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Geared for business, Hampton Inn holds ribbon cutting and grand opening

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EL CENTRO — With El Centro chamber members and Visitors Bureau officials participating, the Hampton Inn by Hilton owners and investors held a ribbon cutting and grand opening Thursday as city officials and guests gathered to join in the celebration of the newest hotel in town located on East Wake Avenue off Interstate 8 and Dogwood Road. Mike Kalthia, president of Kalthia Group Hotels, cut the ribbon.

Carla Kuhns, El Centro chamber board member, presented a hospitality award certificate to Dean Chauhan, senior vice president of KG Hotels, and Kalthia. Christian Nuñez, a field representative of Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, presented a certificate of recognition to both Chauhan and Kalthia.

Chauhan, who will be the temporary manager for the next three months, said the company broke ground for the \$13-14 million project in February 2016, and then opened for business in November of the same year. He said local residents were hired and there are currently 36 employees, but this will eventually increase to 42.

Kalthia said he is thankful to local authorities and government officials who helped to open the Hampton hotel. "We are privileged to help increase the ADR and revenues for the city. We probably can generate more than \$250,000 in revenue per year for the city of El Centro."

According to Kalthia, the Hampton Inn by Hilton hotel is targeted for a specific clientele. "We built this hotel for the business client."

Business people, Kalthia said, need high speed internet, a nice room with a desk and a comfortable chair. Amenities are provided so a client can use a laptop computer while on a couch or sitting on a bed. The client can interface smart phones with the 45-inch television, he said, meaning what they can see on their iPad, tablet or Android device, they can see on the television.

According to Kalthia, the hotel has an indoor pool that allows clients to use the pool despite any outdoor weather condition especially during hot summer months. Additional amenities will be added for children later on. In addition, the hotel complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which addresses the needs of people with disabilities.

Business clients, Kalthia said, prefer less work to deal with. In about six months, Hampton by Hilton in El Centro clientele will be able to use personal smart phones to open their rooms. As a result, the use of card slide keys will be phased out.

Upon checking in, the name, room number, dates check-in and check-out will be programmed on the cell phones. During that period, the lock will open with the use of the smart phone app. Once checked out, the rooms automatically lock, and that client's phone will not work on the door lock.

One client, David Westbury from Charleston, SC, said he will be staying in Imperial Valley for a while. Westbury said he is doing electrical engineering work for the Department of the Navy at the Naval Air Facility El Centro and this phase of the project will take about a month to complete.

“We are putting a transportable air traffic control tower at the base,” Westbury said.

Westbury said he travels a fair amount of time. “I’m staying at the Hampton Inn in El Centro, which is a good quality brand, reliable, consistent wherever you go,” he said. “I’ve been here one night. It is a comfortable nice hotel.”

