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## **Niznick, Prestige Hospitality Group break ground for hotel expansion**

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Shown (from left) are: Cindy Bombard, president and CEO, Central CT Chambers of Commerce; Justin Smith, president, Prestige Hospitality Group; James Frenis, CEO, Prestige Hospitality Group; Justin Malley, executive director, Bristol Economic & Community Development; Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, mayor, City of Bristol; Lynn Dell, general manager, DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton and Bristol Event Center; Michael Heimbach, VP of security and facility operations, ESPN; William Mascetti, ACG North America, General Contractor; and Thomas Barnes, chairman, The Barnes Group.

Bristol, CT The owners and managers of the DoubleTree by Hilton Bristol held a groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday, September 17th, 2020 to officially kickoff the construction of an expanded hospitality complex featuring a new 50,000 s/f Bristol Event Center and a 90-suite HOME2 Suites by Hilton hotel.

Located adjacent to the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel on Century Dr., the expanded hospitality campus will include a conference/event center and a new hotel constructed on four land parcels, including a portion of the existing DoubleTree hotel site. The event center and hotels are owned by Dr. Gerald Niznick and managed by Prestige Hospitality Group.

The 50,000 s/f Bristol Event Center will feature two hospitality suites, a ballroom and outside seating accommodating up to 750 people conference style or 450 people for sit-down dinners/weddings. The innovative space, combined with audio/visual capabilities, is currently unmatched in central Connecticut.

The 90-suite HOME2 Suites by Hilton hotel will feature all-suite accommodations with flexible guest room configurations and inspired amenities. Underground parking garage and pedestrian walkways will connect the two new hospitality venues with the existing DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton Bristol. Expansive outdoor gathering areas will complement the indoor venues, providing fresh-air options for individuals and small groups, private parties, and photographs.

Amara Associates and New Avenue Interior Design Studio provided the architectural services for the new hospitality venues. Consulting Engineering Services and BL Companies provided engineering services. ACG North America of Bristol is serving as construction manager for the project. PowerStation Events, who produced the groundbreaking event, is serving as the audio-visual communications partner for the new event center.

James Frenis, CHA, CEO of Prestige Hospitality Group, who served as master of ceremonies for the event, said, "Our success here at the DoubleTree in Bristol inspired the vision for a new and expansive hospitality campus unlike anything currently available in central Connecticut."

"We welcome this project, this investment, and the local team Dr. Niznick is using," said Bristol mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu. "Bristol will be the beneficiary of this for years to come."

Rendering, new Bristol Event Center

Due to travel restrictions associated with COVID-19, Dr. Niznick and his wife Reesa addressed attendees of the groundbreaking ceremony from California via webinar link.

“Seven wildly successful years after celebrating the grand opening of the DoubleTree by Hilton we are here to expand on that success and break ground on an exciting and new hospitality complex,” said Dr. Niznick.

Thomas Barnes, chairman of the Barnes Group, and Michael Heimbach, vice president of security and facility operations at ESPN, two of Bristol’s largest employers, were featured guests at the groundbreaking event. Dr. Niznick presented donations in their names to two local charities in gratitude for their support of the DoubleTree and the hospitality expansion plans.

“The DoubleTree are great partners of us at ESPN,” said Heimbach. “We couldn’t ask for a better partner right across the street. The luxury of having a center where we can host meetings and events is a huge asset for our company.”

The groundbreaking event featured a specialty reception produced by the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, demonstrating the creativity and details that differentiate their level of hospitality.

“It’s the details that people remember and talk about,” said Lynn Dell, general manager of the DoubleTree Hotel and the new Bristol Event Center.

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