A broken gate, dilapitated trailers on weed-infested land were what Terry Jessen and Diana Unterseher first saw when they viewed what they intended to change into an upscale hotel property.

“We’d bought the land sight unseen in the spring of 2009,” Unterseher said.

On Saturday, the Scottsbluff couple will have a grand opening for the 74-room, 74,000 square-foot hotel that Jessen describes as helping “to change the face of Gothenburg.”

“It reflects Gothenburg and its friendliness and how we know how to do things right,” Unterseher said.

Unterseher added that the Comfort Suites is not status quo but a step above.

A hotel, she explained, provides more of a home-like atmosphere and is often a place where people want to stay for longer periods of time.

“Motels are where you motor in and motor out often after one night,” Unterseher said, noting that the Comfort Suites offers more than a basic room for the night.

Since the hotel opened in mid July, she said business has been steady with several international guests and many visitors drawn by Wild Horse Golf Club and the Monsanto Water Utilization and Learning Center.

Guests seem to like the hotel, according to a book of comments.

One entry is from a group of 60-plus women on a road trip through Nebraska.

“We knew we’d get a good night’s sleep and weren’t wrong,” they wrote. “There were no slamming doors, talking people or flushing toilets as there are in some hotels. We slept extremely well.”

In addition to comfortable beds and what she describes as “fantastic rooms,” Unterseher said cookies are available to guests at check-in and the coffee pot is on 24 hours a day for guests and the community.

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

Aside from a roof leak that has been fixed, Unterseher said there haven’t been any major problems since the motel opened.

However snow and rain delayed construction about two months which was also a challenge for Paulsen Inc. of Cozad who was the general contractor for the project.

Left on the to-do list is an enclosed swimming pool and outside spa with a heated, concrete pad which the couple hopes is finished in eight weeks.

The hotel grounds will be sodded soon.

With children and grandchildren and Jessen properties and businesses in Scottsbluff, the couple plans to spend two weeks a month in Gothenburg and the rest in Scottsbluff.

Surrounding the hotel, is 63 acres for development—called Terry's Business Park—that includes a steel building available for community events. It also houses Jessen's tax business.

Between the hotel and events center, Unterseher said they plan to offer outside games such as badminton, sand volleyball and perhaps a putting green.

Other recreation on the property includes a stocked pond for fishing, walking trails and opportunities to visit two miniature donkeys called Jack and Benny.

Horseback riding and hay rack rides are available upon request.

Jessen and Unterseher hope for a good turnout at the grand opening.

Unterseher said Gothenburg needed a facility like Comfort Suites.

"I think the grand opening is good so the community can find out what we've been doing out here for the last 1 1/2 years," Jessen said.

Comfort Suites is located at 315 Platte River Drive.

Individuals interested in booking a block of rooms for a special event can call marketing

manager Ann Matzke at 537-7378.

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com 308-537-3636