

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 24, 2009

CONTACT: Amy Graham (850) 245-2112, (850) 778-7258 (cell)

DEP ANNOUNCES FLORIDA GREEN LODGING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

*Restructured program will save the state money and continue to recognize
hospitality industry's environmental achievements*

TALLAHASSEE - Beginning July 1, 2009, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is launching a restructured Florida *Green Lodging* Program. The restructured program will save the state money while continuing to recognize the lodging industry's achievements and strengthening the program's environmental performance and customer service.

"DEP remains committed to the Florida *Green Lodging* Program and its reputation of environmental excellence," said Deas Bohn, DEP's Director of Sustainable Initiatives. "By streamlining the program yet adding additional performance measures we are confident that the program will continue to be a model green lodging program for the nation."

Program improvements, beginning July 1st, will include:

- A streamlined online application process.
- A more robust set of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will give properties the ability to customize its conservation efforts. The BMPs will be listed online with helpful supporting documents to aide in achieving designation quicker.
- DEP hosted webinars to provide ongoing education to property staff, specifically housekeeping staff.
- Additional online marketing and educational tools that will be available in multiple languages.

New standards and requirements will include:

- Extended designation period. Florida *Green Lodging* designation will be valid for three years from the date of issuance for new properties with the requirement that properties submit environmental performance data in the categories of water, waste and energy annually.
- For properties already designated, the issuance date will be July 1, 2009 and designated properties will be expected to submit performance data in 2010.
- To renew designation, facilities must implement at least two new environmental practices. In addition, properties will be required to conduct, and document, ongoing employee education to ensure all personnel are implementing the BMPs.
- DEP will conduct selected facility assessments on a regular basis. If deficiencies are noted, the Florida *Green Lodging* Program will offer technical assistance. Consistent failure to correct deficiencies will result in removal from the program.

- DEP will also follow-up on any complaints made through the *Green Lodging Survey* on the DEP website.

“While the framework of the program remains the same, these new standards and improvements will allow us to maximize the program’s efficiency using fewer resources,” said Bohn. “Lodging facilities will implement a required number of environmental practices that conserve resources and improve environmental performance, and have their efforts evaluated, verified and recognized through the *Green Lodging Program*.”

Launched in March 2004, the Florida *Green Lodging Program* establishes environmental guidelines for hotels and motels to conserve natural resources and prevent pollution. As reward for designation, the state recommends designated properties in the Florida *Green Lodging Program* to companies and trade organizations seeking environmentally conscious lodging and convention facilities. For more information about the Florida *Green Lodging Program*, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/greenlodging.

-30-

The Department of Environmental Protection values your feedback as a customer. DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole is committed to continuously assessing and improving the level and quality of services provided to you. Please take a few minutes to comment on the quality of service you received. Simply click on [this link to the DEP Customer Survey](#). Thank you in advance for completing the survey.