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ULTIMATE WOODLANDS NEWS

## More hotels on the way in The Woodlands

By Lindsay Peyton | March 4, 2014

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There will be more places to stay over night in The Woodlands in the future - and community leaders say these luxury hotels will be a welcome addition to the area.



The Woodlands Development Corp. a wholly owned subsidiary of the Howard Hughes Corp., plans to break ground soon on a 303-room hotel overlooking The Woodlands Waterway.

The hotel also will feature 24,000 square feet of meeting and special event space, a fine dining restaurant and second-level pool deck and bar with direct access to The Fountains at Waterway Square. The entire project is expected to be completed in mid-2015.

The corporation also is working on a \$60 million renovation of its 38-year old property, The Woodlands Resort & Conference Center. Construction is expected to be complete in the fall.

The center, located at 2301 North Millbend Drive, houses 440 guest rooms and 60,000 square feet of meeting and event space, including a 13,500 square foot grand ballroom, 33 meeting rooms, spa, fitness center and a water park.

The project includes the addition of 184 guest rooms, a 1,000-foot "lazy river," 60,000 square foot of renovated meeting and event space, an updated spa and a new 120-seat restaurant.

Alex Sutton, co-president of The Woodlands Development Co., said the company also plans to open a hotel in the new Hughes Landing development.

"The Hughes Landing hotel is not as far along in terms of design, and we are negotiating with several brands," he explained. "The hotel will be in the 175-to-200 room range, ideal for business or leisure travelers. We have not yet scheduled a start date for that property."

Earlier in the year, Hyatt Hotels Corp. and New Horizons Hospitality announced the opening of Hyatt Place in The Woodlands at 1909 Research Forest Drive - with 146 rooms and more than 6,100 square feet of meeting and function space.

The various hotel projects are expected to further encourage more visits to The Woodlands and to have a positive impact on the local economy, according to Gordy Bunch, chairman of The Woodlands Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"Having an option for visitors to stay overnight encourages more people to use The Woodlands for a 'staycation' or a family vacation and stay for longer periods of time," Bunch said.

He said hotel taxes contribute to the local economy and funds the Bureau.

"Through these funds the CVB actively markets The Woodlands to visitors and meeting planners," Bunch added. "The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau drives demand for The Woodlands as a travel destination, creates new revenue for businesses and increases sales and hotel occupancy tax for The Woodlands Township's general fund."

He said that tax revenue generated by the tourism industry is invested back into improving infrastructure and programs in the area.

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By Lindsay Peyton

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