

# Short-term rental industry blossoming in Tidewater area

Short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts in West Point, King William County, New Kent County and King and Queen County.

By **Kassie Simmons**

Daily Press

JUNE 26, 2018, 5:00 PM

Tidewater-area residents have started making extra cash on the short-term rental trend, causing some local governments to consider regulating the business.

According to community development director Holly McGowan, West Point has decided that homeowners who use popular websites such as **Airbnb**, VRBO and HomeAway will fall under the same regulations as local bed and breakfasts.

Residents who want to rent out either their whole home or just one room online must first obtain a special use permit. Permit holders do not have to pay a special tax, but if they wish to serve food to their guests, they must be inspected by the health department.

To date, two homes have applied for the permits and been approved by the Planning Commission and Town Council.

Larkin Garbee recently started hosting guests through Airbnb after going through the approval process as a bed and breakfast.

“I love sharing our quaint town,” she said. “It makes me happy when people discover West Point.”

Garbin said that since they are not in town when guests visit, their neighbors have become honorary hosts for the guests as well. Neighbors have even gone so far as to buy a new coffee pot for the house when a guest found theirs wasn’t working.

King William County Attorney Daniel Stuck said the county has no regulations for short-term rentals, but regulations are in place for bed and breakfasts.

Bed and breakfasts operating in the area out of a private home are permitted in the majority of the county, but they are not allowed in scattered locations where primarily businesses and suburban residential areas lie.

Only one bed and breakfast operates in the county, charging guests approximately \$160 per night. Two residents offer their homes on short-term rental websites.

New Kent County has the highest concentration of short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts in the area due to its proximity to both Williamsburg and Richmond and the number of wineries in the area.

County Administrator Rodney Hathaway said the county is considering whether to set regulations for hosts using short-term rental websites, but setting new regulations isn’t a priority. Hathaway said the county wants to be proactive in case the need arises and is weighing the costs and benefits of setting regulations for short-term rentals.

Today, short-term rentals fall under the same regulations as bed and breakfasts and are allowed to operate in the more rural areas of the county. Hathaway believes the growing industry will be beneficial to the area’s economy, as it allows tourists to stay in the area and support local businesses.

Jessica Kuehl owns and operates New Kent’s Vaiden Inn with her mother. The bed and breakfast got started on Airbnb, but after two months they obtained a permit to operate as a company.

“Airbnbs in the area don’t offer the same things that we do and there aren’t many in the area,” Kuehl said. “I don’t think (they affect) our business at all.”

Kuehl has used Airbnb on her own travels for more than two years and has stayed at numerous locations.

Through her experiences, she's learned the tricks of the trade.

"False advertising hosts can make the whole site look bad," Kuehl shared. "That's why I post lots of pictures, give lots of information and communicate clearly with all my guests."

Although assistant zoning administrator Donna Sprouse said short-term rentals are not permitted in the county, one King and Queen resident has two rentals currently available on Airbnb.

King and Queen County does permit bed and breakfasts, however, there are not any currently in operation.

**You can reach Kassie at [ksimmons@dailypress.com](mailto:ksimmons@dailypress.com) or [@KassieLSimmons](https://www.instagram.com/KassieLSimmons).**

Copyright © 2018, Tidewater Review

This article is related to: [Airbnb](#)

**\$2 FOR 20 WEEKS!**  
Hurry, offer ends July 9

**SAVE NOW ›**

