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120-room Hilton Garden Inn opens in south Medford

Medford's new Hilton Garden Inn is open in south Medford. Mail Tribune / Denise Baratta

Hilton Garden Inn, the first local hotel built since the recession, has opened in south Medford.

Prior to the four-story, 120-room hotel turning on the lights, the most recent new hospitality construction was neighboring Homewood Suites in 2008.

"Now is the perfect time for a new hotel to come into the market," said Paul Schmidt, general manager for both Hilton properties. "The demand in the market has increased over the years to the point where there is easily demand for 120 rooms."

It may be the trigger point for a new round of building, he said, noting industry reports point to strong occupancy rates in the region.

"It's just a matter of what brand will fit in Medford," Schmidt said. "HGI was in a niche Medford was missing. It's as near to a full-service hotel as you can get. Medford doesn't have a name-brand hotel with a restaurant and conference center attached; Rogue Regency and Inn at The Commons are both locally owned."

The new hotel boosts Medford's hotel inventory to more than 2,600 rooms, said Eli Matthews, senior vice president of Travel Medford.

"Having an additional 2,800 square feet of meeting space is also good for small meetings," Matthews said. "Ideally, we want to see more conference meeting space as we grow. We're on pace to continue growth in our area in one of the fastest-growing regions in a state that remains the highest for people moving in."

Hilton Garden Inn, at 1000 Welcome Way, adds a different element to the Medford hospitality mix.

It doesn't have the overnight capacity of Rogue Regency or the meeting space offered by Inn at The Commons or Ramada Inn, but Hilton Garden Inn has curb appeal, along with room for 200 people, typical for local conferences.

"It's the perfect size for companies meeting here, because we're not competing against larger markets," said Schmidt. "It's kind of a one-stop center for our guests. We can pick them up at the airport, they can have a meeting at our conference center, have breakfast and dinner at the hotel, and a drink at the bar later."

Although Hilton Garden Inn focuses on corporate clients, it will actively pursue weekend warriors playing baseball, softball and soccer at nearby U.S. Cellular Community Park on the other side of the freeway.