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## **AAHOACON24 Emerges as Pivotal Event for Hotel Owners Worldwide With Wave of Exciting Firsts**

**ORLANDO, FL, Apr. 5** – AAHOA (Asian American Hotel Owners Association), the largest hotel owners association in the world, is leading the way again. Amidst a wave of exciting firsts, the AAHOACON24 Convention & Trade Show emerges as a pivotal event for hotel owners worldwide.

The 2024 AAHOA Convention & Trade Show in Orlando, FL, held the first ever:

- Independent hoteliers conference at AAHOACON
- Kalibri Labs Commercial Strategy Certification Training In Collaboration with HerOwnership, where 42 people were among the first to earn a lodging industry-recognized certification in Commercial Strategy
- Hotel Turnaround Collegiate Championship

AAHOACON24 also had more than 7,000 registered attendees and 524 exhibitors at the Orange County Convention Center for what is dubbed the “Super Bowl” of hospitality events.

In addition to all the AAHOACON-firsts, there were 44+ education sessions, an immersive do-it-yourself product demo experience, top-level keynote speakers, and four networking events, including the Block Party at Orlando’s ICON Park.

AAHOACON24 had exactly two times the number of sponsors than in 2023 with 26. On top of that, event revenue is 6% higher than 2023 and 31% higher than in 2022.

With just over 84,500 square feet of exhibit space, AAHOACON24 is the largest trade show in AAHOA’s 35-year history, with the largest exhibitor total in AAHOACON history.

AAHOACON24 also generated a very strong interest from new business verticals, with 263 exhibiting companies participating in the current show who did not attend AAHOACON23.

AAHOA also received tremendous interest from exhibitors wanting to rebook for AAHOACON25. A total of 134 exhibitors committed to returning to AAHOACON25 in New Orleans next year, and 100% of all exhibiting hotel brands rebooked for AAHOACON25.

Word from the exhibit floor is that AAHOACON24 was the best trade show for business transactions in recent memory, and the excitement for New Orleans is mounting.

“We continue to raise the bar year after year, and AAHOACON24 exemplifies our commitment to excellence,” said **AAHOA President & CEO Laura Lee Blake**. “Celebrating AAHOA’s 35-year anniversary, the success of AAHOACON24 is a testament to the dedication of everyone involved, from our exhibitors and sponsors to our talented speakers, the AAHOA Board, and countless volunteers. Special recognition goes to the dedicated AAHOA Team who worked tirelessly to ensure AAHOACON24 was truly exceptional. Together, we take great pride in our collective achievements, ensuring our members receive the ultimate experience at the industry’s Super Bowl event, AAHOA’s Annual Convention and Trade Show.”

This year’s General Session keynote speakers included **Kevin O’Leary**, world-renowned businessman, author, investor, and TV personality, **Rahul Kapoor**, India’s leading mindset coach, motivational speaker, and author, and **Dr. Kiran C. Patel**, AAHOA Lifetime Member, Zambian Indian American philanthropist, serial entrepreneur, hotelier, and cardiologist. Special guests included **Senator Rick Scott (R-FL)** and **Congressman Shri Thanedar (D-MI)**.

AAHOACON24 also offered HerOwnership-driven workshops and learning sessions created just for women hoteliers, including a luncheon and learning session, and a HerOwnership & Women Own the Room learning session. In addition, AAHOA’s recently launched HYPE Initiative (Helping Young Professionals Evolved) featured a Young Professionals Reception at ICEBAR Orlando and a learning session with special guest speakers Jagruti Panwala, President & CEO Wealth Protection Strategies and Past AAHOA Chairwoman (2019-20); Nishant (Neal) Patel, Managing Partner, Blue Chip Hotels, and AAHOA Past Chairman (2022-23); and Sanjay Patel, CEO, MHG Hotels.

Texas hotelier **Miraj S. Patel**, MBA, CHO, CHIA, became the new Chairman of AAHOA’s Board of Directors, and **Pinal Patel** became the new AAHOA Secretary.

AAHOA Members also elected 10 members to the Board of Directors, recognized the achievement and excellence of the 2024 AAHOA Award recipients, and hosted its first-ever Hotel Turnaround Collegiate Championship. The competition challenged university students to compete via a hotel ownership simulation program in making the kind of decisions all hotel owners must make to turn things around when performance is lagging. Grand Valley State took home The People’s Choice Award, and Oklahoma State received the Judges Championship Trophy. Additionally AAHOA hosted its 2024 Tech Pitch Competition, co-powered by HFTP. The winning company was Kings III Emergency Communications for its emergency communications business.

“The feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing their appreciation for the quality of the speakers, the relevance of the topics discussed, and the overall organization of AAHOACON24,” said **AAHOA Chairman Miraj S. Patel**. “It’s incredibly gratifying to know that our efforts to deliver a valuable and memorable experience were well-received, and it’s a wonderful way to kick off this next chapter for AAHOA as I step into my new role as AAHOA Chairman.”



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**About AAHOA**

*AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world, with Member-owned properties representing a significant part of the U.S. economy. AAHOA's 20,000 members own 60% of the hotels in the United States and are responsible for 1.7% of the nation's GDP. More than one million employees work at AAHOA Member-owned hotels, earning \$47 billion annually, and member-owned hotels support 4.2 million U.S. jobs across all sectors of the hospitality industry. AAHOA's mission is to advance and protect the business interests of hotel owners through advocacy, industry leadership, professional development, member benefits, and community engagement.*