The Tourism Economy Study: CCU Lodging Update, September 5, 2013

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 Aug. 25 – 31 indicate that the midweek occupancy rate averaged 56.2 percent, up 7.4 occupancy points or 15.2 percent compared with the equivalent week of 2012. During the Friday–Saturday night period, the occupancy rate averaged 84 percent, up 2.8 occupancy points or 3.4 percent compared to the equivalent weekend last year. The average daily rate was down 2 percent during the midweek period and up 1.1 percent during the weekend period compared with last year. Consequently, occupancy for HC-HCs for the week overall was up 5.9 occupancy points or 10.1 percent and revenue per available room (RevPAR) was up 8.3 percent compared to the equivalent week of 2012.

Vacation Rental Properties

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 (338 of the 3,135 units) for which complete data are publicly available, during the nights of Aug. 24 - 30, 63.5 percent were reserved or blocked from nightly rentals. The percentage of VRPs reserved in Horry and Georgetown counties combined was up 1.7 occupancy points or 2.7 percent compared with the equivalent period of 2012. For the nights of Aug. 31 – Sept. 6, 2013, 57 percent of the VRPs were reserved or blocked from reservation. The level of reservations was down 5.9 occupancy points or 9.4 percent compared with the equivalent week of 2012.

Six-Week Average Performance

During the nights of July 21 – Aug. 31, 2013, 83 percent of the lodging properties in the Brittain Center’s voluntary sample of hotel, condo-hotel and campsite properties located along the Grand Strand were occupied, which was up 5.3 occupancy points or 6.8 percent compared with the equivalent weeks of 2012. The average daily rate for these properties was up 2.8 percent compared with the equivalent weeks last year. Consequently, RevPAR was up 9.8 percent compared with the equivalent period last year. During the same period, 83.9 percent of the vacation rental property bedrooms in the Center’s random sample of Horry County VRPs were reserved or blocked from nightly rentals, which was down 2 occupancy points or 2.3 percent compared with the equivalent weeks of last year. Advertised prices for this segment were up 2.4 percent compared with last year, which would lead to a decrease in revenue per available bedroom (RevPAB) of 0.1 percent.

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Forecast and Analysis

At the time of this writing, the forecast from weather.com for the weekend of Sept. 7 – 8 called for 20 and 10 percent chance of precipitation, respectively. The Brittain Center forecasts that average occupancy for its sample of hotel, condo-hotel and campsites may be near or above 75 percent during the nights of Sept. 6 – 7, 2013, or within 2 occupancy points of the level reached during the equivalent weekend last year. Based on this week’s observations by Center researchers of 338 websites of vacation rental properties available to rent in Horry or Georgetown counties for the week of Sept. 7 – 13, 50.9 percent are reserved. VRP reservations in Horry and Georgetown counties for that week are down 11.6 occupancy points or 18.5 percent compared with the equivalent period of 2012.

Additional Research Notes

The Brittain Center’s preliminary sample of 29 hotel, condo-hotel and campground properties reporting for the week of Aug. 25 - 31 consisted of 13 hotels (all but five are ocean front/view, and five are brand affiliated), 15 condo-hotels (all are ocean front/view and one brand-affiliated) and one campground resort property. The results for the current moving six-week period are based on an average sample size of 9,640 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.