

Navy Lodge Conference—



Bockelman

Charting the Course

The Navy Lodge Program will be “charting its course” for the next 40 years of taking care of its guests during the 2010 Navy Lodge Conference, which takes place at the Xona Resort Suites in Scottsdale, Ariz. from April 26-30.

Michael Bockelman, Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) vice president and Navy Lodge Program director, told *Military Club & Hospitality* that approximately 60 Navy Lodge managers, assistant managers, headquarters personnel and interns are scheduled to attend the conference, which takes place during the celebration of the program’s 40th anniversary.

The theme for this year’s conference is “Charting Our Course,” based on the Navy Lodge Program’s objective of being future driven. “Let’s look forward,” Bockelman explained. “We’re charting our course for the future. How are we going to do things in the future? It’s not what you did in the past; what are you going to do for me tomorrow?”

AGENDA

The conference will commence on Monday, April 26, with arrival and registration.

Managers will have the opportunity to take the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute’s Certified Hotel Administrator (CHA) and Certified Lodging Manager (CLM) examinations.

That afternoon, Navy Lodge personnel will take a tour of the Fairmont Scottsdale hotel. “We try to tour competitive hotels around the market area, just to see how somebody else does business, how their systems work, things of that nature,” Bockelman explained.

The Cocktail Connections Welcome Reception will take place that evening. Bockelman will address the attendees, and finalists for the NEXCOM Edward E. Carlson Awards will be announced.

During the Welcome Reception, attendees will be asked to dress up in late 1960s- and 1970s-style costumes to mark the 40th anniversary of the Navy Lodge Program. A costume contest will take place, and the winner will be selected by those at the reception.

Bockelman will give a “Welcome” speech during breakfast at the hotel on Tuesday morning, April 27, followed by committee meetings. Brett Sundstrom, general manager of Xona Resort Suites, will follow with a welcome to the Navy Lodge staff. Sundstrom will give a brief overview of his hotel and discuss how he does business.

Training sessions will then begin, covering a variety of topics. A financial overview will be given by Navy Lodge Financial Manager Pam Wheeler, followed by “Guest Service Increases Occupancy,” which will be conducted by Sue Privitera, an outside consultant, and Linda Crumpton, assistant director of the Department of Defense (DoD) Reservation Center.

“Competitive Advantage” will follow, during which attendees will be broken up into small groups to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the hotels they have seen.

Richard Diamonstein, executive vice president of Paramount Industrial Companies, Inc. — manufacturer of King Koil and Comfort Solutions mattresses — will then talk about bedding, including the new “green” bedding that is currently being tested in a few Navy lodges. Diamonstein will talk about the care and maintenance of mattresses, design of the mattresses, how they are built and why they are built that way. “It’s an educational session on mattress

The Xona Resort Suites in Scottsdale, Ariz. will host the Navy Lodge Conference from April 26-30. (PHOTO COURTESY OF XONA RESORT SUITES)



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Conference Preview

construction, including the mattresses currently being used in Navy lodges, and then taking it to the next level, which is the ‘green’ mattress,” Bockelman noted.

“It’s All About the Guest” will be a session conducted by Ken Edwards and Rick Tomljenovic, co-owners of Tristar Hotel Group, the management company for several hotels in the western United States, including Hilton, Wyndham, Radisson and Country Inn & Suites.

MORE TUESDAY SESSIONS

After lunch, NEXCOM Commander Rear Adm. Steven J. Romano, SC, USN, will give an overview of NEXCOM. A session on “Building a Hospitality Company” will follow, led by Steve Marcus, chairman of the board of Marcus Hotels and Resorts, a division of the Marcus Corp. “He is going to talk about how you build a company, what’s important to the company, how do you get to where he is today,” Bockelman said.

Bockelman will then provide details on the Navy Lodge Program’s 40th Anniversary promotion, followed by a session called “Lordy, Lordy, Look Who’s Forty.” Former Navy Lodge staff members Ron Tolson and Bonnie Dumont will lead a history lesson on the Navy Lodge Program.

In addition, a session on yield management is scheduled to run through the rest of Tuesday afternoon, followed by group sessions on yield management related to property management systems.



The Edward E. Carlson Awards will be presented to Navy lodges for their excellent performance in operations and customer service. (NEXCOM PHOTO)

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

On Wednesday, April 28, group meetings will take place in the morning, followed by a session on “Networking Follow-up,” a networking session led by Navy Lodge Regional Manager Carla Hardy and Navy Lodge San Diego Manager Maria Gonzalez.

Bockelman explained that this session is Part Two of a series of three sessions, the first of which took place at last year’s conference, based on how to meet and greet guests, as well as other essential networking tools.

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The next session, tentatively titled "Hospitality University for a Semester," will be conducted by Dr. Richard McNeill, CHME, a professor at the Northern Arizona University School of Hotel and Restaurant Management. McNeill will talk most of the day on guest service, marketing, sales, motivational speaking and other topics not finalized as of press time.

At the conclusion of Dr. McNeill's session, attendees will break into small groups to discuss what he presented, and each manager will be required to develop a performance objective, based on the session. "You have to take what you learned, develop a performance objective for you personally for your hotel, that is put onto your performance review," Bockelman explained.

Committee meetings will continue on the morning of Thursday, April 29, followed by a 15-minute session on criteria changes for the Carlson Awards. Navy Lodge Facilities Manager Mark LaVoie will then provide an update on Navy Lodge construction and renovation projects.

A representative from Cintas will conduct a session on uniforms, focusing on the rollout of a new uniform program for Navy Lodge front-desk personnel. Bockelman noted that new tops for front-desk staff will debut next month, and new housekeeping uniforms will roll out in the fall.

Nancy Stephens, professor of Marketing at the W.P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University, will follow with a session on "Promotions/Social Media."

Following a working lunch, during which attendees will split into groups, each group will do a presentation on their best

idea to celebrate the Navy Lodge Program's 40th anniversary. "Each manager has to do something for the 40th anniversary, so they have to come to the meeting with their agenda item," Bockelman explained. "They will get together into groups, discuss what they're all going to do and then present five of the best ideas of the group. It's just a way of sharing what other people are doing."

Wheeler and John Giattino, Navy Lodge operations manager, will then provide an update on property management systems, followed by an overview on American Hotel & Lodging Association/Educational Institute (AH&LA/EI) training programs in which the Navy Lodge Program participates.

Motivational speaker T. Scott Gross wraps up the scheduled sessions with a discussion on providing "Positively Outrageous Service," that attracts customers with a touch of creativity and personality.

The conference concludes with the Carlson Awards dinner, which takes place Thursday evening at the hotel. The Carlson Awards are presented to Navy lodges for their excellent performance in operations and customer service, and are divided into the following categories: small, medium and large. Awards will also include Associate of the Year, Manager of the Year, Hospitality Awards, Oscars (Outstanding Service, Courtesy Award Recipient), as well as service recognition awards for years of service. The featured speaker for the awards dinner will be NEXCOM Vice Commander Capt. Emil Spillman, SC, USN.

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