

CHINOOK WINDS CASINO RESORT

Positive Things to Contemplate

by Teresa Simmons

In today's economic environment, we sometimes have to be creative in how we enhance what we offer – and the details are important. With the pace that life requires, we often overlook the small things that are worthy of celebration and instead focus on rumors or things that appear to be problematic, forgetting to voice the solution that addressed those problems.

A good example of this would be the wind blowing down the flags last winter that were placed in the ground for a celebration. The casino ordered 60 flags to be used to celebrate holidays and the wind blew them over their first time up.

The Facilities Department came up with a way to reinforce the holders in the ground and now those flags stay upright and are displayed proudly from the upper parking lot on Veterans Day and other holidays like the Fourth of July. They look nice. It's a small detail in the scheme of things, but people notice them.

Other Things to Celebrate

- 40 new employees were hired at the casino's Job Fair on June 24 – 31 employees for the casino, seven for the hotel and two for the golf resort.
- The hotel swimming pool and the interior of its building have received a new paint job and sprucing up. The Chinook Winds logo now is painted on the bottom of the pool.
- Has anyone noticed the landscaping lately? Even though the coastal climate isn't the best for flowering plants, the landscaping around the casino and the hotel is really lovely. Someone works hard to keep it looking that way.
- The hotel has entertainment in the lounge now on Wednesday through Sunday. Bret Lucich is a well-known local artist who has a good following.
- The dance floor in the hotel lounge has been expanded.
- The anniversary fireworks were the best ever, with a full orchestra playing while the event was taking place. Whole families were on the beach around bonfires watching the spectacle. The fog cleared away, the wind died down and it was fairly warm. Lights from the fireworks reflected off the ocean waves, shimmering and dancing in the night. They could be seen from all across town.
- Wedding packages now are being offered and we're booking more weddings than ever before.
- The first Native American Literature Fair and Film Festival will take place at Chinook Winds this fall.
- The inaugural Native American Trade Show earlier this year was a big success.
- Keep seeing some of the same events from year to year? That's true. The American Pool Association,



Hotel swimming pool with Chinook Winds logo (photo by Bruno Rudolph)

tion, the Billiard Congress of America and the Women's Professional Billiards Association come back year after year because of the location and the service they receive at Chinook Winds. It's the same for many events and a number of conventions return annually as well. The Sales, Banquets and Special Events staffs work exceptionally hard to please the clients. It's easy to think of them when something goes wrong, but how often do we thank them when things are running smoothly?

- The high price of gas has caused our buses to have more riders than ever before. People are still coming to play, just in a different mode of transportation.
- The Facilities Department has rolled out a new departmental employee incentive program called "Caught You Doing Something Good."
- Child care has extended its hours to 7 a.m.-11 p.m., Sunday through Thursday; and 7 a.m.-12:30 a.m., Friday and Saturday, to accommodate Chinook Winds employees and community members in the work force who need child care.
- Aces Bar & Grill, located at Chinook Winds Golf Resort, is now open daily at 8 a.m. for breakfast.
- The Players Services Department is organizing teams for the Relay For Life on Aug. 15-16 at the Taft High School track. The casino is a sponsor of the local Relay For Life every year.
- The front-line staff at the hotel has completed customer service training online.
- Directors, managers and supervisors have completed a 10-week team leadership training conducted in-house.
- The Human Resources Department organized casino employee collections of items for Stuff a Boat, a fund-raiser at Tanger Outlet Center for Operation Care Package, a program that sends items to members of the Armed Services around the world. The casino also is a sponsor, as it is for many local

events, working in partnership with entities in the local community.

- Casino administration has started organizing a carpool for employees to help cut down on personal transportation costs.
- Although casino staff feels the economic crunch as much as everyone else, you will find they offer the same level of professional service they always have while they are carpooling and finding ways to meet their own personal financial challenges.
- And even though ways to cut costs are continually being explored, events will be as lively as they always have been thanks to the creative energy of the casino staff. Look forward to New Year's Eve. It will be a new, fresh celebration!

Organizations Say "Thanks"

As mentioned above, Chinook Winds works with many charitable organizations and non-profits to help with fund-raisers. Sometimes they are supported with sponsorships. Other times it may be technical support, surplus items, baskets of items from the gift shop, gift certificates, trays of food or team sponsorships (usually made up of Chinook Winds employees).

We have to be creative to lend a hand and do it with the least amount of cost. Sometimes the items requested are not for fund-raisers. A surprising and frequent request comes from elementary schools for playing cards to use in math classes. We also send playing cards to the troops overseas and to several nursing homes.

During the course of the year, Chinook Winds receives plaques, certificates of appreciation, thank you letters, cards and notes. For a time, the plaques and certificates were displayed at the bottom of the stairs at the east end of the casino that begins at the employee entrance and exits on the gaming floor. Eventually we realized the walls simply could not hold them all!

The following is a sample of the notes we receive during the year for items other than cash contributions or sponsorships. It doesn't matter how

large or small the contribution is, it's still appreciated, as you will see below.

- In the case of a My Sister's Place fund-raiser, we donated trays of food "As vice-chair of the board and co-chair of our fund-raising committee, I want to say how much I appreciate your efforts to make our Marimba Concert fund-raiser a success. Your food trays were wonderfully delicious and every crumb disappeared! We had an exciting and entertaining evening for all who attended! Thank you again for helping us raise funds to continue services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault." Lynn Brooks Whitlow
- Gift certificates were donated to the National Indian Child Welfare Association " ... Your donation to our silent auction helped make it a big success this year. With your generous support, NICWA was able to raise \$4,662!"
- The following letter arrived in 2008 from Relay For Life for a donation in 2007 "Thank you and your staff for all the pirate treasures you donated for the prize table at the children's game tent at Relay For Life. There were not many children (because of the rain) so the leftover prizes will be used for next year also ... Thanks so much."
- From Siletz & Toledo Senior Meals on Wheels "Thank you for the coffee mugs. The seniors and elders like them a lot better. We appreciate all of your support."
- From Lincoln County Chapter #309 AARP for donating buffet tickets to the volunteers as a thank you at the annual volunteer banquet "It's a pleasure to acknowledge your dedication and commitment to our community and those within it who need assistance. We understand the commitment required to devote the time and energy to get the job done. We know that it takes special people to provide services to others." "The services you provide are the very reason for AARP's existence. Through your continual effort, our community is a richer place to live. You bring sunshine into our lives and help spread the joy of living in a vibrant and loving community."
- From the North Lincoln Hospital Foundation for donating certificates for a getaway package to its Gala Benefit Dinner and Auction " ... We deeply appreciate your support and place the highest value on partnerships with businesses and individuals who contribute to the success of the Gala. Your generosity both affirms the Foundation's mission to assure quality health care in our community, and moves us closer to our goal for this event."