Sheraton Hotels Protect Workers and Guests in Decision to Go Smoke-Free

Decision Furthers National Trend

Washington 2008/02/15 - Starwood Hotels & Resorts has announced its Sheraton and Four Points by Sheraton Hotels will make its 8,000 smoking guest rooms in 300 hotels and resorts smoke-free by December 31, 2008. Sheraton follows its sister brand, Westin, which was the first hotel chain to become smoke-free in January 2006.

Following is a statement from John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society, on the Starwood Hotels announcement:

“Today’s decision to make the Sheraton and Four Points Hotels 100 percent smoke-free will remove a major threat to the health of all Sheraton’s guests and workers. In the United States alone, secondhand smoke is estimated to cause 35,000 to 45,000 deaths from heart disease and 3,000 deaths from lung cancer among nonsmokers each year. Former U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona said it himself in June 2006: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

“Given what we know about the dangers of secondhand smoke, Sheraton Hotels has made a socially responsible decision in the best interests of its employees and guests at its 300 properties in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. And with voters across the country overwhelmingly supporting smoke-free laws at the local and state levels, Sheraton Hotels’ new policy makes good business sense as well.

“In fact, smoke-free policies have been shown to increase tourism in cities such as Los Angeles and New York City. The top ten travel destinations in the United States have all enacted smoke-free laws.

“Corporate smoke-free policies are gaining popularity. Sheraton’s new smoke-free policy follows the adoption of similar policies by Comfort Suites, Disney Resorts, Marriott and Westin Hotels in the last two years. We hope the example set by these and other companies will encourage additional businesses to follow suit.

“Smoke-free laws are spreading rapidly across the country. Smoke-free laws have been enacted in 27 states – up from just two states as recently as 2001 – and more than 2,600 communities. Currently, more than 60 percent of Americans are currently living in communities with a smoke-free policy.

“The American Cancer Society and its sister advocacy organization, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action NetworkSM (ACS CAN) are working throughout the country in support of smoke-free policies at the state and local levels. We also encourage members of the business community to adopt smoke-free policies as a way to protect the health of their workers and patrons while improving their bottom line.”

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across America. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

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