

MMH&LA

May 2020

Metropolitan Memphis Hotel & Lodging Association

MMH&LA - the source for information and education, and the advocacy voice for the hotel and lodging industry in the metropolitan Memphis area.

Dean Radesh Palakurthi Led Successful Hospitality Employees Assistance Program (H.E.A.P)

The University of Memphis Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality and Resort Management's Hospitality Employees Assistance Program (H.E.A.P), which put together care packages for unemployed hospitality workers over the past three weeks, has just concluded. Thanks to a generous donation from the Kemmons Wilson Family Foundation, Dr. Radesh Palakurthi, Dean of the Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality and Resort Management, led the charge partnering with the team at the Holiday Inn at The University of Memphis to provide a week's supply of groceries and household items, such as toilet paper, exclusively for hospitality workers. The total amounts donated were as

follows: \$25,000 from the Kemmons Wilson Family Foundation, \$22,000 worth in cookies from Girls Scouts Heart of the South, \$3,000 discounts from US Foods and \$10,000 in kind from MALCO Theatres. Radesh and his team spent three full weeks creating and distributing the care packages. In the first two weeks of the project, 1,100 care packages were picked up from the Holiday Inn University of Memphis by about 550-600 hospitality employees, with some coming by more than once. Radesh said, "The staff at the Holiday Inn University of Memphis were extraordinarily great and I commend them, their general manager Darlene Tedesco and their chef Kevin Raines." Even Kemmons Wilson Jr.

showed up to help hand out the care packages. In their final week, they changed from pickup at the Holiday Inn University of Memphis to delivery. Radesh and his team used the Holiday Inn U of M shuttle and Radesh's own van to complete the deliveries. "It is surprising how much you can fit into a Honda Odyssey" reflected Radesh. They ended up delivering the rest of the 500 care packages to all 9 Huey's locations, Kooky Canuck and many other restaurants and hotels. Radesh concluded, "It was an exhausting three weeks, but I was happy it ended so successfully. The number of employees that sent us good wishes was heartwarming. We thank all our donors and volunteers for making this happen."



COVID-19 Member Update

by Memphis Tourism - May 14, 2020

LOCAL IMPACTS

Overall, Memphis Tourism is cautiously optimistic about demand growth in May, compared to April: Based on the latest data, Memphis MSA hotel occupancy rates from last week increased substantially, rising 12.9 percent from the week prior to 37.6 percent overall. On Friday and Saturday of last week, more than 7,000 hotel room nights were sold in Shelby County each night, the highest volume of nightly rooms sold in the past 30 days. Last week, Shelby County room night demand grew 5.1 percent over the week prior. The week of April 5 was the lowest point for hotel room demand in Shelby County. Last week, Shelby County room night demand surpassed this mark by 37.0 percent. While this is an encouraging sign, our Shelby County hotels are still down -50.7 percent in demand compared to the same week last year.

BIG PICTURE TRENDS

Our social media analytics monitoring dashboard is also showing encouraging indicators: Over the past seven days, only 1.7 percent of social media conversations about travel have directly mentioned COVID-19 related terms, the lowest share we have observed so far. Meanwhile, the overall volume of positive social media conversations indicating travel intent are remaining stable week to week, indicating a steady interest in resuming travel. Road-trips are generating the most travel intent conversations on social media, along with the highest positive sentiment score out of all tracked travel motivators and trip types.

NEXT STEPS

We have already begun to meet many of the initial gate conditions in the Memphis market, as Memphis and Shelby County have moved into Phase 1 of [Mayor Strickland's Back-to-Business Framework](#)—and yesterday, [the Memphis Zoo reopened to visitors](#), while [the Memphis Botanic Gardens opened on May 7 for members](#), and plans to open on May 19 to all visitors. When our target markets begin to lift non-essential travel restrictions as well, Memphis Tourism will move our marketing strategy from the "Wait" phase of our recovery matrix into the "Ready" phase: Our "Ready" marketing strategy focuses on origin markets within 600- miles of Memphis. Our messages will be empathetic, informative and incentive-driven as we reactivate all of our paid, earned, shared and owned (PESO) marketing tactics. Our calls to action will be slightly softer, focusing on how "the beat goes on" in Memphis.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please continue to keep us informed about how this health crisis is impacting your business. We will keep your reports confidential and anonymous, if necessary, but we need your help to make sure we can mitigate the impact of this virus on the Memphis and Shelby County visitor economy.

How We're Holding Up

Advice, observations and updates from our members during COVID-19



General Manager Greg Herning - The Guest House at Graceland

Like many other hotels in town, The Guesthouse has mostly been taking care of essential travelers, airline pilots, medical staff etc. Since Graceland announced their re-opening, there has been about a 30% uptick in reservations for the Memorial Day weekend. Greg shared his thoughts on this time by saying, "No one asked this pandemic upon us, but since it did come into our lives, I encourage that we do everything we can during this downturn to learn how we can be better hoteliers, so that when we emerge, we become better operators, better people and better leaders; we can become more appreciative of what we do." Greg also said that he has taken this time to develop personally by fulfilling his workout goals of riding his bike.



