The Tourism Economy Study: CCU Lodging Update, May 7, 2015

Current Performance Estimates

Hotel, Condo-Hotel and Campsite Properties

Preliminary results from Coastal Carolina University’s voluntary sample of hotel, condo-hotel and campsite (HC-HC) properties along the Grand Strand during the week of April 26-May 2, 2015, indicate that the midweek occupancy rate averaged 37.6 percent, down 8.5 occupancy points or 18.4 percent compared to the equivalent week of 2014. During the Friday-Saturday night period, the occupancy rate averaged 76.1 percent, up 9 occupancy points or 13.5 percent compared to the equivalent weekend last year. The average daily rate (ADR) was down 6.8 percent during the midweek period but up 3.6 percent during the weekend period compared with last year. Consequently, HC-HC occupancy for the week overall was down 3.6 occupancy points or 7 percent, and revenue per available room (RevPAR) was down 8.1 percent compared with the equivalent week of 2014.

VRPs

Based on the Brittain Center’s observations of random samples of Internet websites of vacation rental properties (VRPs) in the coastal sections of Horry and Georgetown counties (318 of the 3,135 units) for which complete data are publicly available, 44.1 percent were reserved or blocked from nightly rentals during the nights of April 25-May 1, 2015. The percentage of VRPs reserved in Horry and Georgetown counties combined was down 21 occupancy points or 32.2 percent compared with the equivalent period last year. For the nights of May 2-8, 44.2 percent of the VRPs were reserved or blocked from reservation. The level of reservations was down 31.1 occupancy points or 41.3 percent compared with the equivalent week of 2014.

Six-Week Average Performance

During the nights of March 22-May 2, 2015, 59.3 percent of the lodging properties in the Brittain Center’s voluntary sample of HC-HC properties located along the Grand Strand were occupied, which was up by 1.8 occupancy points or 3.2 percent compared with the equivalent weeks last year. The average daily rate for these properties was down 1.2 percent compared with the equivalent weeks of 2014, leading to a 12.3 percent increase in average RevPAR compared with the equivalent period last year. During the same period this year, 51 percent of the VPR bedrooms in the Center’s random sample of Horry County VRPs were reserved or blocked from nightly rentals, down 23.6 occupancy points or 31.6 percent compared with the equivalent weeks last year. Advertised prices for this segment were up 3.5 percent compared with last year, which would lead to a decrease in revenue per available bedroom of 29.2 percent.

(CCU Lodging Update continued page 2)
The Tourism Economy Study: CCU Lodging Update, May 7, 2015 (continued)

Forecast and Analysis

According to weather.com at the time of this writing, the forecast for the weekend of May 9-10 calls for an 80 and 60 percent chance of precipitation with highs of 79 and 82 degrees, respectively. The Brittain Center predicts that average occupancy for its sample of HC-HC properties may be near or above 70 percent for the weekend nights of May 8-9, even or within 3 occupancy points compared with the equivalent weekend of 2014. Based on this week’s observations by Center researchers of 318 websites of VRPs available to rent in Horry and Georgetown counties, 57.9 percent are reserved for the week of May 9-15. VRP reservations in Horry and Georgetown counties for that week are down 10 occupancy points or 14.8 percent compared with the same week of 2014.

Additional Research Notes

The Brittain Center’s preliminary sample of 24 HC-HC properties reporting for the week of April 26-May 2 consisted of 10 hotels (all but five are oceanfront/view, and five are brand affiliated), 13 condo-hotels (all are oceanfront/view, and one is brand affiliated), and one campground resort property. The results for the current moving six-week period are based on an average sample size of 8,951 units per week average.

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Note: The above analysis is based on sample estimates. Actual business performance results may vary greatly. Therefore, neither the above Centers nor Coastal Carolina University warrant the use of the above data or analysis for specific business application.