

Newly redesigned The Commons Hotel has grand opening

Written by Harry Colbert, Jr.
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Following a \$15 million yearlong renovation, The Commons Hotel celebrated its grand opening on Wednesday (June 5).

The 304-room hotel, located just steps away from the University of Minnesota at 615 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis, is hoping to attract travelers with a sophisticated pallet and an appreciation for knowledge. Branded as "geek chic," The Commons incorporates elements of academia in its décor, with light fixtures designed to resemble atoms, molecules or some other academic symbols.

The property, operated by Nobel House Hotels and Resorts, was purchased for \$18 million. Prior to the purchase, the hotel operated as a Radisson.

"These renovations are a labor of love and I cannot believe how beautiful this property turned out," said Jim Merkel, president and CEO of Rockbridge Capital, which financed the purchase and renovations.

Merkel said The Commons is one of eight hotels directly associated with a university – four of which are Big 10 Conference schools.



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"Every University needs a front porch and this (hotel) is a great looking front porch," said U of M Athletic Director Norwood Teague.

Teague was not coy in saying the previous hotel on site did not have much curb appeal. The AD said he would be directing visiting teams to The Commons for their stays.

Attached to the three-star hotel is a casual dining eatery, The Beacon Public House. The Beacon specializes in American cuisine comfort food.

In addition to the 304 rooms, The Commons offers 20,000 square feet of meeting and ballroom space.

The Commons Hotel has formed a charitable partnership with the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge, a program that offers cancer patients and their caregivers a free place to stay when their best option for effective treatment may be in a city other than their own.