

Business

No-frills hotel rooms are now few and far between

By PATRICIA BROWN
Staff Writer

As people head to Myrtle Beach this summer, the motel room of years ago with a single bed and shower will be difficult to find. Travelers today are demanding more and are willing to pay the extra money, motel owners say.

"It's just a fact of supply and demand: when people travel they expect more and are willing to pay for it," said Tom Moore, manager of Days Inn in Myrtle Beach, S.C. "They want a place that's just like home."

During the late 1960s, one-price motel rooms could be found across the country. However, these \$6 to \$8 rooms disappeared in the inflationary 1970s, making it nearly impossible to find just a bed and shower.

"Today people are demanding remote control TV, shampoo, hand

lotions and even larger bath towels," said Doug Stephens, manager of the Quality Inn in Myrtle Beach. "These things aren't even extras anymore. They're just assumed to be there."

"If I'm paying \$50 to \$60 for a room, I expect a TV, telephone and all the modern conveniences," said Jill Wienberry, a junior journalism major from Winston-Salem. "I couldn't imagine a room without these things."

With 55,000 hotel rooms in Myrtle Beach, competition for the customer has helped bring on the change in the area, said Ti Hanley, manager of Comfort Inn in Myrtle Beach.

"There's just not a demand for the no-frill hotel anymore; today most hotels are much more service-oriented," Hanley said.

Today, clerks are expected to do much more than check people in and out, said Laura Cleveland of Econo Lodge North Gate in Myrtle Beach.

"Our customers expect to receive their messages promptly and our regular customers like to be recognized by face," Cleveland said.

Although customers expect the amenities, Quality International will introduce McSleep, a no-frills, one-bedded, smaller motel room with TV and telephone, Stephens said.

"Quality International is currently pre-selling franchises for McSleep, so it's not too far off and they're about ready to take off," Stephens said.

Mike Isenhour, a junior RTVMP major from Hickory, sees the no-frill motels as both positive and negative.

"If I'm on vacation, I would be willing to pay the extra money for a really nice room, but if I'm on some sort of tour and knew I would be away from the room for most of the day, I'd go for the room with no frills," Isenhour said.

Airline to expand domestically

From Associated Press reports

CHARLOTTE — USAir plans to concentrate on domestic expansion rather than international flights as it maps out a future after its merger with North Carolina's Piedmont Airlines, the company's chairman says.

"I would be less than honest," USAir Chairman and President Edwin Colodny said, "if I didn't indicate that while we may have one more international European destination in mind, I do not believe that we will have a multitude of foreign destinations out of Charlotte or out of anyplace."

"We do not intend to become a major international carrier over the next few years. Our job is to become a significant player in the domestic market and we intend to build the

Charlotte hub domestically."

Colodny, in an interview with The Charlotte Observer at the airline's headquarters in Washington, reiterated his company's commitment to Charlotte, which has been Piedmont's largest hub airport. He said USAir's new maintenance facility at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport will be used to overhaul Boeing jets, instead of doing simple inspections and routine work as previously planned. The difference could mean another 50 to 200 jobs here, industry observers told The Observer.

Colodny's plans to concentrate on domestic service were first revealed during a January meeting of Piedmont managers in Florida.

"We have a niche over the trans-

atlantic," Colodny told the managers.

"We can capitalize on Charlotte-London and maybe find a way to add another destination, but we should not lose sight of the fact that the success or failure of this combined airline would still be how well we do domestically."

He added, "The reason is simple. Two-thirds of all domestic air travelers take trips under 1,000 miles. That's why (Piedmont and USAir) have been so successful."

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