



Rendering courtesy of Auberge Resorts
An artists rendering of the new planned hotel at Pronghorn resort, northeast of Bend.

Pronghorn resort announces new hotel, spa

Construction set to start in April

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Pronghorn resort plans to start construction next year on a 105-room hotel on its property northeast of Bend, resort officials announced Tuesday.

Pronghorn's parent company, Auberge Resorts, is putting \$20 million into the project, which will also double the size of Pronghorn's spa facilities and renovate some existing buildings.

The proposal makes Pronghorn the second Central Oregon resort to announce hotel plans after years of struggling to clear up ownership and development issues. Construction started in April on a 50-room hotel at Tetherow, just west of Bend.

Pronghorn's plan is to develop the hotel in two phases, General Manager Spencer Schaub said. Construction crews will build 67 of the rooms starting in April, with a tentative opening set for the second quarter of 2015.

The second phase, with 38 rooms, will start after the first phase is complete.

The hotel "was always part of the development requirements for the property," Schaub said. "It's an exciting development and an exciting way to showcase Pronghorn and Central Oregon."

Pronghorn officials are calling the planned hotel The Huntington Lodge, named after a 19th-century wagon trail that ran through Deschutes County. Pronghorn currently has some condo-like lodges available for guest stays, but this would be the first full-scale hotel.

A San Francisco architectural firm that specializes in resorts is working on the hotel design, and Pronghorn is still finalizing some specifics, including its interior design. The hotel is expected to have two varieties of rooms: standard rooms of about 470 square feet; and suites ranging from 940 square feet to 1,430 square feet, Schaub said.

Among a half-dozen resorts

Pronghorn, like more than a half-dozen resorts planned across Central Oregon since 2000, has struggled to meet some of the timelines developers first planned for home and hotel construction around the property.

Oregon and Deschutes County require destination resorts to provide overnight lodging units in addition to homes, golf courses and other amenities. Pronghorn, which opened in 2004, has applied for extensions with the county on the requirements several times since first getting development approval.

The resort includes plans for up to 420 home lots surrounding its two golf courses, clubhouse and recreation center on 640 acres east of U.S. Highway 97 between Bend and Redmond. Just a fraction of the homes have been built.

Still, construction activity and visits to the resort have been on the upswing over the last year, Schaub said.

In February 2012, The Resort Group, a Hawaii development firm, acquired more than \$43 million in loans for the property, effectively taking ownership. That company put Auberge Resorts in charge of daily operations in May 2012.

Troubled developments

Pronghorn is hardly the only Central Oregon resort to face financial hardship over the last decade, and it has fared better than most.

Building at Tetherow, a resort located just west of Bend that broke ground in 2004, has also failed to reach the 380 homes and 210 townhomes that developers first envisioned. But after several ownership changes and the near foreclosure of 191 lots last year, Tetherow officials started construction on a 50-room hotel in April and have said they're seeing more permits for homes around the resort property.

Of the nine destination resorts proposed across Central Oregon between 2000 and 2008, just three — Pronghorn, Tetherow and Brasada Ranch — opened. A hotel management group bought Brasada in 2010.

The others collapsed in the wake of the real estate crash, personal bankruptcies among resort planners and land use decisions restricting development.

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