



Trevino

NAVY GATEWAY INNS AND SUITES: STANDARDIZATION AND TRAINING



It has been a busy year for Navy Gateway Inns and Suites (NGIS) and Mario A. Trevino, official and recreational lodging manager, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC).

Room standardization has moved closer to reality, training continues to be a focal point and the lodging program expanded to assist families of injured servicemembers.

In addition to his service to the VQ program, Trevino is a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserves and spent seven months deployed in Iraq in 2005, overseeing more than 200 construction projects.

Trevino returned to Iraq in 2008 to continue with the rebuilding of Iraq. Now back at the helm of official and recreational lodging, Trevino recently spoke with Military Club & Hospitality about his program's efforts to enhance the quality of life of official travelers.

***MCH:** What were the highlights of the Navy Gateway Inns and Suites (NGIS) during 2008? Were there any initiatives that exceeded expectations? Were there any initiatives that did not meet expectations? Please explain.*

Trevino: We have been steadily moving to attain standardization of our room configuration across the enterprise. We have also been working with SoftBrands, Inc., to solve some of the property management system glitches that slowed us down a bit during this past year, but that has not prevented us from placing at least 80 percent of our CONUS sites on our Web reservation system.

Some of our facilities have received a facelift and we are moving toward changing the overall appearance of our properties. NAB Little Creek, Va., is a great example of how we will look in the future. Our expectations are being met, and the

transformation is improving the way our rooms are configured, the way our facilities are maintained and the services we provide. The goal is to be the lodging of choice for our official travelers.

***MCH:** How many Navy Gateway Inns and Suites do you run? What were revenues in fiscal 2008, and how did they compare with fiscal 2007? How are revenues year-to-date?*

Trevino: We run 42 Navy Gateway Inns and Suites. Revenues in fiscal 2008 were \$152.5 million, compared to \$130 million in fiscal 2007. Year-to-date revenues for fiscal 2009 through July were \$153 million.

***MCH:** Have you opened any new NGIS? Are there any new NGIS you plan to open in 2009 and 2010?*

Trevino: The grand opening for the NGIS at SUBASE Groton, Conn., took place in September.

***MCH:** What plans do you have for renovations for the rest of this year and in 2010?*

Trevino: In 2010, whole-room concept renovations will take place at NSF Diego Garcia; NAF Atsugi and FA Yokosuka, Japan; NB Guam; NAS Sigonella, Italy; and NSY Portsmouth, NAS Oceana, NSA Northwest Annex and NSA Wallops Island, Va.

***MCH:** Please provide an update on the standardization of training for all NGIS professionals.*

Trevino: Training is an essential element of our program. Our training concept is to focus not only on the specific skill sets required by our operations, but also in linking our employees' skills to their development for a career path and measuring their success in the classroom

and the field.

The training is designed by the Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) Training Branch, which in turn certifies our master facilitators. Our master facilitators then prepare and certify the same material across the enterprise, ensuring that standardization of the training material is maintained. As part of the initial development of this process, one module - housekeeping - has been completed and we are using it to test the deployment and the training process, from development of training modules to fielding of the material.

***MCH:** Last year, Robin Gaines, NGIS Lodging Program Reviews, said the whole-room and total-room concepts would continue. Please provide an update on projects at NAS Whiting Field, Fla., which was expected to be completed in the second quarter of fiscal 2009, and NB Point Loma, Calif., for which a contract was expected to be awarded during fiscal 2009.*

Trevino: NAS Whiting Field is complete. The NB Point Loma project timeframe has moved, with an expected start date in the second quarter of fiscal 2010. Engineers are currently conducting a structural survey of the building.

***MCH:** Robin Gaines said she expected 45 properties to allow online reservations by the end of calendar year 2008. Please provide an update on the rollout of the NGIS modernization plan.*

Trevino: Today we have 47 and all properties are expected to be completed by March 2010.

