

## Over 2000 visit casino on opening day - Laurel Leader Call

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 22 December 2010 10:29 -

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LAUREL — There were no traffic jams on the roads leading to the Bok Homa Casino near Sandersville Tuesday. Neither was the parking lot filled to capacity as it was during Monday's 11 a.m. grand opening event.

"That was the grand opening," said Warren Strain, communications director of the Pearl River Resort. "While we would want to continue to see those kinds of crowds, we

realize the crowd will be less after a period of time.

"The thing about Monday was people wanted to see what the casino is all about. They didn't want to read about it or hear about it from someone else. They wanted to see for themselves."

Bok Homa Casino, located on Choctaw Road in the Bogue Homa Community, is a development of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. It is listed among the features offered by the Pearl River Resort which includes Silver Star Hotel & Casino, the Golden Moon Hotel & The Arena at the Golden Moon, Dancing Rabbit Golf Club, Geysar Falls Water Theme Park and several restaurants.

The 27,000-square-foot facility features several new slot games that are the first of their kind in Mississippi, as well as the classic favorites. There are a total of 768 slot machines, electronic blackjack, electronic roulette and video poker machines in the facility that will provide 24 hour, seven-day-a-week gaming.

Influences of the Choctaw culture are present throughout the casino, from interior design to the creek footing the property. Additional amenities include fast-serve deli-style dining from Lucky's Diner and access to the Pearl River Resort Gaming Rewards card program. There is also a performance stage that will feature live entertainment on weekends.

Pearl River Resort President and CEO Maj. Gen. Paul Harvey, who along with Miko or Chief Beasley Denson was instrumental in the development of the casino, said the market is ready for expansion.

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"This property is the first venture for the MBCI outside Choctaw land in Neshoba County," added Harvey. "As many casinos are downsizing, we are in the envious position of expanding our operation."

Strain said everyone is ecstatic about the casino's successful grand opening. A tally of casino visitors showed that 2,045 people showed up on Monday. "We're still reconciling the numbers from our grave yard shift," said Strain. "We're looking at somewhere like 400. And up to 7 a.m. today (Tuesday), we had a little over 100 people."

Strain said although there were apparent traffic problems that caused some people to have to walk a distance to get to the casino, the only negative response he received was the facility was too small or there were not enough machines. Some people had to wait in line until a slot machine became available.

"I didn't mind it though," said Alexandria Matthews, who traveled from Monroe, La., to visit the casino. "It's that way at some of the other casinos I've visited too."

"I think this is a great place they have here," she added. "It was hard to find at first, but it's great."

A check of the casino's parking lot on Tuesday showed that there were a number of people visiting from other states. In addition to a number of vehicles with Louisiana license plates, there were also a number of vehicles from Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Missouri and Ohio.

"Folks are unfamiliar with the area right now," said Strain. "There was a lot of traffic because people knew only one way to get in and out."

"We are looking at ways to route the traffic so it won't be so congested," he said. "We are also looking at ways to address the parking. There is some gravel area that can be easily paved for additional parking if needed."

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