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## New, moving or expanding: GrandStay opens deaf-friendly hotel

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A St. Augusta-based hotel chain opened a hotel this month that became the first in the country to install strobe lights for deaf and hearing impaired in all its rooms.

GrandStay Residential Suites Hotel opened on Oct. 1 in Faribault. It installed the strobe lights because the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf is in Faribault, said Matt Williams, vice president of GrandStay Hospitality, the franchiser of GrandStay Residential Suites Hotels and Crossings by GrandStay Inn & Suites.

The strobe lights, in all 59 rooms, are a fire alarm for people who can't hear well or at all.

Average GrandStay hotels have strobe lights in 10 percent of their rooms, Williams said. The only other two hotels in the country that have 100 percent strobe light alarms are affiliated with deaf colleges in Washington, D.C. and New York, according to a news release.

This is the 11th hotel the business has opened since 2000. It usually tries to open two per year, Williams said.

Despite a lagging hotel business in Minnesota, GrandStay has carved an extended-stay niche for itself. That's one way it has continued to grow, Williams said.

It has properties in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota and California.

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