

ATLANTIC CITY — A Mays Landing company is building a new power plant to heat, cool and energize the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa and the Water Club.

DCO Energy LLC of Hamilton Township is building an addition to the Marina Thermal Facility, the plant at 1077 Absecon Blvd. that serves the casino properties.

The facility is a brick building with green louvers that motorists can see along Route 30.

The new 7-megawatt plant, also designed by DCO, will take advantage of advanced technology — called Combined Heating, Cooling and Power — to capture the heat generated when the power plant burns natural gas to produce electricity, Project Director Dan Jones said.

“The bottom line is it will result in a less expensive and more reliable form of energy,” he said.

Atlantic City’s casino properties need so much heating, cooling and electricity that they typically are served by their own small power plants.

When these systems malfunction — as happened to the Borgata during a cold snap this year — it can be disastrous. The Borgata lost hot water and heat Feb. 2 after a water pipe ruptured between the casino hotel and the Marina Energy plant.

A similar problem befell Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino, Caesars Atlantic City, Boardwalk Hall and The Pier at Caesars on July 15 when a water pipe ruptured between those properties and the Midtown Thermal Control Center owned by Pepco Energy Systems. This caused the air conditioning to fail during a summer heat wave.

Trump Plaza was closed for two days over a busy weekend, costing the casino an estimated \$3.5 million.

The new Marina Thermal plant was designed to prevent similar catastrophes, Jones said.

“Absolutely,” he said. “It provides redundancy to generate energy on site. There is additional reliability to the overall task of providing a safe and reliable energy center.”

These off-site power plants typically serve multiple casinos, which makes more efficient use of valuable real estate, Project Manager Kyle Beebe said.

“The strength of these plants is these casino properties can manage their heating, cooling and energy needs off-site, which allows for more beneficial use within the properties themselves,” he said. “It frees up more square footage for restaurants, rooms or gambling space.”

The new plant will have an automated control system that determines which of multiple systems to use at a given time to produce air conditioning and chilled water. This helps make it eco-friendly, Beebe said.

The company estimates the heat-capture system will save 16,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year that otherwise would be produced by having to burn more natural gas to heat the casino. This is the equivalent of taking 3,000 cars off the road for a year, the company said.

Jones said the new plant will be running by early 2011. Service to the casino will not be affected during construction, which is already underway on Route 30.

The project created about 50 construction jobs, not to mention the secondary jobs for the equipment manufacturers, Beebe said.

“With Atlantic City in its current construction state, this project offers a big benefit to local trades,” Beebe said.

Borgata Hotel Casino Spa to get its own high-tech power plant - Press of Atlantic City

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