General Manager Brooke Atkins - Hampton Inn & Suites Memphis-Beale Street

"We are taking it day by day" Brooke said, "The biggest thing I've learned from this is how to adjust and be flexible and try to stay positive." Learning how to adapt in these times has been key in the era of COVID-19 since all the standards have changed. Brooke added, "This has definitely tested our ability to adapt to new standards". Some of the positives Brooke has noticed have been spending time with family, slowing down and having dinner together. She remarked, "Kids are riding bikes instead of playing video games." Brooke mentioned that some of Beale Street including Alfreds, Dyer's, Silkie's, Rum Boogie and The Pig have reopened. "We're starting to see travelers again and we miss our guests. It's nice to see some people moving around Memphis again. I'm looking forward to much more of that."



General Manager Jeff Emmett - Holiday Inn Express Medical Center Midtown

"We're just kinda surviving at the moment with regular corporate guests" said Jeff over the phone. Jeff said they are focusing more on the cleanliness side and having informative signage for their guests. Their biggest challenge he said was reacting in the right way. "My biggest challenge personally was telling the staff to go home". At the worst, they were down to 5 employees total, but Jeff says he thinks they are through the worst of it now with the occupancy levels now going back up again. Now Jeff looks ahead with pertinent questions. "What does the future look like? What's the official way we are going to clean rooms to make things safe? How are we going to make our guests feel we are the best hotel and the best brand?" Jeff observed that changes come, just like after 9/11, and they stick around. "I don't see hotels going backwards in the future."

STAY INFORMED ON COVID-19 WITH THESE HELPFUL LINKS

[Shelby County Health Department's May 18th
Phase 2 Re-Opening Directive](#)

[AHLA "Safe Stay" Guidelines](#)

[Memphis Tourism's Covid-19 Local & Industry
Resources](#)

[CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

PRESIDENT'S MAY 2020 LETTER



Wayne Tabor
President MMHLA

I hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy during this pandemic situation that the world is in today. It's certainly different times for us these days. As I write this letter today, the death toll from COVID-19 has reached over 100,000 people in the United States. We send our condolences to the families and friends who have lost loved ones to this virus. We urge our government officials to continue to push for a cure and a vaccine. Our country, state and city are starting to re-open. It's a good feeling to

see restaurants, attractions and hotels, as well as many other businesses that have closed, open up! In May, hotel occupancy continued to grow. In the week ending May 23rd, it was at 42.7%, up 4.5% from the previous week. The 28-day running report has us at 38.7%, second highest in our comp set. As we prepare to open our businesses, we need to continue to social distance and abide by all the CDC, state, city, county and health department regulations.

We have again had to move the Stars of the Industry Awards that was scheduled for June 17, 2020. We are not sure when the new date will be, but I will keep you up to date on how it all works out. We need your nominations; the applications are on our website. We won't have a membership meeting again this month in June, but I am planning to try to have one in July. I'm working on a program and will keep you all informed as to our plans. The Southern Lodging Summit will still be held and is scheduled for August 25th and 26th. Plans are moving forward and we have an impressive list of speakers, moderators and

panelists scheduled this year. Information will soon be coming out on who they are. We have sent the save-the-date eblast out along with some other eblasts marketing the event. We need your help with auction items. A request for items went out this week with all the information on it to help us build up our inventory of items. Registration is open on the Southern Lodging Summit website as well as the MMHLA website. Hurry up and take advantage of the early bird discount!

Our annual MMHLA Golf Tournament and PAC Fundraiser is scheduled for September 23, 2020 at the Plantation Golf Club. We are on schedule with the tournament and registration will be opening soon on our website. We will send out an eblast with information on the event.

Most of the national, state and local government affairs this month have been around the CARES ACT, the PPP and the PPE requirements. An email went out from Hospitality Tennessee with information on supporting national bill HR 7010, the Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act. I urge you to support that bill. Locally, both the City Council and the Shelby County Government have been meeting concerning their budgets. I have been attending most of those meetings. Things are going to get tight because of the reduction of sales and bed tax revenue.

The Renasant Convention Center renovation is still coming along. It looks fantastic and plans are underway for the grand reopening and ribbon cutting ceremony. I'll keep you informed on those plans. Well that's it for this month.

Everyone stay safe out there and I will see you around town.

Wayne D. Tabor, CHA
President and CEO,
Metropolitan Memphis Hotel
& Lodging Association

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2020 CALENDAR

If you would like to volunteer a venue or present a luncheon program please contact Wayne Tabor at wayne@mmhla.com or (901) 581-5618.

ATTENTION: All MMHLA Membership luncheons and mixers are canceled through June 2020. MMHLA Board Meetings will be conducted by conference call

Aug. 25 & 26 - 2020 Southern Lodging Summit

The Peabody Hotel

Sept. 23 - Annual MMHLA Golf Tournament

11:30 AM - Timber Truss Golf Course

Sept. 30 - Oct. 3 - Memphis In May World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest

Tom Lee Park

Oct. 16 - Oct. 18 - Memphis In May Beale Street Music Festival

Tom Lee Park

MMHLA OFFICERS & BOARD

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