

Wanna demolish a Trump casino? It'll cost you

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By Wayne Parry | Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — One of President Donald Trump's former Atlantic City casinos will be blown up next month, and for the right amount of money, you could be the one to press the button that brings it down.

The demolition of the former Trump Plaza casino will become a fundraiser to benefit the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City that the mayor hopes will raise in excess of \$1 million.

Opened in 1984, Trump's former casino was closed in 2014 and has fallen into such a state of disrepair that demolition work began earlier this year. The remainder of the structure will be dynamited on Jan. 29.

"Some of Atlantic City's iconic moments happened there, but on his way out, Donald Trump openly mocked Atlantic City, saying he made a lot of money and then got out," said Mayor Marty Small. "I wanted to use the demolition of this place to raise money for charity."

The Boys & Girls Club has hired a professional auction company to solicit bids from Thursday through Jan. 19, when the top bids will be revealed and a live auction will determine a winner. The organization provides after-school and summer recreation, education and career-training programs for Atlantic City children and teens.

Trump, then a real-estate developer, opened the casino in a prime spot at the center of Atlantic City's Boardwalk where the Atlantic City Expressway deposited cars entering the resort. It was the site of many high-profile boxing matches, which Trump would regularly attend.

It closed in 2014, one of four Atlantic City casinos to shut down that year, followed by another former Trump casino, the Taj Mahal, in 2016. That property has since reopened as the Hard Rock casino.

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The third casino Trump used to own here, Trump Marina, was sold to Texas billionaire Tilman Fertitta in 2011 and is now the Golden Nugget.

Trump cut most ties with Atlantic City in 2009 aside from a 10% fee for the use of his name on what were then three casinos in the city. That stake was extinguished when billionaire Carl Icahn took ownership of the company out of bankruptcy court in February 2016.

Trump Plaza has sat empty for six years, and has been deteriorating. Earlier this year, large pieces of the facade broke loose from one of the hotel towers and came crashing to the ground. In one storm, additional debris fell from the structure onto the Boardwalk.

Icahn owns the former Trump Plaza building, and has agreed to the demolition. Small said he is eager to discuss potential uses for the land with Icahn once the casino is gone, including some sort of family attraction.

“Not often does inner-city oceanfront land open up,” the mayor said. “We have one chance to get this right.”

The last casino implosion in Atlantic City was in Oct. 2007 when the former Sands casino was dynamited to make way for a new casino-hotel project that ultimately was never built.

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