

Hoaglands promote Sanders to president

Hoagland Properties Inc., the parent company owner of Florence's Old Town Inn and River House Inn, announced the appointment of Craig Sanders to company president.

Sanders assumes his new role upon owners Gary and Loretta Hoagland's retirement this month.

"Gary and I are pleased to announce the promotion of Craig Sanders to president of Hoagland Properties Inc.," said Loretta Hoagland. "The board's unanimous vote elected Craig to this position as well as to the position of board member. Craig has a deep knowledge of the business and will take over the day-to-day operations of the corporation."

Gary Hoagland will retain his title of chairman of the company's board and will remain in touch on all aspects of the business.

Loretta Hoagland will continue as vice president and secretary of the board and retain her advisory roles.

The Hoaglands are retiring to the Portland area.

Among Sanders' many goals is to continue the properties' climb in TripAdvisor's ranks.

In 2013, The Old Town Inn ranked in the middle of more than 200 properties on the Oregon Coast. Today it is regularly in the top 10 and number one in Florence, and just received TripAdvisor's recognition as one of the country's top 25 bargain hotels for customer satisfaction.

The River House Inn consistently ranks in the top three for Florence.

Experienced hoteliers, the Hoaglands bought The River House Inn and the former Money Saver Motel (now The Old Town Inn) in 1999, at a time when the two properties were in need of improvement.

Sanders was hired in 2000 as general contractor and the continuous improvements in facili-



COURTESY PHOTO

Gary Hoagland, Craig Sanders and Loretta Hoagland

ties and service were begun.

In 2007, Sanders accompanied Gary Hoagland to Salina, Utah, to size-up a Super 8 Motel for eventual purchase.

"During the trip, Gary mentioned needing a general manager in a couple of years," said Sanders. "I started reading-up on the hotel business by getting college textbooks on hotel management and operations, learning operational software such as payroll and business accounting, and learning about human resources, marketing, risk management and safety issues."

"I became Gary and Loretta's general manager over dinner one night in 2008," Sanders remembers. "Gary handed me his office keys and said, 'We're going on vacation. You're in charge.'"

Sanders led a major renovation of The River House Inn's street-side appearance in 2007, converting its old-style motel appearance to one of a contemporary Craftsman-style inn complete with a new entryway and portico, a multi-gabled roofline, a stone chimney and pillars; and redesigning the office, lobby, conference rooms and adding a breakfast area.

In 2013 Sanders was named vice president of the company and led the \$750,000 renovation of The Old Town Inn and The River House Inn.

More than 80 percent of the work was done by people from the Florence area. They used more than a dozen local contractors and sub-contractors, and purchased the majority of their materials locally.

As a result of their ongoing investment in improvements and maintenance, as well as their attention to detail and very competitive pricing, Hoagland Properties' two inns have won local recognition as clean, comfortable, affordable places to stay-and as one of the area's favorite overnight accommodations for local people to recommend to their out-of-town guests.

"Every day it's something different. I like that," said Sanders. "Guest relations can be fun. I like talking with visitors about their trip and helping them find fun things to do."

"Gary and Loretta are very generous and employee-focused. I'll continue that because that is the foundation to our success. We like giving merit-based raises and bonuses to our

staff, and sharing from our financial successes."

Sanders will continue the ongoing customer service training which has resulted in the staff holding competitions for cleanest rooms and quickest turn-arounds.

Housekeepers are rewarded every time the word "clean" appears on a guest comment card. Managers are rewarded for every TripAdvisor review that is scored a 4 or higher. Managers often do not release a room for use until they personally inspect it thoroughly, even to the extent of getting down on their hands and knees to check under beds and chairs and behind dressers and armoires with a flashlight.

"The staff is very helpful to guests in recommending places to eat, shop and find things to do while in Florence," adds Sanders. "They often print maps, menus and tide charts; make restaurant reservations; coordinate dune buggy, horseback or airplane rides and organize golf. They serve like hotel concierges and research everything, down to what each local restaurant has on special each evening."

Sanders became a licensed contractor in 1973. He has also worked as a scuba dive master, underwater photographer and had a dive business in Brookings, Ore., with wife Jeanni.

Sanders is an avid golfer and active member of the Florence Rotary Club. He heads Rotary's annual Cool At The Coast golf tourney as a fundraiser for several local non-profits.

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