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John Fannin, president of SafePlace Corp. in Wilmington, will appear on "Dateline NBC" tonight

DEL. COMPANY HELPS KEEP PLACES SAFE

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Staff reporter

Are you in harm's way when you're staying in a hotel?

John C. Fannin III, president and chief executive of Wilmington-based SafePlace Corp., is scheduled to appear on "Dateline NBC" tonight to address that issue. He was tapped to speak about how the public can guard against hotel crime, among other things.

Fannin's company, which he started in 1993, accredits lodging, health care and education facilities, assisted-living communities, commercial buildings and other places. Accreditation is based primarily on security, fire protection, and health and life-safety provisions of certain nationally recognized codes and standards.

In hotels, SafePlace evaluates things such as the use of key cards, self-closing doors, smoke detectors and sprinklers in guest rooms, water quality and safe-work practices among the hotel staff. So far, only two hotels have received accreditation: the Hotel Monteleone in New Orleans and the Hotel Sagamore in Bolton Landing, N.Y.

Pam Hague, marketing manager for the company, said hundreds more hotels are in the process of getting accreditation. She said that since the war in Iraq began, the company has received more calls from meeting and event planners, as well as corporate travel managers, who say they're concerned for the safety of their clients and employees who are staying at hotels. Some have asked SafePlace to approach the hotels about becoming accredited, Hague said.

SafePlace has six employees at its Wilmington location, and contracts with about 105 independent engineers to perform the on-site surveys around the country.