

## Driftwood In The News

Driftwood has been turning heads in the hospitality industry recently and as 2011 wrapped up, we have added even more properties to our portfolio. With the acquisition and management announcements of eight properties since Driftwood's joint venture with Apollo Global Management, LLC, the media have picked up on the ferocity Driftwood brings to the industry with many publications reporting on Driftwood's successes.

The announcements of the **DoubleTree by Hilton Downtown Wilmington** and the **Clarion Airport near Asheville** garnered the attention of outlets like *Hotel Business*, *Hotel-Online*, *The Daily Lodging Report* and *Silo-Breaker*. Coverage also appeared when the management announcement of both the **Holiday Inn Express Tampa-Brandon** and the **Courtyard by Marriott Dallas NW Hwy. at Stemmons/I-35E** were finalized just before the holiday season. That news was covered by *Hospitality Management*, *Lodging Magazine* online and the *Tampa Bay Business Journal*.

Some of our very own properties and employees have also received prominent recognition recently. **The Avenue Crowne Plaza Hotel Magnificent Mile Chicago** won InterContinental Hotels Group's Torchbearer Award in October and Driftwood Executive Vice President Carlos Rodriguez received the Estrella Award for "**Latino Hotelier of the Year.**" These announcements were featured by both *Hotel Executive* and *Hotel News Now*.

As our aggressive expansion plans have evolved into tangible deals, many publications sought to gain first-hand knowledge of **The Driftwood Difference**. Our very own Steve Johnson spoke with *Hotel News Now* finance editor Shawn Turner in December about our plans and how we are making strides in the hospitality industry. Read at the entire story here: <http://www.hotelnewsnow.com/articles.aspx/7125/Apollo-Driftwood-JV-begin-hotel-search>. We are excited to keep the media on their toes - and with more growth expected this year, we will do just that.

Stay up-to-date on the latest Driftwood news by visiting the Press Room page of our website at [www.DriftwoodHospitality.com/pressroom.html](http://www.DriftwoodHospitality.com/pressroom.html).

## Events



October 17th marked the official re-launch of the **Holiday Inn Phoenix West**. The Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce helped owners Mr. and Mrs. Hou cut the ribbon to officially reopen this newly renovated Driftwood property.



For Thanksgiving 2011, the **Sheraton Columbus at Capital Square** demonstrated what it truly means to give back. The hotel brought Thanksgiving dinner to their local police and fire stations for the men and women who were unable to be with their friends and families. General Manager Steve Groppe and his two children had the privilege of also getting a tour of a local fire station once dinner had been served, with the chance to climb aboard a fire truck.

In the last issue of *News & Views*, news was shared about the **Courtyard by Marriott Chicago Wood Dale / Itasca's** grand reopening party in September. The mayor sang with Elvis and State Senator Carol Panku stopped by to congratulate the property on its recent improvements. Dennis McKinnon and Ronnie Bull, both former Chicago Bears, also stopped by and made the event one to remember.



Want your event in the next *News & Views*? Email the details to [Driftwood@msilver-pr.com](mailto:Driftwood@msilver-pr.com).

## Employee Happenings

Jael Rafuse-Scott, guest service manager at the **Avenue Crowne Plaza Hotel Magnificent Mile Chicago**, was awarded the "Best of the Best Guest Service Manager of the Year" award at InterContinental Hotels Group's conference in October. Jael was recognized for going above and beyond her duties, creating memorable experiences for every guest and inspiring her co-workers to do the same. We would like to recognize Jael for embodying **The Driftwood Difference** every day on the job!

We would also like to congratulate the sales team at the **Courtyard Marriott Miami West** for some incredible sales news. The team recently booked an extended stay group meeting totaling 367 room nights and more than \$30,000 in revenue for the hotel. Congratulations to everyone there for their efforts in exceeding expectations in 2011. We are excited to hear about what all Driftwood hotels and resorts accomplish in the coming year.

