

Mud or not—Comfort Suites Hotel to open Wednesday

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Weather big challenge during construction.

Diana Unterseher thought she'd seen the end of weather-hampered construction when the ground thawed last spring at the site of Comfort Suites Hotel.

She hadn't figured in the torrential downpours and just plain rain scattered throughout May, June and July.

Nonetheless, she and partner Terry Jessen planned to open their new hotel Wednesday (July 14).

"We have guests coming," Unterseher said.

Of the hotel's 74 rooms, she said only 10 will not be finished Wednesday.

The couple had hoped the hotel would open in May.

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But building has been a medley of challenges, Jessen said.

“We expected them but there were more than what we expected and on an hourly basis,” he said.

When they started construction last fall, a tent over the building site—complete with heaters—was needed to pour and dry concrete footings and later the foundation when snow and cold blanketed the area.

Then came rain and more rain in addition to challenges with architects and some subcontractors.

Last weekend, Paulsen Inc. of Cozad—the general contractor for the project—continued work on site.

“They have been wonderful,” Jessen said.

Painters touched up hallways and rooms last Thursday while employees cleaned and arranged furniture. Service people hauled in granite countertops and other materials yet to be installed.

Outside, workers installed rebar where pavement would later be poured to create a heated pad under the hotel canopy.

Because of permit problems, a swimming pool and hot tub will not be ready for about six weeks.

Regardless of challenges, reservations are coming in, the couple said.

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In fact, a wedding party has reserved rooms this weekend and golfers have booked 60 rooms in September.

When fully operational, the business will employ 26 full and part-time employees.

Likening the building to birthing a child, Unterseher said she didn't know labor could last as long as it has.

"We're way past ready," Jessen said.

To keep guests in town for more than overnight, the couple has arranged to offer horseback rides with more activities planned in the future.

"We're out to make it more than just a hotel stay," he said.

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