

**Casino operators look**

**back and ahead at Coast industry**

Executives at four Biloxi casinos look back at 25 years in the casino industry, how the community has benefited and what is ahead.

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The 400-acre site between the interstate and the Bay of St. Louis caught the eye of Donald Trump and several other developers, but unable to find a partner or get financing to build a casino, the owner has put the property up for sale.

Diamondhead Casino Corp. has the largest and some say the best casino site in South Mississippi. The land sits along 2 miles of shoreline on the bay and has 2 miles of frontage along Interstate 10, east of the Diamondhead exit. It would be the only Coast casino directly on I-10 and would be 30 minutes closer to Louisiana than the Biloxi casinos.

A portion of the land [won site approval](#) from the Mississippi Gaming Commission in 2014.

“The only reason we put it up for sale is we owe people money and we have to pay them,” said Deborah Vitale, Diamondhead president.

The company said [in a filing](#) with the Securities and Exchange Commission it has signed a 6-month agreement to sell all or part of the property. The contract with

[Newmark Knight Frank](#)

, an American real estate brokerage with international offices, extends through Oct. 31.

## Diamondhead Casino Corp. selling 400-acre casino site

Written by Administrator  
Tuesday, 16 April 2019 06:00 -

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Diamondhead Casino Corp. can continue to look for a partner to build a casino, Vitale said.

“Our primary focus is to find a joint venture partner,” she said. Beyond that, she said the company would prefer to sell portions of the land rather than the entire 400 acres.

The real estate experts will entertain offers rather than setting a sales price for the land, Vitale said. A recent appraisal shows the value has gone up, and she said, “We just need to get a fair price.”

Vitale envisions a large mixed-use resort with a boardwalk along the water and plenty of acres for a variety of amenities that no other casino site can offer, she said. The property is surrounded by airports at Diamondhead, Gulfport and New Orleans.

“Donald loves this property,” said Vitale, who held a [letter of agreement](#) with Trump [in 2006](#) to build a casino on 40 acres. Trump pulled out of the project a year later.

Casinos Austria International Holding also was interested in developing the site before the recession began locally in 2009.

Phoenix Gaming and Entertainment LLC later signed a letter of intent to buy 25 acres for \$1 million an acre to build a casino, but the deal ended in 2011 when Phoenix was unable to secure financing for the project.

An unrelated project in Diamondhead was denied site approval by Mississippi Gaming Commission in 2014 and again in 2017. The [2017 ruling](#) is under appeal by developer Jacobs Entertainment

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Unlike that other projects proposed on the Coast, “We have site approval and we’re still here,” Vitale said.

**Read more** <https://www.sunherald.com/news/business/casino-gambling/article229273634.html>