Choice Hotels Notes Progress of the Cambria Suites Brand as It Enters Its Second Year

Boise, Idaho, Cambria Suites Brand Hotel Expected to Open Later This Year; Hotel Construction Chronicled Online at www.cambriasuiteslive.com

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Why settle for just a dozen when you can have a baker's dozen?

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(Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20060315/DCW039-b)

That was the story for Choice Hotels International, Inc., which ended 2005 with 13 deals for its new Cambria Suites brand hotel.

The sites for these 13 future Cambria Suites brand hotels are Boise, Idaho; Green Bay, Wis.; Madison, Wis.; Savannah, Ga.; Ft. Meyers, Fla.; Akron/Canton, Ohio; Avondale (Phoenix), Ariz.; Southport (Charlotte), N.C.; Appleton, Wis.; Bloomington (Mall of America), Minn.; Ontario, Calif.; Wilmington, N.C.; and Somerset, N.J.

"This past year was a strong one for us," said William Edmundson, vice president of brand management and strategy for the Cambria Suites brand. "Not only did we execute 13 deals in 12 months for a start-up brand in a new segment for Choice Hotels, we also signed two letters of intent for multi- property deals."

Swift Hospitality in Freeport, Illinois, signed a letter of intent for five properties in and around the Chicago area. Though most of the locations for these properties have not yet been selected, Swift Hospitality has selected Appleton, Wisconsin, as one of the five sites. Choice also signed a letter of intent with Badger Midwest Holdings, LLC, of Cambridge, Wisconsin, for 10 Cambria Suites brand properties in Florida, Minnesota and Wisconsin, with many of the exact locations also yet-to-be-determined.

"We had a stellar first year of development, and we're excited about how many applications are already in-house this year undergoing feasibility studies," added Edmundson.

"The Cambria development team continues to find hotel developers aggressively pursuing upscale opportunities," said Brad LeBlanc, regional vice president, franchise sales, for the Cambria Suites brand. "Cambria Suites is a fresh alternative to the other brands that exist in most markets today, and developers are very excited about the size of the Cambria Suites room and its stylish offerings.

"The Choice development team is very busy as our licensees embrace the brand in their communities," LeBlanc added. "Everyone knows the upscale segment continues to perform well and our licensees want to be a part of the action with a Cambria Suites hotel."

The first Cambria Suites hotel to open will be in Boise, Idaho in the fourth quarter of 2006. Choice Hotels has installed a Webcam at the Boise construction site so that anyone interested in the brand can watch the progress being made at the first property by going to http://www.cambriasuiteslive.com/.

"It's exciting for me to be able to go online every day and see the progress," Edmundson said. "I'm hoping that hoteliers, developers and consumers will all log-on to track the progress of the Boise property via the webcam, get excited about the brand and ultimately will see when the hotel is open for business."

Choice launched the Cambria Suites brand in January 2005 in response to strong market demand for a new select-service, upscale hotel product. According to SmithTravelResearch, 2006 demand for upscale properties is expected to be twice the rate of supply for the segment. This upswing in demand continues a growth trend for the segment that began two years ago.

"We've created a Cambria Suites brand-focused franchise sales team making sure we have properties in the right markets with the right franchisees and the right management companies," Edmundson added. "This will help ensure the brand's success as we go head-to-head with competitors in 2006 and beyond."

The Boise Airport property will be constructed on two acres close to business and leisure destinations and will include a number of distinctive, Cambria Suites brand-specific features such as a square signature tower on an "L"-shaped footprint and a media wall with a built-in 60-inch plasma screen television in the two-story lobby.

Each Cambria Suites brand property will have more than 100 guestrooms that will be 25 percent larger than traditional hotel rooms and feature flat-panel televisions in both the living and sleeping areas, which are separated by a decorative wall. Other features of the guestrooms include a pullout sleeper sofa, overstuffed lounge chair, ottoman/coffee table, microwave, refrigerator and a moveable, oversized desk. All Cambria Suites brand properties will have fitness facilities, an indoor pool, a 24-7 sundries shop, a lounge featuring both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages and a coffee bar and 1,000 square feet of meeting space.

About Choice Hotels International

Choice Hotels International is one of the world's largest lodging franchisors, marketing more than 5,000 hotels open or under development in more than 40 countries under the Cambria Suites, Clarion, Quality, Comfort Suites, Comfort Inn, Sleep Inn, MainStay Suites, Suburban Extended Stay Hotel, Econo Lodge and Rodeway Inn brand names. For more information on Choice, visit the company's web site at http://www.choicehotels.com/.

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