

for Action against Deceptive Mandatory Hotel Resort Fees

The North Carolina Consumers Council (NCCC) and Travelers United are asking NC Attorney General Roy Cooper and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to take action against hotels that engage in a deceptive and misleading practice of advertising nightly rates that do not include mandatory fees.

According to a joint consumer advisory released by NCCC and Travelers United, local hotel operators often advertise a nightly rate per room, but don't clearly indicate that, on top of that, guests have to pay a mandatory, non-negotiable fee that ranges from \$20-35 per night for hotels, and often more than \$75 per night at a resort.

NCCC and Travelers United say that these charges are often listed as "resort fees" and occur most frequently in tourist and business hotspots in destinations such as Florida, California, Hawaii, and North Carolina. Local hotel operators often attribute these mandatory fees to amenities such as "free" Wi-Fi, an onsite pool or gym, and even coffee or newspapers provided to guests.

According to New York University's Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, hotel fees and surcharges grew to a whopping \$1.25 billion in 2014.

"Families and businesses cannot effectively comparison shop or budget for lodging when some hotels advertise a nightly rate and also add mandatory fees," the organizations stated in the consumer advisory. "Local hotel operators also face a difficult choice—advertise a true rate and lose business, or follow the trend and mislead by adding a resort fee in addition to nightly rates. If the fees are mandatory, it must be included in the overall nightly room rate. Anything less is deceptive and misleading," said Charlie Leocha, Founder and Chairman of Travelers United.

"If a hotel fee is mandatory for everyone, there's absolutely no reason why it shouldn't be included, upfront, in the advertised nightly room rate," said NCCC President Sandra Bullock. "Consumers shouldn't have to guess how much they'll be paying or be surprised with additional fees. That's just common sense."

In 2012, the FTC issued letters to 22 hotel operators warning that advertising nightly rates that do not include all required fees is misleading, and may violate the FTC Act's ban on deceptive practices in commerce. However, no further action has been taken since by the agency. NCCC and Travelers United are calling on the FTC to stop the practice of "misleading and deceptive" mandatory hotel resort fees through federal regulation. The organizations say that NC Attorney General Roy Cooper and other state Attorneys General also have the authority to act to protect consumers when businesses engage in deceptive advertising practices.

NCCC and Travelers United encourage consumers to:

- Email the FTC, and urge officials to issue guidance that mandatory resort and hotel fees are deceptive and illegal.
- Contact Attorney General Cooper, or your state's Attorney General, and ask him to investigate this alarming trend, take a position, and take action against the worst offenders.
- Voice your opinion. If staying at a hotel that charges a mandatory resort fee, share your concerns with the manager or hotel operator.

For further information, visit hotelfees.travelersunited.org.

About NCCC The North Carolina Consumers Council (NCCC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been standing up for North Carolina consumers for 47 years. With a mission of promoting consumer education, consumer awareness and consumer protection across the state and beyond, NCCC's primary objective is to provide consumers with the unbiased facts and information they need to make smart, well-informed decisions in today's increasingly complex consumer marketplace. To find out more visit www.NCconsumer.org.

About Travelers United Travelers United is a 501(c)(3) non-profit with 23,000 members and is the leading voice of consumers nationwide on air, rail, cruise and other travel. Founder and President Charlie Leocha is a syndicated columnist, frequent commentator on TV and radio, and an appointed member of the Consumer Advisory Committee to the U.S. Department of Transportation. To find out more visit www.travelersunited.org.

