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WISCONSIN'S OSTHOFF RESORT AMONG FIRST PROPERTIES IN NATION TO OFFER EMPLOYEES DEBT-FREE COLLEGE DEGREES AS PART OF INDUSTRY PILOT PROGRAM

ELKHART LAKE, Wis. (March 13, 2018) – The Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake, Wis., announced today it is one of 10 hotel companies in the country to now offer debt-free college degrees to its employees as part of a groundbreaking pilot program from the American Hotel & Lodging Education Foundation (AHLEF), the foundation arm of the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA). The program, called AcceleratedED Pathways created by education company Pearson, launches this month. Employees of The Osthoff Resort will be able to complete a free associate degree and a low-cost bachelor's degree in this first-of-its-kind program for the hospitality industry. For more on The Osthoff Resort, log on to www.Osthoff.com.

According to AHLA, the program was developed to address the lodging industry's labor shortage, improve recruitment and retention efforts, and build opportunities for its workforce. "The hospitality business is about taking care of people, both our guests and our workforce," said Katherine Lugar, president and CEO of AHLA. "We could not do what we do without a strong, talented workforce."

Osthoff general manager Lola Roeh echoed that sentiment. "Employees completing degrees by taking advantage of this tuition assistance benefit can look forward to earning more money over the span of their careers and be qualified for promotions," said Roeh. "We also find these employees are among the highest performers in driving customer satisfaction, and that all fits with our value system at the Osthoff."

According to Roeh, Pearson staff will help match an employee with an online degree program at an accredited community college or university to complete an associate or bachelor's degree. In many cases, employees can use existing college credits to jumpstart their education, and apprentices currently

enrolled in AHLA's apprenticeship program can also earn college credit. Students will also receive support services that significantly reduce the administrative burden, making it more likely they will complete their degree. The program should be especially appealing to working adults in the hospitality industry who will now have a measure of control over their education while juggling jobs and family commitments.

Along with The Osthoff Resort, other participating companies run the gamut from large global brands to management companies, and include Hersha Hospitality Management, New Castle Hotels & Resorts, OTO Development, The Nines Hotel, Pivot Hotels & Resorts and Davidson Hotel and Resorts, Pyramid Hotel Group, Red Roof Inns, TradeWinds Island Resorts, and Wyndham Hotels and Resorts. This initiative will engage employees across 1,500 properties.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association, founded more than a century ago and headquartered in Washington, D.C., is the sole national association representing all segments of the eight million jobs the U.S. lodging industry supports including hotel owners, management companies, independent properties, state hotel associations, industry suppliers, and others. AHLEF is the industry's philanthropic organization, dedicated to helping people build careers that improve their lives and strengthen the lodging industry. Pearson has expertise in educational courseware and assessment and offers a range of teaching and learning services powered by technology.

Roeh was elected to the AHLA board of directors in 2017 and served as a partner state association representative for Wisconsin. Under Roeh's watch, The Osthoff Resort was voted the #3 best resort hotel in the Midwest in *Travel + Leisure* magazine's 2017 "World's Best Awards." It was also voted one of the top five resorts in the Midwest in the 2016 "Readers' Choice Awards" from *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine. Last year the resort received the prestigious AAA Four Diamond Rating for the 19th consecutive year.

The Osthoff, considered a landmark in Wisconsin tourism, employs 510 full-time and part-time employees. It's known for its lakeshore setting, distinctive architecture, spacious suites, award-winning [Aspira Spa](#) and an impressive collection of amenities that includes three restaurants, a cooking school, gift boutiques, indoor and outdoor pools, lake deck with live music, and elegant ballrooms and meeting venues. For more information on the resort, log on to www.osthoff.com.

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