

Baton Rouge casino makes some big renovations

Written by Administrator

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BATON ROUGE, La. (WAFB) - When casinos were first allowed in Louisiana the law only allowed for one to be on land, the Harrah's Casino in New Orleans. The others had to be on the water. But that law recently changed allowing the others to move on land if they choose to. The Hollywood Casino in downtown Baton Rouge is one of the first in the area to make the change.

"You know the property has been here for 25 years. Going land-based was something we thought would enhance the product, make it better. So, we are definitely looking forward to having some new business", said Aaron Mollura, Vice President of Hollywood Casino Marketing.

This morning the casino held its groundbreaking event debuting what they're calling "The Game Changer". They say moving to land and modernizing themselves will ensure a better experience for their customers at almost every level.

"The vessel is three stories tall it means up and down a lot of stairs, land-based is one floor, a lot easier getting in and out and obviously with a boat you're very constricted to the space you can use", said Mollura.

Sen. Ronnie Johns (R) made his first public appearance as the new chair of the gaming control board. Right now, he says he is still on a learning curve but is hoping to be proactive in the new position.

"I'm really big into communication. I think the industry is going to find me to be someone who really communicates well with them and I also want to communicate with the communities", said Sen. Johns.

Johns sat on the Senate Finance Committee for 11 years and says casinos are now the single largest source of revenue for the state budget. And now with sports betting getting ready to take effect, casinos are expected to play a big role in drawing in more crowds. And Hollywood is hoping to cash in on that.

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“Well, right where we’re standing right here is going to be a fairly large sports bar. We really think it’s going to change the demographic and make it a new vibrant property again”, Mollura explained.

It’s estimated in its first year, sports betting will rake in roughly \$30 million. A large portion of that money will go toward early childhood education.

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