

VALLEY CENTER ---- The San Diego Sports Arena will be renamed Valley View Casino Center under an agreement approved Tuesday by the San Diego City Council.

The five-year agreement will increase Valley View Casino & Hotel's name recognition and provide its guests with access to concerts at the center, said Bruce Howard, general manager at Valley

View.

Signs with the new name will be up in November, Howard said.

"The positive benefits to us are many, with our name now in the middle of the greatest city in the world, which is what we consider San Diego," Howard said. "Exposure to our casino and our brand-new hotel, which opens on (Nov. 19), is greatly enhanced. We also have an opportunity to take our loyal guests to over 100 shows a year now."

Arena operator AEG Management SD LLC will receive about \$1.5 million over five years from the casino's owner, a subsidiary of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians. AEG, which subleases the property from San Diego, will pay the city about \$30,000 a year, plus annual "escalations," according to a city report.

More than 40 years old, the arena near Ocean Beach has historical significance to San Diego. It's been home to professional basketball, soccer and hockey teams, a venue for shows and concerts, and hosts the weekly Kobey's Swap Meet.

Performers who have appeared at the arena include Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Presley, Janis Joplin and Luciano Pavarotti. On Oct. 30, Justin Bieber is scheduled to perform.

"It's had every great star and performer play here over the years, it's centrally located, everyone knows where San Diego Sports Arena has been," said Ernie W. Hahn II, the arena's general manager. "They (Valley View) saw a chance to use that venue and help us make it better in hospitality and the experience."

AEG has put about \$3.5 million into improving the arena over the last two years, Hahn said, including a new arena club and lower-level seating.

The arena is generating more revenue, according to a city report. In 2008, revenue reached \$389,000 and in 2009 revenue rose to \$405,000. This year, revenue is expected to reach \$466,000, an increase of about 15 percent.

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