

Caesars Indiana completes transformation to Horseshoe Casino

By **DANIEL SUDDEATH**

Daniel.Suddeath@newsandtribune.com

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— ELIZABETH — For the past 18 months, workers have been striving to make the transition from Caesars Indiana to Horseshoe Casino and Hotel Southern Indiana, without any strife.

The goal appeared to be accomplished Friday, when the Horseshoe brand officially staked its claim at a ribbon-cutting ceremony near the main entrance to the casino, after a \$53 million investment to upgrade the venue.

Politicians and gaming officials spoke at the event ahead of a Reba McEntire concert at Horseshoe later in the evening — all part of a day of celebration.

“We know how much Caesars meant to our guests, to our team members and to our community,” said Neal Walkoff, vice president of Horseshoe Southern Indiana.

“The partnership we’ve had with the community over the past 10 years will, of course, continue.”

The casino employs 2,000 workers, with officials saying the majority come from Southern Indiana, including 400 from Harrison County.

When Caesars was approved to locate in Elizabeth, there was anticipation and anxiety for local residents, said Harrison County Commissioners President James Goldman. One of the main selling points for allowing the casino was the funding stream that area officials banked on flowing into the community. Grants, tax revenue and jobs have all been credited to Caesars, and Goldman said they expect the same with Horseshoe.

“It has been a challenge for all of us to do the right thing with the money, and I think we’ve done a pretty good job of that,” he said.

Indiana Sen. Richard Young said the casino has been a “tremendous asset to the state of Indiana and Harrison County”. Young was a member of the General Assembly when casino legislation was approved for Indiana. State Rep. Paul Robertson, who represents Harrison County, said he anticipates Horseshoe — which is owned by Harrah’s Entertainment Inc. — will be a great partner with the county in the future, building on the relationship forged by Caesars.

“There have been many changes in Southern Indiana with the donations from the riverboat,” Robertson said. Along with infrastructure improvements in the county Robertson credits to the casino, he said Caesars’ contributions to the community include helping to fund education projects and other worthy ventures. But with the Horseshoe name now on the front of the casino and 503-room hotel, as well as the other amenities, the focus is on the future as casino officials believe they will have great success in Southern Indiana.

“Those who are familiar with Horseshoe expect great gaming action, great service and great dining experiences, and you can expect Horseshoe Southern Indiana to deliver the same,” Walkoff said.

Aroma Cafe and Bar, JB’s Cafe and Jack Binion’s Steak House are among the dining choices at the casino, along with Legends, which is still the featured bar of Horseshoe that offers live music on Friday and Saturdays. The newest entertainment venue is the ENVY Stage Bar, located on the second deck of the casino. The bar features a blackjack pit where customers can play cards while experiencing a great view of a video wall and stage.

Several gift shops and casual stores are incorporated into the casino, as is a heated indoor pool and hot tub. The casino’s first outdoor concert series began this summer to celebrate Horseshoe’s arrival. Bands and music stars such as Sheryl Crow, Montgomery Gentry and McEntire have played the venue, and more acts are still to come.

Barenaked Ladies will play tonight and Gretchen Wilson is scheduled to perform in a week.

Other bands scheduled to play this summer include Bonnie Raitt (Aug. 15), Stone Temple Pilots (Aug. 16) and Bob Dylan (Aug. 23).

For now, Chariot Run Golf Course will keep its Romanesque title, though nearly every other sign of Caesars has been removed. The address also has changed from Avenue of the Emperors to 11999 Casino Center Drive Southeast.

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Photos



Steve Cox plays a slot machine on the second deck at Horseshoe Southern Indiana Casino on Friday. Staff photo by Kevin McGloshen



New carpeting adorned with horseshoes is one of many renovations made to the casino. Staff photo by Kevin McGloshen



A large ribbon cutting ceremony was held to commemorate the renaming of Caesars into Horeshoe Southern Indiana on Friday morning. Staff photo by Kevin McGloshen