ABERDEEN, SD—After establishing itself in the Midwest and Northwest portions of the U.S., economy extended-stay brand My Place is digging its spurs into the state of Texas. A territorial agreement between the brand and Lone Star State-based KAMP Hotels calls for the development of 30 new hotels in 10 years.

“Of the 25 hotels that are open, our largest concentration is in the Midwest and Northwest. As we continue to focus on national expansion, adding Texas and Oklahoma is a big accomplishment for the north-south continuity of our Midwest/Central region. If you’re traveling across the country, you’re bound to see a My Place.”

KAMP Hotels is owned by the families of Texas lawyers Kevin Nelson and Alan Rhodes. The former is also a CPA and real estate broker who owns the historic Amarillo Building in Amarillo, TX, where both he and Rhodes are based. Hence, it was only natural that the first hotel to be developed and opened under the agreement was in that city.

“Alan and I both live in Amarillo and are very familiar with the city,” said Nelson. “As we’ve been getting to know the My Place team, we’ve been very impressed, and as we discussed opportunities, we felt that it would be wise for us to start at home. Let’s do this thing in a market that we’re very familiar with. We intend for the Amarillo hotel to be our flagship hotel. So, when people come to see us we can obviously walk them through our hotel; we can talk about its successes and we can talk about the lessons learned.”

My Place Hotel-Amarillo, TX, opened
in June; next up is nearby Lubbock, where both KAMP Hotels cofounders earned their undergraduate and law degrees, and then Ft. Worth.

“Lubbock is a different market than Amarillo, but it also is very similar,” said Nelson. “We felt like there would be some synergies having the two properties close by from a management perspective and from a construction and subcontractor perspective. With Fort Worth, we’ve now tapped into the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex where there’s a tremendous amount of opportunity with lots of submarkets.”

The Texas deal spawned from an original multi-property agreement between My Place and KAMP Hotels that also included hotels in neighboring Oklahoma and New Mexico.

“The multi-property agreement that was established with KAMP Hotels was a stepping stone,” said Rivett. “Territorial development was a main topic in our early discussions with Kevin and Alan. All of us had an understanding of the potential for My Place in Texas, and we certainly had confidence in KAMP from the onset.

The multi-property agreement was the preamble and the opening of Amarillo, KAMP’s first property was the launch party for KAMP Hotels as My Place’s Texas representatives.”

Two hotels outside of Texas—in Albuquerque, NM, and Oklahoma City—have been incorporated in the agreement and are expected to be the next to open following the Texas trio. “The reason for that is they’re all tied together on Interstate 40, which is Historic Route 66, and it’s a very important cross-country, highly traveled road,” said Nelson. “Tying all those markets together was our intentional thought, and then we’ll have a solid core to build out as we develop the rest of the state.”

For his part, Rhodes expressed it was the My Place executive team—Rivett, his grandfather Ron (cofounder of both Super 8 and My Place) and Terry Kline, EVP of franchise development—who cemented his faith in the partnership.

“We are so impressed by the My Place plan and the My Place people, and that starts with Terry, Ryan and Ron, and the things they’ve shown us and the opportunities they’ve presented us,” said Rhodes. “Kevin and I are both farm boys and our fathers showed us the law of the farm—there’s a time to plan and then there’s a time to plant and to cultivate. But, our dads were both farming entrepreneurs, and the things that we learned as farm boys, we’re going to try to apply here as we go forward and in a very entrepreneurial way.”

Kline was equally impressed with the vision the KAMP group has for My Place in Texas, and we certainly had an understanding of the potential for My Place in Texas, and we certainly had an understanding of the potential for My Place out of Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston or San Antonio,” said Kline. “You’ve got those large markets and then you’ve got a lot of coastal areas; you’ve got the greater Austin area with a lot of government; you’ve got the Mexico border communities; you have all kinds of opportunity. So, it will be really coming back and working together in a facilitating manner.”

Rivett noted, “If you think of the territorial agreement in terms of a train, KAMP Hotels is really the engine that is getting it started; that’s maintaining momentum; and that’s continually increasing momentum by developing properties and by growing relationships with networks of other hoteliers, developers and business people that may find the hotel business a good opportunity to get into.” HB