals before the year ends.

With this growth we have been able to promote several associates within existing operations from supervisory positions to management positions, and managers from small operations to much larger operations. This not only makes our clients feel good that they are getting a proven MMI Dining Systems employee, but it gives our associates more responsibility and pay increases, as well. **OPPORTUNITY HAS BEEN KNOCKING!**

Thanks for your effort and keep up the good work!!

## MMI set to open first new-build HYATT PLACE in USA

We are pleased to introduce HYATT PLACE, an exciting and innovative new select-service hotel offering more of what is important to today's travelers. MMI and Silver Companies have entered into a development agreement with internationally recognized hotel company, Global Hyatt, to develop HYATT PLACE™ hotels across the Southeast.

MMI will break ground on our first two HYATT PLACE hotels in Jacksonville, FL and Germantown, TN (Memphis) by the end of summer, 2007. The brand of these new properties will be supported by the more than 125 AmeriSuites that Hyatt purchased in 2005 to be renovated and converted to HYATT PLACE™ hotels as well.

The brand's "larger than home" experience is comparable to a Hilton Garden Inn or Courtyard by Marriott and will include features like a 42" high-definition flat panel TV, the signature Hyatt Grand Bed, a plush Cozy Corner oversized sofa sleeper in each guest room and an intimate coffee and wine café, freshly prepared menu items available 24 hours a day, and self-registration kiosks in the common area.



**Ken O'Keefe**, VP of Technical Services, (Left) and representatives from Hyatt and Silver Companies recently participated in the ceremonial ground breaking of the very first new build Hyatt Place in the USA to be located in Jacksonville, FL.



# Property Updates

## King & Prince Chosen for 2007 Best of the South Award

The King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort is honored by three distinguished publications *Successful Meeting*, *ConventionSouth* and *Meetings South* by winning **The Pinnacle Award**, The Reader's Choice Award and The Best of the South Award in 2007. The readers of these publications voted on destinations that exemplify outstanding customer service, impeccable amenities and accommodations, and quality food and beverage service. We are honored that groups, meeting professionals and leisure visitors recognize the staffs' ability to exceed the guests' expectations and our dedication to excellence.

## Fairfield Inn – Airport Celebrates Employee Appreciation and Associates Awards

President **Gaines Sturdivant**, VP Admin **Jim Hart**, SVP Operations **Joe Morgan** and GM Quarterback **Andrea Ochoa-Gorum** lead Fairfield Inn's Awards and celebration ceremonies (L – R, below).



## Marketing Downtown Oxford Inn & Suites

Downtown Oxford Inn & Suites GM **Scott May** marketed DOIS at the Mississippi Bar Association Annual Conference at the Hilton Sandestin Beach & Golf Resort, Destin, Florida.



## Embassy Suites Celebrates Independence Day

Embassy Suites Housekeeping Department Executive **Cookie Floyd**, gets guests going in Embassy Suites July 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Day Celebration Parade.



## Lake City MMI Associates Honored by Tourist Development Council

**John Parker** made a special trip to Lake City to honor **Mrs. Pearl Walker** with a Career Achievement Award for her 38 years at the front desk of the former Holiday Inn and then Quality Inn and Conference Center of Lake City. Parker, the General Manager of Cabot Lodge in Gainesville and a member of the Alachua County Tourist Development Center, had been general manager of the Holiday and Quality Inns for 10 years, owned by Mississippi Management Inc. "She has contributed much to Florida Tourism over the years," Parker said. "She has worked with and helped train many of the company's managers, including **Gaines Sturdivant, MMI president.**" Parker noted that Mrs. Walker was hired when the room rate was \$9 a day, they used racks – not computers – to track room occupancy and room keys were metal, not the key cards we now use. **Back then, a postage stamp was 6 cents and gas was 35 cents a gallon. She had many challenges on the job, including dealing with the infamous serial killer Ted Bundy, Parker said.** Mrs. Walker's last day was up until the closing of Quality Inn. Walker was one of seven people honored by the Columbia County Tourist Development Council Wednesday afternoon. Harvey Campbell, Executive Director of the Tourist Development Council, made the presentations.

**Beverly Phillips** was awarded the Outstanding Management Employee of the Year.



**Carol Johnson** was recognized as the Hotel Employee of the Year.



**Pearl Walker** is presented an Outstanding Tourism Employee award by Cabot Lodge G'ville GM John Parker. Mrs. Parker retired twice in the past and recently re-retired with the closing of the Lake City Quality Inn.



