

AH&LA President Makes Unprecedented Visit to University of South Carolina

Even in a down economy, the hotel and lodging industry is a powerful engine for economic growth, said Joe McNerney, president and chief executive officer of the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA), last month at the University of South Carolina's Lodging Lecture Series.

Citing the industry's 48,000 lodging properties, 4.5 million rooms and 1.8 million workers, plus the 7.5 million other jobs made possible by the lodging industry, McNerney said the times nonetheless require more efficient and effective management and openness to restructuring and rebuilding.

A 45-year industry veteran, having worked from Manhattan to Madrid, McNerney says he's benefited from his experiences working with individuals representing all personalities, talents and cultures. Those experiences, he says, prepared him for his role as president of the association.

Among his achievements, since beginning his career with Sheraton, McNerney established the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Foundation to improve the lodging industry. The industry's only premier non-profit organization, the foundation provides scholarships and professional certifications, as well as funding for industry research.

For almost a century, the American Hotel and Lodging Association has been the largest nationally recognized association representing the hotel and lodging trade. AH&LA represents all aspects of the industry from hotel companies to student members while working with 43 state associations. Through its headquarters in Washington, D.C., the association allows advocacy for the hotel and lodging industry to reach Capitol Hill.

The Lodging Lecture Series was developed by Instructor Kiran Shah and Professors Sheryl F. Kline and Brumby McLeod in the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management at the University of South Carolina to prepare students for their futures in the hotel, restaurant and tourism industries and to introduce them to successful individuals in their fields of interest.

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