***MCH:** How many recreational lodging facilities do you run? What were revenues in fiscal 2008, and how did they compare with fiscal 2007? How are revenues year-to-date?*

All-Services Lodging Report

Trevino: We operate 37 recreational lodging facilities. Fiscal 2008 revenues were \$17.7 million, compared to \$15.8 million in fiscal 2007. Year-to-date revenues through July were \$15.6 million.

MCH: Please provide an update on NGIS' branding concept, as well as continued efforts to achieve standardization.

Trevino: The Navy's official lodging operation has been branded as "Navy Gateway Inns and Suites," and we are in the process of standardizing the contents of our rooms, beginning with beds. Sealy has manufactured our new beds, and the bedding is composed of 350-thread-count sheets, a duvet and four pillows. All of our televisions are flat screen, commercial

or using our call center. This gives our customers a quality standard they can count on, regardless of how they contact us. This year we have processed 400,000 online and call center reservations, leading to more than \$12 million in sales, which is an increase from last year's total of 160,000 reservations that generated \$3 million. As we get closer to finalizing the rollout of the system and instituting our enterprise standards, we believe that more and more customers will be making reservations via our varied distribution channels.

MCH: Are there any other new technological advances featured in the lodges? Please provide the names of the companies supplying the technology.

Trevino: In addition to the standardization of our services, the Web reservation system and our training processes, we are in the process of implementing a facilities recapitalization plan. With decreasing appropriations, it has become necessary to look for other ways to sustain and improve our facilities. Lodging facilities do not necessarily make the top of the list for sustainment, restoration and modernization (SRM) and military construction (MILCON) funding, so we are looking at implementing a nonappropriated-fund construction (NAFCON) process to improve good facilities and replace bad ones. The process we have proposed is under review.

MCH: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Trevino: In an effort to align similar programs that better support the enterprise, our lodging program as an entity is now considered the umbrella for all lodging programs in the command. These are considered three distinct brands of lodging focused toward different guests, yet providing lodging accommodations that share the same concept of quality and convenience. In addition to Navy Gateway Inns and Suites, the CNIC Lodging Program also includes Navy Recreational Lodging and Campgrounds and the Fisher House program.

"Navy Recreational Lodging and Campgrounds" was recently selected as the proposed brand name, providing a vast inventory of recreational facilities from cabins and cottages to RV parks and tent sites. These facilities provide recreational accommodations to vacationing travelers. Sites are normally located within or near a Navy installation, which makes them more convenient, affordable and appealing to servicemembers and their families.

The Navy Fisher House program provides lodging accommodations to families of servicemembers who are inpatients at a hospital or are visiting the hospital as part of their treatment. A Fisher House, donated by the Fisher House Foundation, is "a home away from home" for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers. Homes are normally located within walking distance of the treatment facility or have transportation available.



This Fisher House at Naval Medical Center San Diego, Calif., provides lodging accommodations to families of servicemembers who are inpatients at a hospital or are visiting the hospital as part of their treatment. (NGIS PHOTO)

grade with the capability to enhance programming services in the future. Additional room enhancements complete a comprehensive amenity package that is included as part of the break-even room rate, which is well below per diem rates.

MCH: How has the new online reservation system and central call-center system benefited NGIS guests and NGIS personnel? How many reservations have been processed since the implementation of the new systems?

Trevino: The online reservation and call center system has given us the ability to market inventory in a completely different way. For the first time, our customers have the ability to make reservations 24 hours a day by calling the property directly, making reservations online

Trevino: NGIS launched online comment cards directed at customers who have stayed with us. After a customer checks out, an automatic e-mail is sent thanking him or her for their stay, and asks them if they would be interested in answering a few questions. It provides managers with statistics and real-time data once the comment card has been answered. Managers have the ability to see every comment card, get real-time alerts based on customer answers and provide immediate feedback to the customer. This new comment-card feature gives us feedback from the desk, helps identify process improvements and helps alleviate maintenance issues.

MCH: Are there any programs currently underway that you would like to highlight?