

UCSC Inn to house summer tourists

Hotels & Boarding Houses
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SANTA CRUZ — Come summer, there will be lots of room at the UCSC Inn. *3-12-00*

Formerly the Holiday Inn, the hotel was converted to a UC Santa Cruz student dormitory last fall. That elicited anger and fear from city leaders who saw a paucity of nice hotel rooms in the city for the bumper summer season. They also predicted a loss of about \$500,000 annually from transient occupancy tax the hotel paid for every room rented. To offset that loss, the university contributed \$75,000 to city coffers last year.

This summer, most of the building will convert back to a hotel. A sign in front of the Ocean Street building is advertising rooms for \$49 a night. By the time students graduate in June, university spokesperson Liz Irwin said, 150 of the hotel's 179 rooms will be available for tourists.

The news surprised city staff and officials, who said the additional tax money would help the city's financial picture. The city will have to cut \$750,000 from its \$47 million general fund by June, and another \$750,000 a year later.

Dave Culver, the city's finance director, said the addition of tax money from the UCSC Inn probably won't match the \$500,000 it contributed as the Holiday Inn. But it will go a long way to help the city's financial health.

"It's a nice surprise for me," Culver said. "Overall, I still

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UCSC Inn
on Ocean
Street,
formerly
the
Holiday
Inn, is
offering
hotel
rooms at
reduced
rates to
summer
tourists.

Dan Coyro/
Sentinel



Inn: Visitors welcome

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expect the hotel tax to be down. But every little bit helps, and it looks like it will add a healthy amount of TOT (hotel tax) to the budget."

Councilman and UC Santa Cruz lecturer Tim Fitzmaurice was the city's mayor when the university announced its plans to lease the hotel more than a year ago. At the time, he said he was "dumbfounded" and "disturbed" by the announcement, saying the tax money the hotel contributed to the city was equal to funding a homeless shelter or funding the conference and visitors center for a year. Now, he says the news of the additional hotel rooms was a surprise and "good news for the city and for the traveling public."

But Irwin said this was always the university's plan.

"The majority of the facility will be open to the general public," she said.

Irwin said the 150 vacant rooms is an estimate and will vary depending on what conferences the university is hosting at the hotel at any point in the summer. In September, the hotel will revert back to a dorm.

The university announced its 10-year, \$19.5 million deal to lease the property in January 2001. At the time, the university was leasing a wing of the hotel for its students.

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