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Second Homeowners' Minds At Ease

By Meredith Sanger-Katz

Connected Hearth, an online service that will launch on July 1, gives homeowners the ability to monitor and control their homes via the Internet. For many East End vacationers, this service means an end to worrying about their second home and the start of really enjoying it.

Subscribers can check and control the thermostat, monitor their emergency and security systems, view the house using cameras, adjust lighting, and access a number of other features using their online account with the website, connectedhearth.com.

Creator and second homeowner, John Thorsen, Jr., believes his service will provide second homeowners with, "a great deal of peace of mind to monitor and control" household functions. Instead of driving home to double check that the stove is off, subscribers can log onto their password-protected account to make adjustments. Subscribers can change a single feature such as the lighting, or program a group of commands to prepare their home for arrival. The click of a single button can trigger into action a sequence of events from their primary residence or anywhere else in the world with Internet access. These sequences can be programmed to do almost anything, such as turn on the air conditioning, turn the pool heater up, and turn on porch lights. Additionally, the website offers "emergency event notification." The service checks for fire, leaks, or breaches in security every 60 seconds. The homeowner will be notified immediately if any of the conditions are worrisome via e-mail, cellular phone, or pager.

In addition to minimizing the moment of anxiety, many homeowners feel when driving up to their weekend home after being away for days or weeks. Thorsen said his product is incredibly convenient. It allows customers to perfect the luxuries of a second home, such as turning on the Jacuzzi or brewing a hot cup of coffee to be ready when they arrive.

The equipment installation is \$6000, and a basic monthly subscription to the website is \$59.95. This product is perfect for second homeowners like Thorsen himself, providing peace of mind, as well as adding luxury options to a luxury home.