

After roughly year and a half of work, the Cahuilla Band of Indians thought they would be ready to celebrate the opening of their new resort property, [the Cahuilla Casino Hotel](#) , on April 2, but the spread of the novel coronavirus forced them to make other plans instead.

To protect the safety of their guests and employees they closed their original casino property on March 18 still hoping they could open the new replacement property in just a couple weeks. That didn't happen either: The tribe later announced that the opening of the new project would be postponed until further notice.

[Now the more than \\$35 million project, fully completed, will open on Wednesday, May 27.](#) A 58-room hotel, gaming floor, restaurant and gift shop will all open but with a detailed list of sanitary and safety procedures in place. People will have to have their temperatures checked at the door, wear masks and social distance. Hand sanitizer stations will be located throughout the property and surfaces everywhere will be scrubbed and sanitized regularly.

The casino's opening comes at a time where governmental leaders have taken different stances on Southern California's casinos reopening.

Gov. Gavin Newsom in a letter to tribal leaders said the risk of coronavirus transmission remains a threat and encouraged them to reconsider opening. But on Friday, [Pala Casino, Spa & Resort](#) ,
[Harrah's Resort Southern California](#)
;
[Valley View Casino & Hotel](#)
;
[Morongo Casino, Resort & Spa](#)
;
[Spotlight 29 Casino](#)
;
[Tortoise Rock Casino](#)
; and the
[Agua Caliente Casinos in Rancho Mirage and Palm Springs](#)
all reopened.

Written by Administrator
Monday, 25 May 2020 11:38 -

Melissa Asmus, director of operations for the resort, said that it's been a long two months, but casinos officials feel that now, as they're getting ready to open, they have set up a much safer environment and are doing everything they can to keep their team members, guests and members of the community safe.

"We're beyond excited," she said. "It's something we have been working on for such a long time now."

She said many of the casino's patrons feel the same way.

"Everyone from a player standpoint had watched the growth and watched the development of the property going up and we were so close to being able to open our doors to showcase the new property," Asmus said. "So the fact that we've had a couple months now that they've been waiting for this there's excitement there."

The resort completed and prepped

The resort will offer rooms ranging in size from its 645-square-foot suites to 314-square-foot deluxe king rooms. All rooms will feature LCD TVs with premium channels, coffee and tea makers and charging stations. Pictures of area landscapes and native vegetation line the walls in the rooms.

Asmus said the rooms will be cleaned rigorously after each departure and every day for guests that stay over. She said at least once weekly, a device that emits high heat will be used to sanitize the rooms.

The resort's new restaurant, Ribbonwood Grill, which features a portrait of a large ribbonwood tree — a tree native to the area — will serve up a mix of comfort food such as burgers and salads but also some seasonal and higher-end fare. Guests will enjoy those things at greater distance from one another. The restaurant's capacity will be reduced by about 50 percent to help make sure customers are properly socially distanced.

The gaming floor will open with slots, a high limit room and table games will open as well as a

Written by Administrator
Monday, 25 May 2020 11:38 -

bar that boasts 60-inch TVs playing sports games or music videos. Some chairs will be removed and some machines at the bar turned off to maintain social distancing in that area.

“The entire floor is up and running,” Asmus said. “It looks absolutely amazing. Everything is configured and in place with where it’s going to be at. All of our systems are working. The TVs are on, the music’s on, the front desk is set up, the restaurant is set up. We are ready to go.”

The old Cahuilla Casino operated in a tent-like structure for roughly 24 years and though the original plan was to take it down within a week of the new casino hotel’s opening, it has already been removed. Now workers are finishing up a walkway connecting the new property to the tribe’s convenience store and gas station, the Mountain Sky Travel Center.

There’s some space left behind by the take down of the tent-like structure and that could be where something else is potentially built or added to the resort, but Asmus says nothing has been decided for that area as yet.

“Our focus is just getting the new property up and running and welcoming our guests back,” she said. “I think down the road we’re going to look at potentially doing that.”

For now, Asmus said, some of the casino’s offices may be moved there just to keep everything in the same spot.

Another thing changed by the coronavirus is there will be no big grand opening celebration, at least for the time being.

“We’re looking to do more of a softer opening and easing into things,” she said, adding that a more opulent grand opening celebration could come in a month or two once the casino has had a chance to see where things are.

But just being able to open the long-awaited facility after a year and a half is exciting for Asmus.

Cahuilla Casino Hotel moves past coronavirus setback, gets ready to open – Press Enterprise

Written by Administrator

Monday, 25 May 2020 11:38 -

“It’s just a really beautiful new property, which I think is one of the things we’re most excited about at this point coming through this pandemic that everyone has been suffering through, is that we have the opportunity to open in a brand new facility,” she said.

Read more <https://www.pe.com/2020/05/25/cahuilla-casino-hotel-moves-past-coronavirus-setback-gets-ready-to-open/>