



**TOPS'L BEACH & RACQUET RESORT, DESTIN, FL**  
**RECEIVES**  
**EcoGreen AWARD™**



**Fort Lauderdale, FL: Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> 2008** - TOPS'L Beach & Racquet Resort in Destin, owned by ResortQuest Northwest Florida has been awarded the prestigious EcoGreen Award™ following their "Go Green" initiative. The resort undertook a total rethink in looking at ways to help the environment and save money in the process. They found that a large portion of energy consumption is related to lighting and discovered that it made sense, on a cost-saving level, to commit to the EcoGreen Award™ online program, pioneered by Tropical Lights, Inc. in Fort Lauderdale.

TOPS'L has the best Maintenance Department on the Emerald Coast. The 52 acre property is comprised of three high rise buildings, town homes, single-family homes, a gulf-front restaurant and bar, fitness and tennis center, guest registration, maintenance and housekeeping buildings. The entire resort took a

little over a month to transform from regular lighting to environmentally friendly light bulbs and fixtures.

Melonee Lund, Green Team Chairperson and Owner Relations Manager, commented, "ResortQuest began its green initiative in February 2008. With food and beverage, fitness and tennis club, high-rise condominiums, single-family homes, town homes, ResortQuest-owned buildings, nature trail, Association-managed buildings and other properties, TOPS'L was the ideal choice to spearhead this initiative. Within these areas of operation, we were able to manage each milestone that was required to meet the green certification through the Green Lodging Program. With lighting playing a significant factor in this process, we worked to acquire the EcoGreen Award™ as our foundation for developing future Green policies."

Commenting on the process, Phil Tumminia, General Manager of TOPS'L said: "Replacing current non-green lighting with green lighting was minimal compared to the overall savings in the life of each bulb. Also, we donated the functioning incandescent bulbs to "Habitat for Humanity" to help with their building needs".

Tropical Lights, Inc. developed the EcoGreen Award™ Certification for the hotel, hospitality and restaurant industry to specifically reduce energy consumption by converting to efficient lighting technologies. This smart use of efficient lighting is

a “win win” for both parties ... the facility owner/operator helps reduce energy consumption and benefits with a payback of reduced operating costs!

For TOPS'L Beach & Racquet Resort specifically, it is also the first step in achieving certification through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Green Lodging Program. TOPS'L believes that it is time for them to do their part to lessen the impact on the environment. Aside from the moral and ethical obligation they feel, for the generations to come, the transition to environmentally conscious lighting had the added bonus of being more cost effective over the long term so it made sense to TOPS'L both financially and environmentally.

“The effort was certainly worthwhile”, says Phil Tumminia. “The transition took several weeks and did cost several thousand dollars but we believe it was a worthwhile investment”.

Tumminia went on to say, “The EcoGreen Award™ is the beginning of a much more comprehensive transformation into a more environmentally conscious operation. We are proud to tell our property owners and guests that we have embarked on this journey. As we educate ourselves, we become ambassadors and educators in the hope that others will follow in our footsteps. We are also conscious of the fact that vacationers and potential property owners are

becoming more conscious of the cause and are seeking partnerships and business relationships with like minded entities.”

Stephen Leach, Maintenance Manager was very positive towards the transition and said, “Tropical Lights, Inc. were very helpful in answering specific questions relating to the EcoGreen Award™ requirements. Time wise, it took a month with waiting on ordered bulbs and installing. The EcoGreen Award™ website ([www.EcoGreenAward.com](http://www.EcoGreenAward.com)) was very easy to use and in consultation with Tropical Light’s inspector, relating to bulb type and fixtures, the whole process was seamless. On one single visit, he informed us that everything had been completed perfectly, and before leaving, he granted us certification. That was exciting news! I was told that so often when the inspector comes out to properties, they don’t have everything in place and sometimes he has to go back three or four times in order to complete the process for the property and grant them certification.

According to Tropical Lights, Inc. the U.S. could reduce energy consumption by 20% in just a single year, with simple light bulb changes. U.S. buildings consume 65% of total electricity generated with lighting being more than 50% of that use. Efficient lighting technologies can reduce usage by almost 70% immediately, making it quite clear that this area is the place to start.

TOPS'L Beach & Racquet Resort made the commitment and has been recognized for their efforts. Now Corporate America needs to take note and continue the environmental evolution.

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