To have your property featured in an upcoming issue of *News & Views*, submit news to [Driftwood@msilver-pr.com](mailto:Driftwood@msilver-pr.com)

## View from the Top

We are excited to announce that a new year is bringing not only new hotels, but newly renovated hotels, to the Driftwood portfolio. Many of our properties have recently completed successful renovations and others will be breaking ground in the coming months. What better way to begin a new year than with a new look?



Renovations at the **Holiday Inn Phoenix West** wrapped up at the close of 2011 and guests can now enjoy newly refurbished rooms, meeting spaces and a brand new lobby. The **Fiesta Inn** in Tempe Arizona will also be finalizing numerous property enhancements at the beginning of this year. The **Sheraton Columbus Hotel at Capitol Square** and the **DoubleTree by Hilton Downtown Wilmington** are both undergoing extensive renovations in Q1 2012, including the properties, rooms, lobbies, meeting and event spaces, restaurants and exterior spaces. The **Sheraton Columbus Hotel at Capitol Square** and the **DoubleTree by Hilton Downtown Wilmington** will finalize renovations by September 1, 2012.

We are excited to see the final product at Driftwood's newest properties and to help travelers experience the most innovative public spaces and guestroom amenities available on the market.

As always, we are excited to continue seeing our hotels embody **The Driftwood Difference**. We stand apart from our competitors by embracing the five pillars of **The Driftwood Difference**.

**Flexibility** – We pride ourselves on the way we tailor our management approach, style and response to any given situation.

**Diversity** – There is no limit to what Driftwood is or can do, from the expertise of our team to the variety of services we offer.

**Integrity** – The only surprise about Driftwood is our innovation. What you see really *is* what you get, which is unusual in this business.

**Accessibility** – We think like an owner, which means cost-control, access to senior management and swift conflict resolution.

**Originality** – Being hungry and entrepreneurial means that we bring big ideas to the table. At the same time, we find a way to implement those ideas efficiently and cost-effectively.

Feel free to contact me directly with any questions, concerns or feedback at [MDiaz@dhmhotels.com](mailto:MDiaz@dhmhotels.com). Visit our website to learn more about our company and executive team at [www.DriftwoodDifference.com](http://www.DriftwoodDifference.com). We look forward to seeing many of you at ALIS next week!

— **Michael Diaz, Executive Vice President & COO**

## GM Spotlight

**Mik Mahdavi**

**Avenue Crowne Plaza Magnificent Mile Chicago**



1. How long have you worked at the Avenue Crowne Plaza Magnificent Mile Chicago?

*I have worked at the Crowne Plaza for four years and I have been with Driftwood for nine.*

2. What is your alma mater?

*I graduated from Johnson & Wales University Providence, RI with a BS in Hospitality Management.*

3. What is your favorite weekend activity?

*It's always a good weekend when I can make it to the gym.*

4. Tell us a memorable experience that you've had while working at this property.

*Every day is an adventure in Chicago.*

5. What is your favorite part of being a general manager?

*My favorite part of being a general manager is working with a group of people who take pride in what they do and helping make the hotel a success.*

To nominate your GM for an upcoming section of *GM Spotlight*, submit your GM's name, property and a brief explanation of why s/he should be recognized to [Driftwood@msilver-pr.com](mailto:Driftwood@msilver-pr.com).

Learn more about the Avenue Crowne Plaza Magnificent Mile Chicago at <http://www.avenuehotelchicago.com/>.

## Our Expanding Portfolio

We are excited to announce the addition of new hotels to our rapidly expanding portfolio and would like to welcome the following to our family:

- **Holiday Inn Express Tampa-Brandon**
- **Courtyard by Marriott Dallas NW Hwy. at Stemmons/I-35E**

Two new hotels since our last e-newsletter! Driftwood is continuing its search for new business opportunities and open to any suggestions or contacts you may have.

Drop us a line by emailing Brian Quinn, EVP/Principal Development, at [BQuinn@dhmhotels.com](mailto:BQuinn@dhmhotels.com).

For more information, visit our website at [www.DriftwoodDifference.com](http://www.DriftwoodDifference.com)