

# Local lodging properties to be star rated

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Of The STAR Staff

**L**odging properties in Puerto Rico will be classified using a star rating system developed by Diamond Hospitality Group LLC, an industry official said Wednesday.

"We've hired the firm to do the rating system to take our destination to the next level," said José Suárez, executive director of the Tourism Company.

The \$200,000 Tourism Company-commissioned rating system will be applied to more than 120 properties such as independent, nonbranded hotels, small inns and guest houses.

The rating system will not be implemented on large flagged hotels like Wyndham, for example, which already uses the American Automobile Association, known as AAA, Diamond rating system. (In the AAA system, a five-diamond property is world class and a one-diamond property offers good, but modest accommodations.)

The hotel rating system that Diamond Hospitality Group developed for Puerto Rico properties is based on the internationally known models such as the AAA diamond system, and the star systems used by Mobil and the American Academy of Hospitality Science.

"We're not reinventing the wheel, we've based the rating system on international standards," said Toby Pike, president of Diamond Hospitality Group who is in Puerto Rico this week to meet with Tourism Company officials and hoteliers.

An establishment's rating is often the deciding factor when choosing lodging, according to Pike who said that stars will be used to rate the properties in Puerto Rico.



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**Tourism Committee Chairwoman Sylvia Corujo held a public hearing for House Bill 4372, submitted Feb. 11, which proposes to amend the Puerto Rico Tourism Company Organic Law which would authorize the agency to establish a hotel classification system.**

To give the properties a rating, anonymous inspectors — veteran hoteliers — will begin during the summer to spend one night at the different properties, Pike said. The star system is expected to be implemented by the fall.

The Washington, D.C. based hospitality industry consulting firm works with hotels in the United States, including Puerto Rico, and Canada. Clients consist of associations,

See "RATING SYSTEM," Page 26

► From Page 24

## Rating system

corporations, federal government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Meanwhile, Tourism Committee Chairwoman Sylvia Corujo held a public hearing for House Bill 4372, submitted Feb. 11, which proposes to amend the Puerto Rico Tourism Company Organic Law which would authorize the agency to establish a hotel classification system.

House Bill 4372 recognizes the initiatives of the Tourism Company that are underway which are in accordance with the agency-commissioned InterVistas strategic master plan for the industry.

The Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Association and the Caribbean Hotel Association endorse the bill. The Tourism Company's endorsement of the bill is subject to the condition that it holds continuity despite changes in administration.