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## Northcott Hospitality planning for its next 50 years

*Milestone anniversary finds owner of AmericInn hotels looking beyond its Midwestern roots*

**CHANHASSEN, Minn. – June 2, 2010** – The company that owns the AmericInn hotel franchise and built the Perkins restaurant brand is celebrating its 50th anniversary, but half a century in the lodging and restaurant businesses hasn't slowed down Northcott Hospitality a bit.

Northcott Hospitality is a Minnesota-based hospitality company that develops, owns and operates several successful hotel and restaurant chains, including the AmericInn hotel brand and 25 Perkins and Houlihan's restaurants. Quietly successful as it built some of the best-known hospitality brands in the region, the company is ready to make some noise as it launches an aggressive move beyond its Midwestern roots.

"We're setting ourselves up to accelerate growth of the AmericInn chain and add to our portfolio of restaurants with acquisitions. We also have plans to re-model our Houlihan's restaurants as we complete a re-positioning of the concept," said Paul Kirwin, president and CEO of Northcott Hospitality, who recently joined the company after 25 years at Carlson. "The hospitality industry has seen some tough times recently, and a lot of brands are still hunkered down, waiting for the storm to pass. This is an opportunity for us to reassert ourselves and aggressively pursue opportunities for growth."

In the past year, Northcott Hospitality has not only added Kirwin as its new CEO but also Ron Burgett as vice president of franchise development for AmericInn. Part of Burgett's strategy is opening up to property conversions, a previously rare occurrence for the brand known for its tight construction standards. Kirwin expects the mix of Northcott Hospitality's deep hospitality experience, the new conversion option, a new and more modern construction prototype, a

revamped guest loyalty program, and a focus on expansion into new geographic markets will help drive AmericInn's growth despite continuing tough times for the industry.

Northcott Hospitality's rich, fifty-year history of growth and success in the hospitality business began with Wyman Nelson, a young Minneapolis entrepreneur who invested in a Perkins Pancake House restaurant in the late 1950s. After developing a national reputation over the years within the Perkins system for creativity and business acumen, Wyman ultimately acquired and later sold the chain of successful restaurants.

Another Minnesota entrepreneur, Jim Graves, began building the first AmericInn hotel locations in the 1980s. After owning and operating successful AmericInn properties as a franchisee, Northcott Hospitality acquired the AmericInn brand along with 35 franchised properties in 1994. AmericInn now has more than 250 locations open and under development nationwide, concentrated in Minnesota and throughout the Midwest.

Today, Northcott Hospitality also owns and operates 21 Perkins locations, making it the family dining chain's third-largest franchisee, as well as four Houlihan's restaurants.

"Our goal for the year ahead is to extend our traditional Upper Midwest base into the Mountain West, the East Coast and other natural growth markets, leaning on our deep and diverse experience across the hospitality industry," Kirwin said. "We're more than just an owner of a hotel franchise: We design and build hotels. We own and manage hotel properties. We've been in the restaurant business for half a century. Building successful hospitality businesses is what we do, and we're taking that expertise across the country aggressively this year."

### **About Northcott Hospitality**

Northcott Hospitality is a Minnesota-based company with headquarters in the Twin Cities' suburb of Chanhassen. Privately held, Northcott has 50 years of hospitality experience and maintains a superior reputation for excellent service in the lodging and restaurant industries. Its holdings include the AmericInn chain of more than 250 locations open and under development and Perkins and Houlihan's restaurants strategically located in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and South.