

Hotel St. Regis, Sprint team up

Guests will get Internet, digital entertainment access starting in fall

By Charles E. Ramirez / *The Detroit News*

DETROIT -- Guests visiting the Hotel St. Regis in Detroit's New Center Area will get more than chocolates on their pillows this fall.

They'll also get the Internet and digital entertainment.

The venerable hotel has teamed up with Sprint to offer Internet and digital entertainment service in its 220 guest rooms.

Earlier this month, the hotel and Sprint announced an agreement to offer the service in Detroit and they expect to make it available in October. Pricing for the service is still being determined.

The hotel will be the first to offer the service -- called Sprint InSite with KoolConnect -- in Detroit, Hotel St. Regis and Sprint officials said.

InSite provides with high-speed Internet access, digital music, games and movies-on-demand as well as online concierge service through televisions sets in the rooms.

Guests use the services through a wireless keyboard or the TV's remote control. They may also use the services through laptop computers.

"We're always looking for opportunities to enhance our guests' experience," said Mark Grant, information systems manager for the St. Regis. "With this service, we will be able to provide them access to the types of interactive services they have in their homes and offices."

Sprint offers InSite at five other hotels in the country. The company, which has headquarters in Overland Park, Kan., provides data, long distance and local phone services and is one of the country's largest mobile phone carriers.

New York-based KoolConnect Technologies Inc., which provides interactive and broadband services to the hospitality industry, is helping



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Sprint deploy the technology.

"It's encouraging to have partners like the Hotel St. Regis realize the value of our service offering," said Thomas Patchin, director of hospitality sales for Sprint.

"It tells us we're doing the right things and providing a service that benefits their business and their customers."

The hotel offers guests Internet access through high-speed data lines at its front desk and lines for dial-in modems. It's building a new business center, too, Grant said.

"It's going to take time to build the center because we want to offer 21st century services while still maintaining the hotel's original European style and class," he said.

A majority of the hotel's clients are business travelers -- an industry sector that's struggled for the last three years and was hurt even more by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

That sector should improve slightly this year, but won't rebound until next year, according to the Travel Industry Association of America.

The Washington D.C.-based trade group projects business/convention travel revenues will rise 1.4 percent to \$670 million this year.

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