## Holiday Inn Baymeadows

The kitchen team at **Holiday Inn Baymeadows** expanded their horizons and created "theme stations" in the dining room and banquets. Two themes they have worked on are an Italian pasta station and a Mongolian grille station and both themes have had good reviews since their inception. The guest picks and chooses the ingredients for their food creation giving it that "it was created by me satisfaction" (the interaction with the guest offers additional entertainment that wouldn't happen from a plated meal or buffet). Also, during group lunch breaks we have seen an increased capture ratio in the restaurant by putting the stations in the lobby of the hotel. Now when meetings break for lunch instead of going right past the restaurant and into their cars, the lobby fills up with the smells of Italian food being prepared and captures a crowd around the station.



## Hilton St. Augustine

Annually, Hilton St. Augustine hosts a fire works display on July 4<sup>th</sup>. The street in front of the Hilton Historic Bayfront is blocked off and over 5,000 people converge to watch the display. This year, Hilton staffers **Edmundo Don (Banquets)**, **Aaron McDowell (Kitchen)** and **Executive Chef Brad Smith** set up a cash sales area and sold Barbeque and other grilled foods as well as beverages, netting additional cash sales of \$900 revenue for the day.

## Moosehaven

by Kurt Strenger, Foodservice Manager

**Moosehaven**, Orange Park, Florida hosted the **Moose International Convention** on July 1, 2007 and the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Moosehaven. This was a large event where MMI Dining Systems provided a cook-out for **2,700** people on the Moosehaven campus. It was a great relief and comfort having access to available Florida resources, and we were able to recruit help and borrow equipment from some sister Dining Systems Florida properties in the Jacksonville area. This was such an incredible showing of what a great team of managers we have. Many thanks go out to **JoJo Watkins**, **John Andesacavage** and his **Chef Sten**, **Mark Wothke** and his **Chef Brad**, **Kevin Krzeminski**, **Chef Bill** and his wait staff. Also to **Bill Caldwell** and **Dave McEwen**.

Thanks for all your hard work and efforts.

## Celebrating 20 MMI Years and Counting!

Pictured are **eight of 10 MMI Hotel Group associates** whose MMI careers have spanned 20 years as they embark on their **20-Year Cruises!** Congratulations go to you and to your MMI Hotel Group properties where your services have been rendered. God speed for many years to come. Special thanks go to MMI's cruise coordinator **Brenda Cook** and to **Embassy Suites Lea Neill** for helping to arrange the successful cruises. Kudos.

First row L – R: **Patricia Seymore** and **Carol Johnson**, Quality Inn, Lake City; **Linda Hardee**, King and Prince. 2nd row, L – R: **Carolyn Gross**, Cabot Lodge Jackson North; **Mary Miller**, Cabot Lodge Gainesville, and **Connie Towns**, King & Prince. Last row: L-R: **James Snider** and **Larry Hamby**, Holiday Inn – Airport. Not Shown (and celebrating): **Regino Franco**, Embassy Suites Orlando; and **Lucille Johnson**, Holiday Inn Airport.

## Hospitality 2007—Making Mine MMI!

The 2007 Supervisors Workshop theme says it all. Great hotel rooms, great food and excellent service make memorable experiences that define hospitality and these experiences are caused by MMI's carefully selected and trained Hotel Group and Dining Systems supervisors and their staff. Department heads attending **Hospitality 2007 – Making Mine MMI!** were in learning and networking states of mind (photos below) at their June 18<sup>th</sup> and June 21<sup>st</sup> workshops. MMI president **Gaines Sturdivant** led an engaging general session about his favorite 2007 topic: "Finding, hiring and retaining the best" hospitality talent.

Asset Director **Micajah Sturdivant** painted the commanding picture of MMI's plan for future growth. VP Admin **Jim Hart**, Sr. VP Operations **Joe Morgan**, VP Technical Services **Ken O'Keefe**, Director of Management Services **Ronnie Roe** and Controller **Len Shannon** shared "real deal" information. Assistant Director of Information Technology **Trey Tracy** described MMI's "Going Paperless" initiative, while Director of Contract Management **Ronnie Roe's** Entomologists armed Maintenance Chiefs with techniques for keeping hotels pest-free. Revenue Manager **Clint Smith** taught "Sales Skills" to Front Desk Managers and Reservationists, while Special Projects Director **Tom Feller** simply admonished: "Work Safely!" Topping the list were Payroll Manager **Tina Presley** and Benefits Specialist **Brenda Cook's** updates – getting paid and staying well! MMI Director of Procurement **Tom Scott** and Food & Beverage Director **Donald Harris** coordinated Mississippi and Jacksonville visits to Sysco Foods warehouses for MMI Food & Beverage supervisors.



