

# Yesterday & Today: Hiway House



At left: the original Hiway House Restaurant on the southeast corner of 107th and Grand avenues as it appeared in the 1960s. The buildings that once were the Hiway House Restaurant and Hotel were torn down in 1989 to make way for a shopping center. A Kentucky Fried Chicken now stands at the location where the Hiway House once existed.

## Sun City's first restaurant welcomed early visitors

When Sun City opened to the public on Jan. 1, 1960, initial visitors were greeted by an elaborate water fountain, five model homes, a recreation center, golf course, shopping center and a restaurant.

Oddly enough, the Hiway House restaurant was arguably the most familiar name recognized by visitors to the new community on that New Year's Day more than 60 years ago. Today, the name Sun City is known throughout the world while the Hiway House has been lost to history.

Most people think of Del Webb as a famous builder and one-time owner of the New York Yankees, but he was also involved in the hospitality business. In addition to his hotels in Las Vegas, Webb also owned a string of motels throughout the Southwest.

The Hiway House chain of motor hotels and restaurants thrived during the 1950s, a time when creation of the nation's vast interstate highway system provided families enhanced freedom to explore the country by automobile.

It was only natural for Del Webb to include one of his hotels in the new retirement community. The Hiway House, located on the southeast corner of 107th and Grand avenues, would for many years be the com-

munity's most popular restaurant and coffee house. The property would also include a hotel, swimming pool and eventually be surrounded by the company's vacation apartments.

For many of the community's earliest residents, the Hiway House was a temporary residence until construction of their home was completed.

A visitor to the coffee shop – The Coffee Brake – in 1961 could get a cup of coffee for 10 cents and a hamburger for 65 cents. The most expensive thing on the menu was broiled filet mignon for \$2.45.

The Webb Corporation divested itself from the hotel business in the 1960s, and the restaurant and hotel eventually changed owners. The name was changed to the King's Inn Restaurant and Hotel.

The entire complex – restaurant, hotel and apartments – was torn down in 1989 to make way for a shopping center. The shopping center is still called King's Inn Center and today is home to a Fry's Grocery Store and several other small businesses.

A Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise is located where the restaurant originally stood.

A few items from the King's Inn Restaurant – dishes and furniture – can be seen on display at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.