

## **MXR Hospitality names CEO and president**

By Esther Hertzfeld | Feb 18, 2026

Extended stay hotel developer and property management firm MXR Hospitality, names industry veteran Brent McDowell, currently chief operating officer for McNeill Hotel Company, as its inaugural chief executive officer. MXR Hospitality also names Eric Watts, also president of Extended Stay for Dallas-based RREAF Holdings, as its inaugural President.

MXR is a strategic partnership of RREAF Holdings, a privately held, vertically integrated real estate investment and development firm, and hospitality investor Phillip McNeill, Sr. Kip Sowden, Chairman and CEO of RREAF Holdings, and Phillip McNeill, Sr. made the announcements.

In this role, McDowell will be responsible for supervising all operating units of MXR Hospitality, to include hotel development, third-party property management assignments and brand relationships, hotel sales and acquisitions, human resources, administrative functions, and new business development. In addition, McDowell will work closely with Watts in guiding the firm's strategic direction.

McDowell previously joined McNeill Hotel Company upon its formation and was instrumental in its growth, which included the development, design and construction of 7 new-build hotel projects and the acquisition of an additional 14 hotels as of the end of 2022. As executive vice president, business development and COO for McNeill Hotel Company and with nearly 30 years in the hospitality industry, he has been responsible for the growth of the platform's investment vehicles, as well as helping develop MHC's reputation for excellence in caring for guests, empowering team members, and serving the interests of owners and investors.

Prior to joining McNeill, McDowell served as vice president of Pillar Hotels & Resorts Construction, where he was responsible for the strategic capital planning and execution of capital expenditures for a portfolio of more than 300 hotels encompassing 10 hotel brands. His hospitality career also includes serving as Asset Manager in the Realty Management Division for Goldman Sachs, providing oversight for nearly 100 properties across multiple major brands.

In this role, Watts will be responsible for refining and growing MXR's ground-up extended-stay platform, in particular, supervising site selection and evaluation, negotiation, entitlements, and construction activities for new build projects. Watts will also work

closely with McDowell in identifying new business opportunities, including third-party property management assignments, and in guiding the firm's strategic direction.

Watts has 10 years' experience in the development industry, spanning all aspects of construction for retail, multifamily, and hospitality properties. Watts joined RREAF Holdings in 2016 as director of capital expenditures over its multifamily platform, and later transitioned to project managing several ground-up projects across the Southeast. He then served as RREAF Holdings' director of construction extended stay hospitality, starting in 2022, before being named RREAF Holdings' president of extended stay.

Prior to joining RREAF Holdings, Watts served as project manager for Innovation Renovation, of Memphis, where he facilitated the rehabilitation of more than 1,500 units for industry leaders Mid-America Apartments LLC, and Fogelman Properties Group, all in the Mid-South/ Memphis area.