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## Hotel takes lead on green accommodations

By MELISSA HART, Contributing Writer

LAKE PLACID — The Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort in Lake Placid has set a high standard for being an environmentally friendly accommodation. From using green cleaning products to in-room recycling to a chlorine-free pool, owners and staff have been paying attention to the details.

A "living roof" was installed in 2008, acting as an insulator and storm-water management system, catching pollutants as they drain off the roof. Next up, hotel managers are planning to use alternative-energy systems to heat water for the pool and laundry facilities.

For Earth Day this year, the resort used its Facebook page as a way to prevent 48 tons of carbon emissions from being used. For every 25 new fans on Facebook in the two weeks leading up to Earth Day, the Golden Arrow pledged to retire three tons of carbon-dioxide emissions through the Adirondack Council's Cool Park/Healthy Planet Program, which buys "pollution credits" from Northeast companies.

The Holderied family has owned the hotel since 1974 and started concentrating on "greening" the business in 2005, according to Jenn Holderied, who manages the 166-room hotel with her siblings, Peter and Heidi Holderied.

"We found we were already doing a lot, which is nice to know we were ahead of the game."

One of the family's goals was to come up with a way to evaluate the progress they've made, Holderied said.

They wanted to be held accountable for what's been done, and a way to measure how they've improved, she said. After doing some research, they found a rating program through Audubon International and applied in 2005.

The program rates hotels in a tiered system of one to five "leaves," and the first time Golden Arrow achieved three leaves.

"We were pretty excited," she said. Along with the score were guides as to how to move forward. Hotel managers took the suggestions to heart and when they applied again two years later they scored four leaves and were only nine points away from the top tier, which was achieved in 2009.

When looking into green hotel-rating programs, Holderied was surprised to find a lack of programs in the United States. Only Canada and New Zealand seemed to have national programs, and in the U.S. only California has a statewide program.

With that in mind, she spearheaded an effort to create a statewide Green Tourism Council. Holderied went to the state Department of Environmental Conservation and tourism councils. Members from various state agencies, along with entrepreneurs such as Holderied, have been meeting for a year and a half.

In recent years, the hotel has received a handful of awards recognizing its efforts. It was the first hotel to be recognized by the DEC Environmental Excellence Award. And it achieved the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association's Good Earth Keeping Award in 2009.

For Holderied, some of the work she's most proud of is the involvement from guests and staff. When the hotel started its in-room recycling program in 2007, there was an 85 percent participation rate.

"It shows that people are willing to do their part if you give them an opportunity to do so," she said.

Staff initiated many of the projects taken on at the hotel. "We said, 'Here's what we want to do, you are experts in your field. See what you can come up with,'" Holderied said.

The results, such as "greening the pool" and using sustainable products and local foods in the hotel's restaurant, have inspired staff to take ownership of the changes, she said.

"It's positively impacted the culture of the hotel," she said.