

Sun News, The (Myrtle Beach, SC)
April 25, 2004
Section: MONEY & SUNDAY OPINION
Page: D3
Column: Tourism Talk

RALLY TO EDUCATE LAWMAKERS ABOUT NEED FOR I-73 Dawn Bryant The Sun News

The Grand Strand will try to show the need for Interstate 73 month when it plays host to Congress members who can help get the road funded.

A "Road Rally" is set for Thursday through May 2. It's the latest in a string of rallies trying to drum up support for the interstate, which would connect Myrtle Beach and Detroit.

As many as 30 Congress members or staffers are expected to come. They'll meet with local leaders about the economic need for the interstate, tour the area's roads and hear comments from the public during a forum 6 p.m. Friday at Myrtle Beach City Hall.

Area leaders took their pitch for the road to Washington last month and to Charleston last year. Organizers say the efforts have paid off with money, several million dollars, that has been earmarked for the \$2 billion road.

Weekday tourism up

More tourists are coming to the beach during the week, not just the weekends.

Weekday occupancy rates for the week of April 12-15 jumped 25 percent over the same week last year, which was leading up to Easter. Average midweek prices were up about 2 percent.

But the weekend fell off a bit, with occupancy down 3 percent and rates down 7 percent compared to the same weekend last year, which was Easter.

Bookings are coming in strong for the Carolina Harley-Davidson Dealers Association Myrtle Beach Rally set for May 7-16. Area Leaders are expecting a full house, with reservations claiming about 75 percent of available units.

The statistics were compiled by Coastal Carolina University's Clay Brittain Jr. Center for Resort Tourism.

Internet-savvy travel

Area business leaders are anxious to cash in on travelers' growing habit of using the Internet.

It took only a few hours for a Internet marketing seminar next week to fill up. Organizers are putting the extra names on an alternate list.

About 43 people plan to get tips from marketing expert Bill Geist on Thursday in the first in a series of technology seminars the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce plans to sponsor.

With more travelers booking on the Web, locals have been stepping up their Internet presence.

Just last week, Sea Trail Golf Resort and Conference Center in Sunset Beach, N.C., launched a redesigned Web site, www.seatrail.com.

Traveler habits

Turns out tourists aren't always the neatest folks.

About 25 percent leave towels on the floor, 19 percent eat in bed, and 13 percent leave the television on when they're out of the room, according to a new Orbitz survey.

They also are sneaking in more people (29 percent), cigarettes in nonsmoking rooms (12 percent) and pets (11 percent).

Contact DAWN BRYANT at 626-0296 or dbryant@thesunnews.com.