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Blue Sky Announces Fast Track Plan for Completion of French Lick Springs Resort & Casino

Resort will close Sunday and reopen December 2006

FRENCH LICK, Ind. – French Lick Springs Resort will temporarily suspend operations while construction is underway to accelerate the schedule for the new resort and casino, Blue Sky partners announced today. The closure is scheduled for Nov. 20, 2005, through December 2006, when the new resort and casino are slated for the grand opening.

"Suspending operations will allow us to complete renovations on all of the 440 guest rooms (versus the original 200 planned) and amenities in time for the grand opening of the French Lick Springs Resort & Casino," said Robert Lauth, CEO of Lauth Group, Inc. "As the renovation and construction progressed and intensified, we realized that trying to maintain operations during construction could result in a poor guest experience – and that was unacceptable to us." "With the increased activity in and around the building, suspending operations allows us to continue to ensure a safe environment for our guests and employees," added Steve Ferguson, chairman of Cook Group Inc. Suspending operations also will allow concentrated renovation efforts to be spread throughout the property, providing more opportunities for construction workers on the project.

During the next 60 days, staff will prepare the building for the next stage of renovation and construction. The employees affected by the layoff will be eligible for unemployment benefits and will also receive benefits under a private unemployment benefit plan. Health benefits will continue for employees currently enrolled in the plan.

"Employee training programs will be a focus during this time as well," said Ferguson. "In addition to the extensive job training programs already provided by our hospitality partner Benchmark Hospital International, they are working with organizations like Ivy Tech to make sure all resort and casino employees have the opportunity to learn many new skills in food service, hospitality and spa services, among others."

Once the construction is complete in December 2006, the French Lick Springs Resort & Casino will include an 80,000-square-foot casino, an event and conference center, the newly renovated Donald Ross golf course, a full-service spa, as well as 440 fully renovated guest rooms and suites.

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