

Slot machine arrival marks milestone in Hempfield casino construction

Written by Administrator
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The former Bon-Ton department store at Westmoreland Mall in Hempfield is starting to look a lot like a casino.

[Live! Casino Pittsburgh](#), a \$150 million venue [owned by The Cordish Companies of Maryland](#), is slated to open before Thanksgiving with 750 slot machines and 30 table games. By Thursday, about 15 high limit slot machines were installed, flashing lights giving the space a traditional casino feel.

A handful of slot machines were being installed outside the high limit area, games such as Blazin' Gems and Triple Jackpot ready to be placed on about 15 slot machine bases arranged on the casino floor. Signs reading "Promotions," "Players club" and "Cashiers desk" shone red along the perimeter.

It's a far cry from the empty space that previously was filled with clothing and housewares.

"That's one of those benchmarks that's critical in the construction and opening process," General Manager Sean Sullivan said of the slot machines. "So, getting slot machines in here, and in our case 750 and 30 table games, is really an integral part. There's so many facets to that, that when we see this we almost have a mini celebration."

The more than 100,000-square-foot casino will consist of two floors, the first being the casino and sportsbook through a [partnership with FanDuel](#), and the second being more entertainment-based.

The second floor will be home to Sports and Social Steel City, a 445-seat restaurant and bar space, including a 45-foot television screen that can be viewed from the sports betting space downstairs. The 22,000-square-foot area has three bars under construction, along with a

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four-lane bowling alley, Skee-Ball, golf simulator, darts, basketball hoops, pingpong tables and shuffleboard. A banquet space is located on the second floor.

“We think this is going to be a really fun space,” said Brian Uran, vice president of marketing.

A fourth bar will be located on the first floor, where additional televisions will be placed for people to watch sporting events. Concepts for two areas of the casino, one upstairs and one downstairs, have not been announced.

Casino officials spent months gearing up for opening day, even though the exact date hasn't been announced. [Dealer school](#), in conjunction with Westmoreland County Community College, started in August with about 120 students. Of those students, between 60 and 70 are expected to be hired at the casino.

An additional 50 to 60 dealers with previous experience will be recruited.

A [recruitment center](#) opened in August next door to the dealer school in the Sears wing of the mall, allowing job seekers to meet with casino representatives who can answer questions and provide additional information about the more than 500 available positions. Job interviews and open houses are hosted at that facility.

Overall, the project is expected to have more than \$188 million in annual [economic impact](#), with an additional \$148 million impact from construction.

“We're really excited about what's going on in here,” Uran said.

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