*Editor's note: Kudos to associates at Cabot Lodge Millsaps and Holiday Inn Airport for your gracious hospitality and hosting of MMI's 2007 supervisors workshops; and congratulations to the successful completion of Holiday Inn Airport's restaurant renovations and roll-out of new concepts by the Food and Beverage Department.)*



## Training and Recruitment Director's Corner

by Norma C. Brown, Corporate Director of Training & Recruiting

MMI Hotel Group and MMI Dining Systems thanked associates for their contributions to the company and its guests during May 14-16, 2007 Associates Appreciation Days. Associates, general managers, corporate associates – everyone paused to say just say “Thank You” in a number of ways. At corporate headquarters, new guy Micajah Sturdivant single-handedly embraced the concept and arranged some delightful appreciation activities for corporate associates. The appreciation spirit seemed contagious! In Jacksonville, Courtyard by Marriott associate **Pamela Hagwood** nicely sums it up in her original poem:

### MMI TEAM SPIRIT

“This is our motto when it comes to the test  
We should always be the best of the best.  
It's always our goal in everything we do  
To offer ourselves in service to you.  
We go beyond what someone expected  
So the Company we work for will be respected.  
When it comes to service, we're part of a team  
When it comes to the crop, we are the cream.  
A spirit to serve, that's what's required,  
To be on a team that's always admired.  
When it comes to all of the competition,  
Blow'em out of the water that is our mission.  
As in any mission, we should plan in advance  
So the other side doesn't have a ghost of a chance.  
If you're part of this team, you are one of the few.  
If you have what it takes, this company wants YOU!”

Pamela's poem aptly describes the kind of associate MMI wishes to recruit. Adding to Pamela's poem: Mississippi/Louisiana early arriving Supervisors for the MS/LA Supervisors Workshop were treated to dinner at the new Sal & Mookies restaurant. Scott Sledge, MMI Re-

### NO MORE PAPER

by Trey Tracy, Asst. Director of I.T.

How nice would it be not to have to deal with paperwork any more? Well, that soon will be a dream come true, to a certain degree. MMI Corporate will be going nearly paperless in the coming months as a new **Document Management System** is installed.

The goals of the system include:

1. Reduce nearly all the paperwork flowing into Corporate from the hotel properties. This includes invoices, HR forms, contracts, etc.
2. Reduce postal costs incurred by transmitting paperwork to Corporate.
3. Reduce offsite storage costs incurred for archiving paperwork both at the hotel level and Corporate office.
4. Increase the efficiency of processing and retrieving documents.

This system will initially be deployed to all hotel properties and later to some dining systems accounts.

Look for more details to come closer to deployment time or feel free to contact Trey ([ttracy@mmiemail.com](mailto:ttracy@mmiemail.com)) for more information.

gional Manager, suggested hiring The Fondren Express Trolley to transport diners to dinner. Jackson trolley owner and operator Wes Holsapple, also a motivational speaker, subsequently sent this inspirational poem in a follow-up letter:

### THE BUILDER

I saw a group of people tearing a building down, a group of people in my hometown. With a heave and a ho and a mighty yell, they swung a beam and a sidewall fell.

And I said to the foreman,

“Are these people skilled, the kind you'd hire if you wanted to build?”

And he laughed and said,

“Why, no indeed. Common laborers are all I need. For I can tear down in a day or two, what it took a builder ten years to do.”

And I thought to myself as I walked away, which of these roles do I wish to play?

Am I the type that is constantly tearing down as I make my way foolishly around?

Or

Am I the type that is trying to build with care, in hopes that my community will be glad that I was there?

Thank you Pamela and Wes for describing the makings of true hospitality-hearted professionals. MMI is recruiting associates who can help us continue to BUILD our 51-year company. Interested hospitality-hearted friends may send their resumes to [HR@mmiemail.com](mailto:HR@mmiemail.com), or fax them to HR Dept., 601-939-5685.

### MMI Golf Classic Tournament

Congratulations Dan! MMI's IT Director **DAN MACGREGOR** won the **Annual MMI Classic Carpet Golf Tournament** on July 3rd for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row! Since the event began in 2003, Dan has won all but the first, when Tom Scott won. It is rumored that next year's tournament will be officially audited by LeFoldt & Associates. One more year of winning and Dan will win the coveted green blazer.



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YEARS OF LEADERSHIP

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