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Events

AUGUST 5, 12, 19

Free Health Classes

For veterans & their families on Metabolic Syndrome, 10am-12noon at Veteran Services Office in Belk Building. Info & register 704-638-9000 ext 4937

AUGUST 13

Compassionate Friends

Meet 7pm in Training Room at Pee Dee Electric. Info 704-694-8774

AUGUST 15

Back to School

With Pride event at Hatcher Park in Lilesville, 11am. Free school supplies for Anson students, entertainment. Donations greatly appreciated. Call Vancine Sturdivant 704-848-4412 or Jennifer Tarlton 704-694-3115

AUGUST 16

Healthy Living Seminar

Learn how to cook healthy plant-based foods, how to lose weight, have more energy, reduce cholesterol, reverse diabetes, lower blood pressure & more. Free! 3-5pm at Pathway to Peace Ministries, 11775 Hwy 109 S in Peachland. Info 704-695-1441

AUGUST 18

Board Meeting

Of Brown Creek Soil & Water Conservation District, 10am in district office

AUGUST 19

Bach's Lunch

Featuring chicken salad croissant, potato salad & dessert along with a dancing program at First Presbyterian Church in Wadesboro at noon. \$10 tickets at Lacy's & Arts Council. 704-694-4950

AUGUST 21

Storytelling Festival

At Hampton B. Allen Library w/Appalachian Folktales by storyteller Linda Goodman, 2pm. Free & open to the public. Info 704-694-5177

AUGUST 29

Democratic Women

Of NC Annual Meeting, 10am-noon at Old Armory Community Center, 500 S Johnson St, Monroe w/Olma Echeverri. RSVP Beatrice Colson 704-233-4197

SEPTEMBER 12

Burnsville School

Reunion 5pm at Lockhart-Taylor Center for anyone who attended Burnsville School. Info Ann Williams 704-272-9357

SEPTEMBER 26

Class of 1985

Anson Senior High School 30th Reunion at Holla Center, 5pm. Info Carolyn Cash 919-585-6293 or carolyn.cash@live.com

ONGOING EVENTS

Bariatric Pal Support

Group meets the 4th Monday of each month at CHS-Anson, 6pm. Info 704-475-3024

AA Meetings

Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 8pm & Sundays 8am & 7pm at AA Building, 2111 Country Club Rd in Wadesboro next to Ambassador Health

Chemical Dependent?

There is help. Chemical Dependency Anonymous meets Thursdays, 8pm at AA Building, 2111 Country Club Rd in Wadesboro next to Ambassador Health

Direct and Counter Cyclical Program Sign-ups

Call the Farm Service Agency Office at 704-694-3516 ext. 2 to complete eligibility forms

Sexual Assault Victims

Support group meets every Wednesday, from 5-6pm at Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition offices. Info 704-694-4499

Food Commodities

Distributed free the 4th Tues of each month at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Ctr, 9am. Info

704-826-8182

Food Pantry

Free food every Wed, 9-11am at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Ctr. 704-826-8182

BACK TO SCHOOL

Does Your Child's Eyesight Make the Grade?

Vision problems are a leading cause of school performance problems, so be sure your child can see clearly at school. Make an appointment with Dr. Kiker today for a complete eye exam.

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Holly Allison Kiker, OD

1134 Holly Street in Wadesboro (On Highway 74 across from Forbes Jewelers)
Mon-Thurs 8:30-5 & Friday 8:30-12:30 704-694-3618

Community Health Center Week
August 10-14, 2015

Date:
August 14, 2015

Time: 9-3

WORKSHOPS

- SAFE SEX (Correct condom use)
- FAST FOOD MADE HEALTHY
- SELF BREAST EXAMS (DO It Right!)
- HEALTH CARE.GOV (Do you have the right insurance?)
- EXERCISE FOR ALL AGES

FREE SCREENINGS
BMI, Blood Pressure
Depression Cholesterol, Blood Sugar

For more information
704-694-6700

Anson Regional Medical Services (ARMS) COMMUNITY HEALTH DAY
203 Salisbury Street
Wadesboro

Promoting Healthy Living

RECEIVE FREE LUNCH WITH EVENT PARTICIPATION.

GAMES, PRIZES, DISPLAYS
FOOD DEMONSTRATIONS
Hair cuts, manicures, makeup application, eyebrow with event participation

ANSON REGIONAL MEDICAL SERVICES

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