

Casino Connection

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Remembering the Past...

Milestones abound in Nevada history

by **Bill Bible**



We cannot appreciate our present without understanding our past. It seems such a simple notion when stated in a short sentence, but its importance is undeniable. None of us can understand who we are as individuals without some knowledge and appreciation of our past. That is why we celebrate milestones.

Last year Las Vegas celebrated its 100th birthday, and Reno and Carson City celebrate their 140th and 150th anniversaries respectively in 2008. I tell you this because the vast majority of Nevadans today were not born or raised in Nevada and few know its rich history.

As the cover story recounts, we are coming to the end of Nevada's 75th year of "wide open" legalized gaming. If you think about it, 75 years is a relatively short period of time (and seems to become even shorter as I grow older). Since the inception of legalized gaming, Nevada's population has increased by nearly 2,700 percent—more than 31,000 people per year. The people who moved to Nevada in that period are like the American pioneers of the 19th century who settled the West. They were willing to give up the life they had to seek opportunity and a better life someplace else.

Among those 31,000 pioneers a year who bet on Nevada were many of gaming's biggest names and gaming leaders who relocated to this state seeking new opportunities. Names include Bill Harrah, Steve Wynn, Bill Boyd, Don Carano, John Ascuaga, Jackie Gaughan, Kirk Kerkorian, Benny Binion, Bill Bennett and Sheldon Adelson. The effect these gaming leaders have had on Nevada, its citizens and the growth and evolution of gaming cannot be overstated.

The hundreds of thousands of people who came to the state to gain employment in the resorts as dealers, waiters/waitresses and room attendants helped inspire a nation to not only visit Nevada, but also consider making Nevada a place to stake a claim.

The signing of the bill legalizing gaming into state law offered the rich and poor

an opportunity to make their mark in Nevada and continues to provide each and every person who is willing to work hard opportunities not found anywhere else in the United States.

The Nevada Resort Association knows members of the casino and resort family are proud of their work and the industry they contribute to every day. Understanding gaming's past and our role in continuing the successes that came before provides each of us who are lucky enough to work in the gaming and resort industries a sense of purpose, pride and direction for the next 75 years.

Please take some time and read through this issue of Casino Connection and learn a little about the industry, its people and how important they are to Nevada's past, present and future.

Bill Bible is the president of the Nevada Resort Association. Bible has a long history with the state of Nevada and the gaming industry. He has served as a controller for Nevada, the chairman of the state Gaming Control Board, and a member of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission.