

Cincinnati's future casino at Broadway Commons has an official name: Horseshoe Casino Cincinnati. But it also has a new face: general manager Kevin Kline.

The 42-year-old comes to Cincinnati after serving as second-in-command of Horseshoe Hammond in suburban Chicago, the most lucrative casino in that region as well as the state of Indiana.

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An employee of Caesars Entertainment Corp. developer Rock Gaming's partner for 12 years, Kline is also a veteran of Las Vegas and Atlantic City casinos.

"I'm excited about the next step on the journey," he said. "We'll run a casino that makes Cincinnati proud."

Hiring permanent employees for the casino won't begin until the middle of next year. Before then, in a few months, Kline will move here to play a key role in the casino's final shape. Officials with Caesars Entertainment Corp. say the casino's designers will rely on Kline's day-to-day operations expertise in influencing the layout and look of the planned 354,000-square-foot complex.

Kline has played that role before: he oversaw the \$500 million upgrade to the Hammond casino.

When the expanded casino was unveiled in 2008, it more than doubled the casino floor and grew annual visits by 50 percent to more than 6 million.

The project entailed building a new gambling floor on a floating barge and replacing the old riverboat.

It was not a renovation it was a complete rebuilding, he said.

We didnt want anything to feel like an afterthought.

The final product sleek and modern especially impressed Detroit entrepreneur Dan Gilbert, who owns Rock Gaming.

It has the look and feel that reflects the hopes and tastes were striving for, Gilbert said.

The son of an Army colonel whose last job was in the Pentagon, Kline was born in Germany and attended three different high schools. He studied finance to settle down, but wound up taking a job as a financial analyst at the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City and moved over into marketing.

Then in 1999, he was offered the post as vice president of VIP marketing in corporate for Harrahs Entertainment (Caesars corporate name until last fall) before it began a string of acquisitions that transformed it into the worlds largest casino company one of those included the Caesars brand itself.

Klines first job helping run an individual casino was from 2000 to 2002, when he was vice president of casino marketing at Las Vegas Rio casino, which the company had recently bought.

Im adept at quickly feeling comfortable in new environments, he said.

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Caesars is also counting on Klines New Orleans experience to ensure the Cincinnati casino succeeds.

Opened in 1999, the New Orleans casino stumbled into bankruptcy, after struggles with the local business community, excessive taxes and regulation and overestimating revenue from tourists.

Kline said Harrahs transformed the New Orleans casino into a success in part by building bridges with the local business community and promoting other attractions in the city.

Kline was vice president of casino marketing in New Orleans from 2002 to 2005.

It was about improving the connectivity with the community, he said.

We encouraged our customers to make their visits more of a New Orleans experience.

Kline says that's a lesson that will be applied to Cincinnati. Since the 2009 casino campaign, Gilbert has pressed for a casino project that would connect with nearby businesses and help revive downtown.

Kline says he wants the casino's customer to embrace the city as he intends to. We're not building a casino to keep our customers on site we want them to experience Cincinnati, he said.

## Casino GM ready to embrace city - Cincinnati.com

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