



## **120 Smoke Free Hotels Join the [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) Online Directory in 1st Month**

Date: 2006-02-22

Just 1 month after FreshStay™ launched the [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) online directory of hotels offering clean indoor air products and practices, 120 smoke-free properties have joined the growing network.

'Some 120 smoke-free hotels have joined [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com),' said Ray Burger, president of Pineapple Hospitality Inc., the Saint Charles-based developer of FreshStay™. 'An average of five smoke-free properties are added to the online directory every day. Already, 37 states and 93 cities are represented. Dozens of national and regional brands as well as management companies, franchisees and independent owner/operators have joined the rapidly growing [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) network.'

Connecting millions of travelers and thousands of groups to hotels committed to providing clean indoor air, [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) awards hotels guaranteeing non-smoking rooms at the point of reservation two pineapples, while 100-percent smoke-free hotels automatically earn three pineapples. Beyond that, the more fresh indoor air products and practices a property has in place, the more pineapples it earns. In the near future, the Web site will list and rate hotels that offer enhanced accommodations including being cleaned with Green Seal-certified products, having walls covered with low-odor, low-VOC paints, and offering improved air and water filtration and allergen-barrier products.

'Not surprisingly, more and more hotels are going smoke free - but until the [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) online directory came along last month, there really wasn't an easy way for businesses, meeting planners and individual travelers to easily pinpoint these properties and readily connect with them for reservations,' Burger said. 'We're leveraging new-age technology, the Internet, to connect age-old supply and demand. For decades, so many - including, just to name just a few, athletic teams, school church groups, medical associations and those suffering from allergies, asthma and chemical sensitivities - have struggled to find fresh air lodging. Not any more. We're clearing the air on booking smoke-free stays at [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com).'

### **Good For Groups**

FreshStay™ and its [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) online hotel directory are good for groups and meeting planners alike, according to Joan L. Eisenstodt, Chief Strategist for Eisenstodt Associates LLC, a Washington, D.C.-based firm specializing in conference consulting, facilitation and training.

'Just as we select facilities for the amount of space they have or their amenities, including better beds, and just as we look at venues because they're easier to get to, we also look for the facilities that are smoke free, particularly for groups that really value their health and safety,' Eisenstodt said. 'Now having a resource such as [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) where we can learn, for certain, of smoke-free facilities truly is an added benefit for all, but especially for independent hotels.'

Eisenstodt said owner/operators and the industry in general have created what was considered a niche market - smoke-free hotels - some years ago but today is considered more the norm. Such smoke-free facilities have a built-in marketing advantage that can and should be better leveraged through solutions such as a [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com).

'Most people searching online for hotel venues don't want to click too many times to find what they want,' Eisenstodt said. 'If a property is smoke free, they want to shout it out - for their benefit and that of guests and groups - and [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) is the best way to do it.'

'Certainly all groups - other than those associated with the tobacco industry - should be more likely to request non-smoking rooms if not completely smoke-free facilities,' Eisenstodt said. 'For instance, medical associations, medical-education groups and educators in general naturally gravitate toward smoke-free venues to try and set good examples for students and to look out for the health of their members/meeting participants.'

For groups seeking smoke-free venues, hotels just trying to clear the tobacco smoke in the air usually doesn't come close to meeting non-smoking guests' expectations. For example, Eisenstodt had a client that wanted to hold a meeting in a completely smoke-free facility. The client wanted to meet in a particular conference center, but the center initially was unwilling even to take the ash urns out because there would be other groups with smoking guests in house at the same time.

'The group ended up contracting for a smoke-free environment in the part of the conference center it would be using, but it was tough because other areas through which members had to walk were not smoke free and were rather unpleasant to attendees,' Eisenstodt said.

Eisenstodt said she expects and hopes the smoke-free trend will continue to gain momentum throughout the United States.

'Years ago, flight attendants helped enact non-smoking laws on airplanes because their health was suffering,' Eisenstodt said. 'I think restaurant and hotel employees want the same rights. Smoke-free hotels definitely represent a trend that I think will continue to occur more and more.'

Owner/operators stand to gain as well as hotel guests and employees as some smoke-free hotels report a 30-percent or greater improvement in their bottom lines - and this doesn't factor in that their capital assets increase in value at a much greater rate without the harmful effects of tobacco on the buildings and their furnishings, fixtures and equipment. Eisenstodt cited statistics from Rhode Island, which enacted smoke-free legislation for restaurants and has since seen its sales tax collections on meals and beverages rise 8.2 percent.

'Sales and profits increase, which is an added incentive along with an overall healthier environment for guests and employees alike,' Eisenstodt said. 'The reasons to go smoke free are numerous and significant, and they're growing every day.'

### **The Westin Way**

'We're very excited to be leading the way in this rapidly growing movement to smoke-free hotels,' said Janet Lewis, Senior Manager of Marketing Partnerships & Sponsorships for White Plains, New York-based Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide. 'Our Westin Hotels & Resorts was the first major international brand to ban smoking indoors and poolside chainwide - doing so recently at all 77 of its properties in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean,' Lewis said.

Before the move in late 2005, eight Westin Hotels already were smoke free. However, market research found 92 percent of Westin's room requests were for non-smoking rooms. (Note: In the study, one reservation counted as one room request, regardless of the length of stay.)

Further spurring the move, Westin conducted market research with general consumers and 88 percent said hotels need to take additional steps to provide healthier environments and 81 percent said hotels should go smoke free to create healthier environments.

'Westin's move to completely smoke free fully supports our brand positioning of renewal and creating a healthier environment for guests and employees alike,' Lewis said. 'We're giving guests, groups, and associates what they want, and our brand and our owner/operators are gaining a distinct competitive advantage in the process.'

Lewis said [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com) is a great resource for connecting guests and groups online with those properties that have taken extra steps to provide smoke-free environments.

### **Also Going 'All In'**

When it opens in August, the Coralville (Iowa) Marriott Hotel & Conference Center will have 286 smoke-free guestrooms and 60,000 square feet of smoke-free function space. In addition, the property will donate a percentage of guestroom receipts in 2006 to the University of Iowa Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center for tobacco-related research.

'We are proud to foster a healthy environment for our guests and employees, and this well-being extends to every area of our hotel from our plush Revive(R) beds to our smoke-free air,' stated Justin Hannah, Director of Sales & Marketing.

St. Louis' Chesire Lodge kicked off the New Year by going smoke free in its guestrooms and public areas. The enclosed Fox & Hounds Tavern is the property's only remaining space open to smoking. It took several months for the extensive cleaning of all 105 guestrooms and public spaces, but the conversion was well worth it for all involved, said Sales & Marketing Manager Sarah Bruns.

'More than 70 percent of our guests requested non-smoking rooms and the fourth floor already had converted to entirely smoke free in early 2005, so the decision to go completely smoke free was a relatively easy one for our owner to make on behalf of our guests and family of employees,' Bruns said. 'And now, with the recent launch of [www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com), our timing really couldn't be better.'

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality(TM) is an EPA Energy Star(TM) partner bringing fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines - including FreshStay(TM), Environmentally Sensitive Amenities, the greenSPA luxury amenity and dispenser system, GE energy efficient lighting, Guestat programmable thermostats, Oxygenic water-efficient showerheads, the Nature's Mist deodorization system, and dozens of other products and programs. To get a taste of Pineapple's sweet solutions helping hundreds of hotels bolster business and cut costs, please visit [www.pineapplehospitality.net](http://www.pineapplehospitality.net), or call Ray Burger at 636-922-2285.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource  
<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:  
<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article21066.html>