

## **For Immediate Release**

# **Aimbridge Hospitality and AmREIT, Songy Partners LLC Open Aloft Houston by the Galleria**

*Lifestyle hotel in Uptown District offering affordable, chic accommodations for the savvy business traveler and vacationer to Houston*

**HOUSTON, TEXAS** (August 26, 2009) — Aimbridge Hospitality along with AmREIT and Songy Partners LLC, two commercial real estate firms with offices in Houston, announce the opening of the **Aloft Houston by the Galleria**. This is the first **Aloft** hotel to open in Houston and one of the first 30 worldwide.



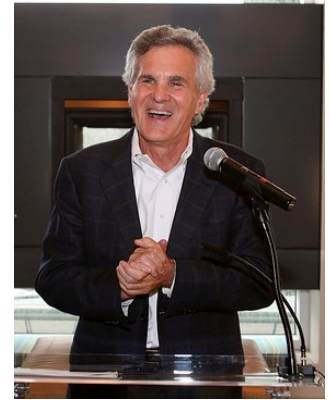
Photo Identification on Page 3

The 152-room hotel is the seventh **Aloft** in the Aimbridge Hospitality portfolio and the fourth of five it will open this year. It is also Aimbridge's third managed property in Houston – the company also operates the Doubletree Hotel Houston Intercontinental Airport and the Houston Embassy Suites Energy Corridor – and its second property managed for Songy Partners.

The property, located at 5433 Westheimer Rd., is a new concept in 'lifestyle' hotels, targeted to meet the specific needs and desires of today's savvy, design-conscious consumers who understand that great style can be both accessible and affordable. The new hotel features loft-like guestrooms with cutting-edge technology, urban-influenced design, and social areas that help you connect with others. Guests can read the paper, work on their laptops via hotel-wide wireless internet access, play a game of pool or grab a drink with friends at the *re:mix* communal lobby area and bar *w xyz*. The *re:charge* fitness center and *splash*, the heated indoor pool, give guests options to de-stress and re-energize; while *re:fuel*, the 24-hour one-stop food and beverage area, offers sweet, savory and healthy food to guests.

“Aloha! On behalf of Aimbridge Hospitality, welcome to the **Aloft Houston by the Galleria**,” General Manager Mark Sampson said to several hundred guests at the hotel's ribbon cutting ceremony August 13. “This hotel is adding a new dimension to the Galleria area by bringing Starwood's newest urban-boutique hotel brand to a market that has long been underserved. We are pleased to have the opportunity to work once again with Songy Partners and enter into a new relationship with AmREIT by bringing Starwood's **Aloft** concept of affordable, chic accommodations for the contemporary business traveler and vacationer to Houston,” he added.

Kerr Taylor, AmREIT



Kerr Taylor, AmREIT Chairman and CEO, said he is delighted to partner with a high-quality management company who has a proven track record in opening and operating **Aloft** hotels, to bring this exciting new concept in hotels to Galleria/Houston.

“For 25 years, AmREIT has created value on the ‘best-of-the-best’ corners in our Texas markets—what we call ‘Irreplaceable Corners™,’” Taylor said. “The location of our hotel has higher per capita income in a 3 mile radius than Buckhead Center/Atlanta, Highland Park Village/Dallas or Beverly Center/Beverly Hills. We believe this project will be successful because it is at the intersection of great real estate and the ‘four star experience at a three star price’ provided through the **Aloft** concept.”

According to David Songy, CEO of Songy Partners: “Starwood's **Aloft** hotel is truly a breath of fresh air in today's hospitality sector. We are proud, along with AmREIT as our partner, to introduce the new product into the Houston Galleria market, especially in such a high profile location fronting Westheimer Rd. This brand, coupled with Aimbridge Hospitality's management team, should prove successful within this dynamic market.”

### **Stellar Addition from Starwood**

“The urban design sensibility and social interplay of the **Aloft** brand will make it a perfect match for this dynamic metro area,” said Paul Sacco, Senior Vice President of Development for Starwood in North America. “From wake-up call to last call, **Aloft** appeals to savvy travelers and area professionals with its electric and eclectic experience and lively *w xyz*<sup>SM</sup> bar.”

The Houston Galleria is an upscale mixed-use urban development centrally located in the Uptown District of Houston at the intersection of Westheimer and Yorktown. The Galleria consists of a retail complex, the Galleria Financial Center, two Westin hotels, and private health club. It is the largest shopping mall in Texas, and the 7<sup>th</sup> largest in the United States.

