

News from Nevada

The Mirage Volcano



Gaming giants **Harrah's** and **Caesar's** have merged, making Harrah's Entertainment the world's largest, and one of Nevada's oldest, gaming enterprises. The expanded Harrah's is made up of 46 hotel-resorts located on three continents. In Nevada properties include Harrah's Las Vegas, Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino, Harrah's Laughlin, Harrah's Reno, Bill's Casino Lake Tahoe, Harrah's Lake Tahoe, Harvey's Lake Tahoe and now also includes Caesars Palace, Bally's, Flamingo and Paris in Las Vegas plus the Flamingo Laughlin.

Another growing Las Vegas company is the **MGM Mirage** group with its most recent acquisition, the Mandalay Resort Group. The company's properties include the Bellagio, MGM Grand, Mandalay Bay and

TheHotel, The Mirage, Monte Carlo, New York-New York, Luxor, Treasure Island, Excalibur and Circus-Circus. Shark's Reef at Mandalay Bay is celebrating its 5th anniversary. This predator-based aquarium is the only one of its kind in North America and has 14 exhibit areas which contain more than 2,000 dangerous creatures.

Madame Tussaud's in Las Vegas invites visitors to become celebrities. For a mere \$300,000, Tussaud's sweeps you away via first class air on a three-day spree to London. There you visit the company's main wax works where master crafters begin sculpting your life-size likeness in wax. You also have a shopping trip to pick out a wardrobe, including accessories, to dress the new-you. In about three months the finished sculpture is delivered gift-wrapped to your home.

By Elana Andersen

If this experience is a bit rich for your group members, consider having a virtual photo taken at play with various celebrities. An interactive stage sets the backdrop and tour members pose with wax figures in a round of golf with Tiger Woods, going one-on-one with Shaquille O'Neal, saddling up with John Wayne, dancing with Britney Spears or singing along with Elvis.

Elton John will appear at the Caesars Palace Coliseum Theater through 2008. The popular singer and pianist has extended his "The Red Piano" appearance contract by adding 150 shows to the schedule.

The **Nevada State Railroad Museum** in Carson City is celebrating its 25th year with special exhibits and events. In the 1870s the Virginia & Truckee Railroad hauled ore from Virginia City mines to various north-

ern Nevada mills. It completed its last run in 1955 and the VTRR is the focus of the museum's exhibits. There are several restored locomotives and cars and visitors may ride on a steam train and inspect the museum's restoration shops. The galleries have displays of artifacts, photos and other memorabilia from the mining and VTRR history. Its feature exhibit is "Tireless and Unremitting: The Chinese and Nevada's Railroads," through January 2006. These displays explore the work of Chinese immigrant laborers who helped build the Central Pacific Railroad across Nevada. Also included is a re-created Chinese woodcutters' camp.

While in Carson City visit the former landmark Lucky Spur Casino. It has reopened after 30 years as **Stew's Sportatorium**. This 1880 era building, located on the city's main street, two

blocks from the State Capitol, is now home to a large microbrewery. Observation windows offer a view of the brewery works. There is a bar and dining room decorated in a sports theme which features the owner's collection of sports celebrity jerseys and uniforms. Other services include an ice cream bar, slot machines, pool tables, darts and a gift shop.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has honored the **Historic Fourth Ward School in Virginia City** with its prestigious National Preservation Honor Award. It was built in 1876 during the Comstock era and offered many state-of-the-art amenities and innovative approaches to education. Unlike other schools of the time, the Fourth Ward School was known as a melting pot of ethnic diversity and, until its closing in 1936, served the

Historic Fourth Ward School Museum
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community's students from elementary through high school levels. It reopened as a museum in 1986 and has since been completely restored offering historical exhibits, tours and hosts various lectures and concerts.

Laughlin is alive with year-round festivals and events. Add these dates and to your 2006 calendar.

Jan. 6-12, Winter Break. A celebration for active (age) 50+ vacationers. There are ongoing activities offered including entertainment, dances, bingo, slot tournaments, cooking demonstrations, exercise classes, educational seminars, a trade show, day trips to regional attractions, golf tournaments and much more. Tickets are available to individ-



Steam engine in Carson City

ual events plus one- and 4-day all event passes.

July 4, Rockets over the River.

Independence Day is celebrated with an evening fireworks display which is best seen from the Riverwalk located at river's edge. During the day be sure and visit Laughlin's Ramada Express and attend its "American Spirit Show" which celebrates the men and women who served the country in various wars. The show is offered every hour from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. ■

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Tool Kit:

- Harrah's, www.harrahs.com
- Mandalay Bay, 702-632-4555, www.mandalaybay.com
- Nevada Commission on Tourism, www.travelnevada.com
- Madame Tussaud's, 702-862-7800, www.mtvegas.com
- Elton John tickets, 888-435-8664, www.ticketmaster.com
- Nevada State Railway Museum, 775-687-6953, www.nsrn-friends.org
- Stew's Sportatorium, 775-882-7787
- Historic Fourth Ward School, 775-847-0975, www.virginiacity-nv.org
- Laughlin Visitor Center, 800-452-8445, www.visitlaughlin.com
- Winter Break, 602-999-5749, www.winterbreak.us