

Meridian Design Build project in Kentucky indicative of solid hotel market in Midwest

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An aerial view of the Staybridge Suites hotel currently under construction in Bowling Green, Ken.

Developers aren't building as many hotels this year as they were in 2011. But that doesn't mean that hotel projects aren't making an impact across the Midwest.

Consider the construction project taking place now in Bowling Green, Ken. [Meridian Design Build](#) is building a three-story 124-suite Staybridge Suites Hotel there. The hotel will cover 85,000 square feet once it is completed in November of this year.

The hotel will stand adjacent to Western Kentucky University's Knicely Conference Center, and will provide extra rooms for visitors to both the conference center and the university.

Last year was a strong one for hotel construction, both in the Midwest and across the country. This year's numbers are down, but are still solid. According to the May 2012 STR/McGraw Hill Construction Dodge Pipeline Report, the active U.S. hotel pipeline included 2,711 projects with 290,392 rooms.

That's pretty solid. But it's actually down 6.4 percent from the number of rooms in the active pipeline during May of 2011.

Rooms that are being built, though, are aimed at a more upscale traveler. According to the STR/McGraw Hill report, the upscale hotel segment boasted 17,882 rooms in the active pipeline this May, a jump of 37.9 percent from the same time one year earlier.

The upper midscale segment also saw an increase this year. In May of this year, the country's total active pipeline included 19,544 upper midscale hotel rooms. That's a jump of 26.2 percent from the same month in 2011.

– Dan Rafter