

# THE REPUBLIC

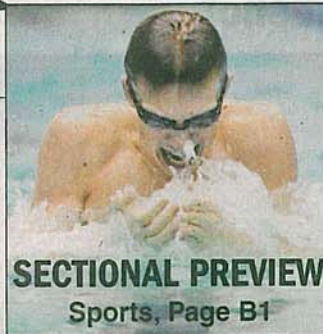


Columbus, Indiana

Thursday, February 14, 2008



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## CRH amenities reflected in concierge service

**A**BOUT this time last year, Columbus Regional Hospital workers learned their place of employment had been designated as one of the "50 Best Places to Work in Indiana" by Indiana Chamber of Commerce.

The award is old hat to the hospital. It and Irwin Union Bank have received the designations two years in a row, which is pretty good seeing as how the award is only two years old.

I'd say that chances of extending that title into a third year are pretty good, certainly for the hospital.

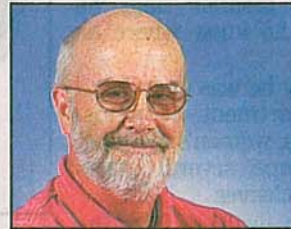
After all, how many businesses provide their employees with a concierge service?

Actually, there are quite a few according to people who track this sort of thing, and as businesses compete to attract and keep valuable employees, many more can be expected.

CRH got into the concierge business about eight months ago, according to Human Resources Manager Joe Turco.

### Keeping employees

"We want to do all we can to assist our people to do their job and keep this as a place where they want to work," he said. "To that end we wanted to help them



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deal with day-to-day distractions that could take time away from what they are doing."

Judging by statistics, the concierge service is doing just that.

"Our retention rate during this period has been among the highest in our history," Turco said.

The hospital has contracted with a Cincinnati company — Best Upon Request — to provide the service for 1,750 employees.

Frank Berry, a Columbus resident, has been hired by the company as a one-man staff.

The service is pretty simple, but it's wide-ranging.

If an employee needs to have a car serviced, the hospital concierge will drop it off at the dealership and pick it up when the work is done.

Should a child have gone to school without lunch money, the concierge will run the money out

to the school. Same goes for any medicine the child needs to take.

"We do a lot of things that a typical concierge might do," Frank said. "We can drop off suits at the dry cleaner, make reservations for plays or entertainment shows, even arrange to have someone's lawn watered when they're on vacation."

The service is an employee benefit. The employee will pay for specific services — such as having the car serviced or the laundry cleaned — but the services of the concierge are paid by the hospital to Best Upon Request.

Oddly enough, not all employees have availed themselves of the service. Turco estimated that 500 of the staff have used it on at least one occasion and that a peak day might include 18-20 "errands."

"I suppose that some of the staff are reluctant to use the service, because they haven't gotten used to it," he said. "Some of them might have a work ethic where they would think they're taking advantage of their employer."

Far from it. The idea behind the concierge service is not only to keep the staff happy but to increase their productivity and

make them more interested in staying with the hospital.

"The beauty to this plan is that the employees can tailor it to fit their needs and situations," Turco said.

And the service is such that it lends itself to creativity and innovation.

At Thanksgiving, for instance, Berry was able to place a bulk order for pies so employees could get a reduced rate. He wound up buying 350 pies.

### Massage service

"We even arranged for a massage service on the premises," he said. "We were able to find space in the hospital where the (contractor) could set up a table and provide massages to employees which they paid for."

At present, Berry is the concierge staff at CRH, but he has been able to call for additional part-time help on heavy days.

I suspect that as the hospital staff becomes more accustomed to having a concierge service, there will be many more heavy days.

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