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Sleuths find 6 Toledo hotels are lacking in ‘attitude’

By [MIKE SIGOV](#)

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Secret shoppers visited six of the city’s hotels in recent months and found customer service needs to be improved, especially when it comes to phone inquiries, Mayor Carty Finkbeiner said yesterday.

The mayor held a press conference to criticize the customer service at the Toledo hotels, releasing reports on each that were prepared by IntelliShop, LLC of Perrysburg. The reports were prepared after 24-hour hotel visit evaluations and phone inquiries by professional hotel inspectors in the past three months.

“Most of the complaints, across the board, have to do with the attitude of the lobby personnel and the service provided,” Mr. Finkbeiner said. “This means the management of these facilities needs to focus more on training their employees to be professional in their attitude and conduct.”

The reports cited incidents that included clerks failing to identify themselves, wearing sloppy clothing, and failing to inquire about the needs of a customer because they were preoccupied with other employees.

The inspections and reports cost about \$2,500 out of the city’s building inspection budget, said Chris Young, chief building official.

The evaluated hotels were Hotel SeaGate, 141 North Summit St.; Park Inn, 101 North Summit St.; Toledo Riverfront Hotel, Two SeaGate; Clarion Westgate Hotel, 3536 Secor Rd.; the Clarion Hotel, 2340 South Reynolds Rd., and the Hilton Toledo, 3100 Glendale Ave. They were judged on phone inquiry, initial curb appeal, check-in, public areas, guest room appearance, room service, and checkout.

“All of these facilities scored low in customer service via phone,” Mr. Finkbeiner said. “For example, when the secret shopper conducted a phone inquiry to each of these hotels to make his/her reservations, they were not treated as well as they should have been.”

The Hilton received the highest overall score of 85 percent, the Park Inn received 74 percent, and the Clarion Westgate, 72 percent.

The Clarion Hotel received 65 percent, the Toledo Riverfront 63 percent, and the Hotel SeaGate 28 percent.

The full reports are available on the city’s Web site, www.ci.toledo.oh.us.

The mayor said he is focusing on hotels because they are where many people get their

first impression of the city.

“Great cities do take care of public places. ...” Mr. Finkbeiner said. “Visitors to our city form an impression of Toledo based on what they experience while they are here.”

He added: “If they see a dirty room, or receive poor customer service, they are not going to want to come back to Toledo.”

The mayor noted that the hotels received largely favorable scores on the appearance of their public places.

Mr. Finkbeiner yesterday thanked the management of Hotel SeaGate “for their recent hard work and progress,” and noted numerous repairs to the facility.

He said all of the elevators are now working, the washers and dryers have been replaced, and that the lobby area is clean.

In May, the mayor cited the hotel at 141 North Summit St. as a “public nuisance.”

Using a critical report written by a secret shopper hired by the city, he gave its owners 72 hours to clean up and repair the premises.

Shannon Fielder, the hotel’s general manager, later denied that the hotel was dirty, but took the mayor’s order and promised to respond immediately.

At the end of the news conference, Mr. Young said that the city will continue to monitor the progress at Hotel SeaGate on a weekly basis.

“And that’s perfectly fine,” Ms. Fielder said when reached on the phone yesterday.

“Everything that the city would like us to do, we will do.”

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