“The Galleria area, the third largest central business district in the State of Texas, welcomes the 29th **Aloft** hotel to the community,” said Don Sweat, President and CEO, Galleria Chamber of Commerce. “**Aloft** provides a smart, fresh alternative for the business traveler and a great getaway weekend option for Houston.”

Elisabeth Urtado, Business Development Director for the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, concurred, saying: “**Aloft** is a fresh, affordable concept for Galleria area. It adds a lot of color and excitement to the area. It's uplifting to see that even during this economic turmoil, new construction hotels are still opening in Houston.”

Additional information and bookings may be made at [www.aloft-houston.com](http://www.aloft-houston.com) or by calling (713) 622-7010 or 877-GO-ALOFT.

**EDITOR'S NOTE/PHOTO CAPTION PAGE 1:** (From left) Don Sweat, Galleria Chamber of Commerce; Paul Sacco, Starwood Hotels & Resorts; Kerr Taylor, AmREIT; David Songy, Songy Partners LLC; Mark Sampson, Aloft General Manager / Aimbridge Hospitality; Conya Berras, Liaison to Houston Mayor Bill White; Chris Charbonnet, Aimbridge Hospitality; and, Elisabeth Urtado, Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, cut the ribbon to signify the opening of the Aloft Houston by the Galleria.

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### **ABOUT AIMBRIDGE HOSPITALITY**

Aimbridge Hospitality is one of the nation's leading independent hotel investment and management firms with a proven track record for delivering superior returns for its strategic partners in a variety of markets and economic cycles. Aimbridge provides management, asset management, development, renovation and consulting services. Based in Dallas, Texas, Aimbridge currently owns and/or manages 52 upscale, independent and branded hotels with nearly 11,000 rooms across the United States, including such affiliations as Marriott, Hilton, Embassy Suites, DoubleTree, Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton Inn & Suites, Aloft, Hyatt, Wyndham and the Phoenix Inn Suites chain of hotels. For more information on Aimbridge Hospitality, please visit [www.aimbridgehospitality.com](http://www.aimbridgehospitality.com).

### **ABOUT AmREIT**

AmREIT is a full service real estate company dedicated to providing the highest standard of service and value to its clients, partners and investors. For 25 years, AmREIT has delivered on its vision to become the Irreplaceable Corner™ company through investments, acquisitions, value-add developments and management of high quality retail and mixed-use properties.. AmREIT is headquartered in Houston, Texas and has an office in Dallas. To learn more, visit [www.amreit.com](http://www.amreit.com).

### **ABOUT SONGY PARTNERS**

Songy Partners LLC ([www.songypartners.com](http://www.songypartners.com)) is a commercial real estate firm based in Atlanta, with company offices and projects in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Miami, Mexico City, Knoxville, Fort Myers, Boca Raton, Lafayette, and Dallas. The partnership was formed to acquire, renovate and develop institutional quality real estate projects throughout the United States.

### **About Aloft Hotels**

Created to shake up the staid, traditional select service segment of the hotel industry, Aloft delivers urban-influenced, open and vibrant design and a social guest experience at an affordable price point. In the same way that W Hotels broke through the clutter of conformity in the upscale hotel arena a decade ago, Aloft is shaking up the industry for the next generation of traveler. Aloft hotels are geared toward savvy, design-conscious consumers who grew up with the democratization of design. Aloft hotels are wired for the future and an aggressive growth plan is in place with properties set to open from Abu Dhabi and Baltimore to Dallas and Beijing and everywhere in between. For more information, please visit [www.alofthotels.com](http://www.alofthotels.com).

### **About Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.**

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. is one of the leading hotel and leisure companies in the world with 960 properties in 97 countries and 145,000 employees at its owned and managed properties. Starwood Hotels is a fully integrated owner, operator and franchisor of hotels, resorts and residences with the following internationally renowned brands: St. Regis®, The Luxury Collection®, W®, Westin®, Le Méridien®, Sheraton®, Four Points® by Sheraton, and the recently launched Aloft®, and Element<sup>SM</sup>. Starwood Hotels also owns Starwood Vacation Ownership, Inc., one of the premier developers and operators of high quality vacation interval ownership resorts. For more information, please visit [www.starwoodhotels.com](http://www.starwoodhotels.com).