



SeaSide gets turtle-friendly features



Anna Maria Island Resorts Operations Manager Dawn Betts points out the turtle-friendly windows. SUN PHOTO/LAURIE KROSNEY

By Laurie Krosney | sun staff writer

BRADENTON BEACH — SeaSide, a small beachfront motel on the "S" curve of Gulf Drive has always been one of the places on the Island that has worked hard to do what it could to help preserve the sea turtles that nest here.

When it was purchased by David Teitelbaum and added to his Anna Maria Island Resorts, which include Tortuga Inn, Trade Winds and Old Bridge Village, the trend continued.

"We have always worked hard to be responsible about turtles," Teitelbaum said. "SeaSide is directly on the beach, so we wanted to work especially hard at it here."

As the resort was being completely re-done, both inside and out, AMI Resort Operations Manager Dawn Betts paid special attention to making sure that the building would be "turtle friendly."

"And she knows about turtle safety," Teitelbaum said. "She was the code enforcement officer in Bradenton Beach, you know."

Betts said she made sure the outside lighting was recessed and that it pointed down, as is recommended by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

"We wanted to make sure that we didn't have any point sources of light that would draw sea turtles," Betts said. "And we're careful to keep the wattage low enough that we don't have city glow happening."

City glow is caused by all the sources of light that can attract not only turtles, but also migrating birds, whose flight paths it can interrupt.

To get an example of city glow, take a look out over the Gulf at night. Then turn toward the east and you'll have a clear idea of what city glow means, or log onto www.nightskies.com to find out more.

At SeaSide, the outside lights will not be drawing turtles or hatchlings away from the water, but all the rooms at the resort front on the Gulf and all the rooms have huge sliding glass doors opening onto the Gulf. Light from inside those rooms could also be a lure for turtles.

"So we went with 'turtle glass' on the windows," Betts said.

"It's a film that cuts out certain wavelengths of light, and what's left doesn't affect the turtles," Teitelbaum said. "They can't see the wave lengths that are left, or so the turtle experts say."

The film is applied to existing glass. It has a blue tint. The spectacular Gulf views offered by each room at the resort are not affected by the application of the film, and the turtles are safe at the same time.

"It is really no more expensive than anything else we could have done," Teitelbaum said. "The cost is insignificant, and we get the benefit of being responsible about the nature we live with on the Island."

"It's not difficult or expensive at all to be careful to make sure you don't harm sea turtles or interrupt their nesting," Betts said.

To find out more about turtle protection measures you can take, log onto www.myfwc.com.