

Rebuilding a Vision

A Sleep Inn Owner's Story of Perseverance

When Tim Hunt, the co-owner of a family-run contracting business in Savannah, Tennessee, decided to open his first hotel, he turned to Choice Hotels.

"One of my friends is a general contractor who's built multiple hotels," Tim recounts. "He put me in touch with [Regional Vice President] Zach Burdette over at Choice. So, I reached out to Zach, him and I developed a relationship pretty quick, and it was on from there."

From the start, the project was personal to Tim.

"This is not just for me," he explains. "This is for my family, and it means a lot to me — here in my hometown, my first hotel. I mean this is really something."

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Zach says from the beginning Tim had a very clear idea of what he wanted his Sleep Inn & Suites to be.

"Tim had such a passion and a vision," he recalls. "And when we were walking the property, his vision was so clear that I could see it through his own eyes."

But partway through construction of the new hotel, disaster struck.

"[We] had a catastrophe — a fire," Tim says. "That was a big setback for me."

A big setback, indeed, as the partially built property was burned entirely to the ground. But Tim was not deterred.

"Any time you face those obstacles and challenges, [the important thing] is to remain calm and focused, and ... always remain focused on the future and what you can do about that," he says.

When it was time for Tim to begin construction anew, Choice Hotels was by his side.

"When Tim was at a time of his greatest need, I am proud to say that Choice Hotels — not only myself but the entire organization — we were there to help and support him," says Zach. "If there is one person on this planet that could rebuild and build this hotel in a timely manner, it was Tim Hunt — without a doubt."

And so he did. In April 2026, less than a year and a half after the fire, the [Sleep Inn & Suites Savannah Tennessee Riverfront](#) opened its doors to guests.

"This location is located on the Tennessee River — a very majestic area, historical," Tim says. "I think travelers from the surrounding areas — locally and away from here — will come here to visit because of the scenery."

Zach is confident that they will — and that when they do, Tim's Sleep Inn & Suites will provide them with

the ideal location from which to explore downtown Savannah and its sweeping views of the river.

“This hotel is the perfect setting. The guests from this hotel will have a beautiful view,” Zach says. “And then you add to that the amenities that [Tim] is bringing to the table — with the infinity edge pool overlooking the river, the splash pad, the lower sundeck area. He’s really creating a destination area all to himself here in Savannah.”

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