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Quality Inn and Suites of Sequim Earns the ENERGY STAR® for Superior Energy Efficiency

(Sequim, WA) The Quality Inn and Suites, owned by Wirta Hospitality Worldwide has earned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) prestigious ENERGY STAR, the national symbol for superior energy efficiency and environmental protection. This signifies that the building's energy performance rates in the top 25 percent of facilities nationwide.

"Wirta Hospitality Worldwide is pleased to accept EPA's ENERGY STAR in recognition of our energy efficiency efforts," said owner Bret Wirta. "Through this achievement, we have demonstrated our commitment to environmental stewardship while also lowering our energy costs."

Commercial buildings that earn the ENERGY STAR use an average of 40 percent less energy than typical buildings and also release 35 percent less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The Quality Inn and Suites improved its energy performance by managing energy strategically across the entire organization and by making cost-effective construction decisions and improvements to the hotel.

"Improving the energy efficiency of our nation's buildings is critical to preserving our environment and our natural resources," said Kathleen Hogan, director of EPA's Climate Protection Partnerships Division. "From office buildings to hotels, supermarkets to schools, the ENERGY STAR distinguishes those organizations who are taking environmental responsibility into their own hands."

To earn the ENERGY STAR, Wirta Hospitality Worldwide exceeded insulation standards during the construction of the Quality Inn. Moving forward to save additional energy, WHW partnered with their local electricity provider, Clallam County PUD. Their first joint project was a building lighting retrofit. Under the PUD's Conservation Implementation Agreement, the district agreed to reimburse WHW for 70% of the cost of the lighting retrofit. The retrofit was completed in March 2009. PUD estimates that the equivalent of an entire month of building electricity usage will be saved by the lighting retrofit.

The second program in the Clallam County PUD partnership is the monitoring of a retrofitted device called an Energy Eye in the guest rooms. Common in European hotels, this infrared device senses if the hotel room is unoccupied and turns down the rooms heating or air-conditioning to preset levels. A total of six rooms are being monitored by the PUD in the beginning of 2009. WHW hopes to see a 5% to 10% decline in room energy usage with the Energy Eye devices.

Wirta Hospitality Worldwide is promoting its vision of being a good neighbor through sustainable tourism to all its customers and is sharing the results of the ENERGY STAR program with its parent franchise, Choice Hotels International. In 2008 WHW won an APEX (Award for Property Excellence) for being an Eco-Friendly hotel from Choice Hotels.

Says owner Bret Wirta about the hospitality industry, "Most large or expensive hotels practice energy conservation and sustainable tourism. Many of these upscale hotels have building managers who are engineers and they work closely with organizations like ENERGY STAR and other energy savings consultants. But mid-scale brand hotels like our Quality Inn that make up the majority of hotel buildings across our country, don't have access to that same knowledge. In our type of mid-scale brand hotel, the number of staff with the understanding of complex energy systems is usually minimal. That means that there are tens of thousands of hotel owners who currently need education, a massive energy-savings potential. Wirta Hospitality Worldwide will continue to work closely with organizations like ENERGY STAR on conservation education and will work hard to serve as an example for other mid-priced hotels to follow."

EPA's national energy performance rating system provides a 1-100 scale that helps organizations assess how efficiently their buildings use energy relative to similar buildings nationwide. A building that scores a rating of 75 or higher is eligible for the ENERGY STAR. Commercial buildings that can earn the ENERGY STAR include offices, bank branches, financial centers, retail stores, courthouses, hospitals, hotels, K-12 schools, medical offices, supermarkets, dormitories, and warehouses.

ENERGY STAR was introduced by EPA in 1992 as a voluntary, market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency. Today, the ENERGY STAR label can be found on more than 50 different kinds of products, new homes, and commercial and industrial buildings. Products and buildings that have earned the ENERGY STAR designation prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy-efficiency specifications set by the government. In 2007, Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved about \$16 billion on their energy bills while reducing the greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of 27 million vehicles.

For more information about ENERGY STAR visit www.energystar.gov.

*To calculate greenhouse gas emissions, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/calculator.html>

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