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Kalahari Resorts & Conventions Earns Spot on TIME's Inaugural List of America's Best Private Companies 2026

Family-owned company recognized among the nation's top private companies for its people-first culture and community impact

WISCONSIN DELLS, Wisc. (July 30, 2026) – Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, home to America's Largest Indoor Waterparks, has been named to TIME's inaugural list of America's Best Private Companies 2026, earning recognition among 500 of the nation's top privately held companies for its commitment to associates and its positive impact on society.

The recognition celebrates not only Kalahari's continued growth, but the people-first culture that has defined the company for more than 25 years. As a family-owned and operated business founded by Todd and Shari Nelson, Kalahari has built its success by investing in its associates, developing leaders from within, and creating opportunities for meaningful, long-term careers.

Associates experience that investment every day through programs like [Be Well](#), which supports career development, as well as financial, physical and mental wellness. Kalahari believes supporting associates both at work and at home helps them and their families thrive. Through leadership development opportunities, including the Rising Star program that is designed to prepare supervisory-level associates for their next step in their careers, and a longstanding promote-from-within philosophy, the company continues to create opportunities for associates to grow personally and professionally.

The commitment extends beyond the workplace. Through [Kalahari Cares](#), the company's associate assistance fund administered through the [Nelson Family Life Foundation](#), eligible associates and their dependents receive support during unexpected hardships, reflecting the Nelson family's belief that caring for associates means caring for the people and families behind the guest experiences they create.

That same philosophy guides the Nelson family's broader commitment to giving back. Through the Nelson Family Life Foundation and other philanthropic efforts, the family supports education, schools and community partners that create opportunity and build stronger neighborhoods.

Kalahari also invests in the communities surrounding its resorts through associate-led volunteer efforts, including food and winter coat drives, fundraising events and partnerships with local organizations. The company also supports future generations through partnerships with schools, career development programs and workforce development initiatives like [Project SEARCH](#), which creates employment opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

TIME and Statista developed the list by weighing verified employee survey data alongside each company's measurable impact on society, health and the environment, using analysis from the Helsinki-based Upright Project.

The honor reinforces what Kalahari has always believed: exceptional guest experiences begin with exceptional associate experiences. That commitment to people has shaped the company's culture for more than 25 years and continues to distinguish Kalahari across the hospitality industry.

"This recognition isn't about a ranking; it's about our people," said Todd Nelson, Founder and CEO of Kalahari Resorts & Conventions. "I think about the associates who return to Kalahari year after year, the leaders who have built lifelong careers here, and the families who have grown alongside our company. That's who this recognition belongs to. We've always believed that when you invest in people - supporting their growth, their well-being and being there for them through life's toughest moments - you build something stronger. Those stronger families create stronger communities, and that belief has guided us since the beginning."

The recognition comes at a defining moment for Kalahari. The company is investing \$85 million to expand its flagship Wisconsin Dells waterpark while preparing to open its fifth resort in Spotsylvania, Virginia. As Kalahari grows, it remains committed to creating new opportunities for associates without losing the family-owned culture that has defined the company for more than 25 years.

The full TIME America's Best Private Companies 2026 list and methodology are available at time.com.

About Kalahari Resorts & Conventions

Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, founded by Todd and Shari Nelson, is home to America's Largest Indoor Waterparks, and offers an unmatched mix of all-under-one-roof experiences for families, vacationers, and meeting attendees. With locations in Wisconsin Dells, WI; Sandusky, OH; Pocono Mountains, PA; Round Rock, TX; and a new resort opening in 2026 in Spotsylvania, VA, each property draws inspiration from the rich culture and vibrant landscapes of Africa. Recognized by USATODAY's 10BEST for Best Indoor Water Park and Best VR Water Slide, Kalahari continues to set the standard for family

entertainment and hospitality. Across its growing collection of resorts, guests can expect well-appointed accommodations, signature dining, unique retail, expansive indoor and outdoor waterparks, immersive adventure parks, and state-of-the-art convention centers. In 2026, Kalahari introduced its Treehouse Adventures, luxury treehouses located on the shores of Lake Delton in Wisconsin Dells. Select locations also feature full-service spas and wellness destinations, creating the ultimate all-in-one getaway. For the latest news and media resources, visit kalaharimedia.com.

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