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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

2004 is almost over, and this is traditionally the time for summing up the events of the past year.

In January 2004, the CITQ started its second complete classification tour across Quebec. This lengthy process, to be completed by December 2005, has shown us once again that Quebec's tourist accommodation establishments are constantly improving. This progress in the accommodation available, backed up by a stringent, reliable classification program, is eloquent proof of our industry's drive and energy and its commitment to quality. Let me take this opportunity, in fact, to remind you that there is a quality assurance program for certain classes of accommodation; I invite all eligible operators to join.

It is also very gratifying to see the growing interest in the classification of accommodation, in both the industry itself and the media. In 2004, the CITQ joined in a number of public forums, and the media all across Quebec devoted considerable attention to the question of classification. It is increasingly seen as an excellent tool for informing travellers. Since classification is mandatory, I recommend that you always include your classification in all your establishment's promotional materials.

The success of the classification program also depends on the professionalism of those who created it and are putting it into practice. I would like to thank the whole CITQ team for its contribution to this undeniable success. Let me also express my thanks to all my colleagues on the Board and the operators who co-operated so graciously throughout 2004. A very special thank you goes to Tourisme Québec, too, for its unflagging support, as well as to all our partners for their dedication to the future of our industry.

Finally, let me wish one and all a very happy holiday season. May 2005 bring you peace, happiness and prosperity.

Jean Authier

DID YOU KNOW...

The CITQ will be launching a thorough review of its classification grids in 2005.

In 2005, the CITQ will be reviewing all its classification grids, at the same time taking into account the minor changes suggested during its first review in 2003.

The new review, requested by many operators and industry representatives, will have a twofold goal:

- to meet the expectations of the industry and travelling public, and;
- to adapt to the constantly evolving accommodation industry.

Throughout 2005, advisory committees will be reviewing the hundreds of classification criteria used in rating accommodation establishments classified by the CITQ.

Consultation tools will be set up to ensure that everyone has a chance to be heard. The CITQ is counting on your input.

ON THE MOVE

The building where the CITQ is currently housed is being turned into a residential building, so the CITQ has to relocate by next spring. As soon as we have decided on a new home offering the best price/quality ratio, we will use all our communications tools to let you know our new address. Watch your e-mail and check the www.citq.qc.ca Website regularly.

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THE CITQ WEBSITE GETS A MAKEOVER

Since it was launched in March 2003, the CITQ Website has received over 30,000 visits. We have continued to improve the site and work out any bugs, and a number of visitors have made some very constructive comments and suggestions. Our designers, inspired by these ideas, went back to the drawing board and made some significant improvements.

A section just for operators

A section for the exclusive use of operators, allowing them to share valuable information and, in the longer term, to simplify the handling of their files. Still under construction.

Instant access to classification signs

A fast and simple way to download different sizes of the most recent versions of classification signs. More and more operators and promoters have grasped the importance of using these images in their promotional material.

A direct link to our publications

A link for downloading our publications, including the paper version of the *2004 Accommodation in Québec* guide, the only complete directory to establishments classified by the CITQ.

A fast way to reach CITQ representatives

For any questions operators may have concerning their classification files. This is where to find the names of the CITQ representatives in charge of their files, how to reach them and the regions for which they are responsible.

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Easier to use

Menus have been reorganized to reflect visitors' preferences and arranged by subject rather than target audience. Each menu comes with a set of submenus for simpler consultation.

A picture is worth 1000 words

Photos of classifiers in action give a more concrete image of how establishments are classified. The photos were taken outdoors, in bedrooms, bathrooms, dining rooms and reception areas, to illustrate the scope of their work.

Easier to print

A fast way to print the pages consulted.

Information visible immediately

Starting on the home page, section titles clearly indicate the contents of the most frequently consulted sections.

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USEFUL TIPS AND IDEAS

“Hello, this is Eve at the reception desk. How may I help you?”

Managers of Jaro Hotels in the Quebec City region gave us some customer service tips. Each employee in contact with customers wears a name badge, and all employees always identify themselves at the start of any telephone conversation with customers. These little touches make all the difference for both customers and employees, say Jaro Hotel managers.

Many tourist accommodation operators, we're pleased to say, are doing everything they can to make their customer service even more personal. The CITQ encourages all operators to take this approach. A warm welcome and courteous service make the suns and stars on classification signs shine even brighter!

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Do I have to have a swimming pool to get four stars?

NO. There are no minimum conditions for obtaining a given number of stars. For instance, some 5-star hotel establishments have no swimming pools. The classification process uses hundreds of evaluation criteria relating to the quality, appearance and cleanliness of facilities (bedrooms, bathrooms, common areas, exterior). Classifiers also consider the number of services offered by an establishment. Each of these criteria and services earns points, and it is the sum of these points that determines your classification.

Is a classification transferable to a new buyer?

NO. Although the purchaser of an establishment is entitled to temporarily maintain the classification held by the vendor, any establishment that changes hands must be visited and re-classified. New operators must notify Tourisme Québec (1 800 463-5009) that the establishment is under new ownership, complete, sign and return all the forms sent to them, and pay the annual classification fees. Visit the “How to apply for classification” section of the www.citq.qc.ca Website for more details.

ADVICE FROM CLASSIFIERS

The condition and cleanliness of bathroom linens is something classifiers look at closely when inspecting bathrooms. There are different ways to keep your linens looking fresh and clean.

Tip #1

Add some makeup removal pads to your complimentary toiletries. Customers will be less likely to leave makeup stains on towels and washcloths. Your linens will look nicer and will be easier to clean.

Tip #2

Many customers enjoy slipping on a bathrobe instead of a towel when they get out of the bath or shower. Make sure they can see that the bathrobe has been thoroughly washed between uses. Empty the pockets before washing, wrap bathrobes in plastic after washing and leave them carefully folded at the foot of the bed or hanging in the wardrobe.

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