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## Renaissance sparkles with diamond rating

BY COSBY WOODRUFF • FEBRUARY 26, 2010

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Diamonds are a hotel's best friend, especially if the diamonds come in clusters from AAA.

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The Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center received four of them on Thursday, making it the first hotel in Montgomery to earn that designation from the automobile club.

It was one of seven properties -- five hotels and two restaurants -- owned by the Retirement Systems of Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail properties that won the Four Diamond Award for 2010.

Al Gibbs, AAA Alabama vice president and general manager, presented the awards Thursday at the Renaissance. RSA CEO David Bronner accepted the awards and presented them to the general managers of the winning properties.

"It is pretty neat to have hotels in the top 4 percent in the country," he said.

Mike Eveleth, general manager at the Renaissance, said the award is a big deal for the hotel.

"It obviously puts us among the top level of hotels," he said.

That will mean something to customers who are choosing where to stay, he said.

"It speaks volumes to conventions and to transient customers," he said.

"That will be all over our marketing."

It also will become part of the marketing from the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce's

### Montgomery hotel earns AAA's Four Diamond Award (02:06)

The Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center earns AAA Alabama's 2010 Four Diamond Award, one of seven awards presented to Retirement Systems of Alabama properties on Thursday, Feb. 25, in Montgomery.

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Mike Eveleth, general manager of the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center, talks about the hotel's AAA Four Diamond Award for 2010. (Amanda Sowards)

Convention and Visitors Bureau, according to vice president Dawn Hathcock.

"This is huge for Montgomery," she said. "It is our first and only Four Diamond Property.

"Meeting planners look at that kind of thing when they are choosing a quality facility."

Gibbs said the award is presented to properties that invite AAA to rate the hotel or restaurant.

A screener from AAA will make an unannounced visit to the property and rate it on its hospitality, attention to detail and other factors. A Four Diamond rating means the hotel or restaurant offers service, lodging or meals for the traveler seeking luxury.

"Four and Five Diamond lodgings and restaurants represent the best the hospitality industry has to offer," AAA Alabama spokesman Clay Ingram said.

Eveleth said the award was the result of the staff's efforts.

"A lot of that starts with training and even with recruitment," he said. "You have got to get the right people."

Other RTJ property hotels earning the designation were the Battle House in Mobile, Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa in Florence, Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa in Hoover and the Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa in Point Clear.

The Grand Dining Room in Point Clear and the Trellis Room in Mobile were the winning restaurants.



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