

CONSTRUCTION AT DOG TRACK BEATING TIMETABLE TRI-STATE SAYS NEW HOTEL ON SCHEDULE OFFICIALS HOPE TO HAVE UNOFFICIAL OPENING OF RACETRACK'S ON-SITE RESORT IN JULY

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The owners of Tri-State Racetrack and Casino believe the new on-site hotel will be finished before the deadline set by the state.

Construction on the four-floor hotel began last June, and the owners of the racetrack said at the time the hotel would be finished by the end of this summer.

Dan Adkins, president of Hartman and Tyner, owner of the racetrack, said Monday work is expected to wrap up before the August deadline set by the state.

"We are on track," Adkins said. "I'm hoping to have an unofficial opening in July."

If the hotel isn't finished by August, Tri-State will face a doubling of its \$2.5 million licensing fee for the facility.

"I don't want to pay a \$2.5 million fine, so we are pushing to get it done," Adkins said.

Tri-State stuck to its original pledge that West Virginia labor would be used to build the new hotel. Charleston-based Agsten Construction was selected as the project's lead contractor.

Between 150-200 laborers have worked on the project over the past year, said Chief Executive Officer Carl Agsten.

The hotel will create 74 employee positions, Adkins said. More may be hired at a later date.

The hotel is designed to have a New Orleans/French-Quarter look to complement the Mardi-Gras themed casino, Adkins said.

"It's not your normal lobby type hotel," he said. "It's a themed hotel."

The hotel will offer an indoor/outdoor pool, 24-hour room service, fitness area and concierge services, he said.

Room prices will range from \$99 for a deluxe king to \$350 for a presidential suite. Players will also be able to use points from the casino to get a reduced rate, he said.

"Those rates will be a little higher on the weekends," he said.

But Adkins said there's more in store for the site. He plans to meet with other officials soon to discuss future expansions.

"We want to get it done in summer, so we can then sit down and start talking about some other new amenities we want to add," he said. "There's going to be construction work at that property for the foreseeable future."

He wouldn't elaborate further.

But thanks to good planning, Adkins said the recent harsh winter weather didn't slow down progress on the hotel.

"We started last summer with a big push to have the roof on it before winter, and it's a good thing we did," he said. "We had a very interesting winter, but we worked through that and it didn't really slow us down."

Kanawha County voters approved legislation allowing table games at the racetrack in 2007. But the legislation brought with it some stipulations.

State lawmakers gave the racetrack and three others like it the right to hold the table games elections, but only if the track agreed to build an onsite hotel with at least 150 guestrooms within three years of the vote.

Nitro Councilman Craig Matthews said he is glad to see progress is continuing unabated at the site.

"As soon as they can get it up and we can get more people into our city limits, the better," he said. "It's going to be a big plus to the city of **Nitro**."

"Any boost to the economy right now will be much appreciated," Matthews said.

TOM HINDMAN/DAILY MAIL PHOTOS

The owners of Tri-State Racetrack and Casino believe the New Orleans/French Quarter style hotel will open one month ahead of schedule. State lawmakers had set a deadline of August 2010 for the hotel to open.

Construction continues on the interior, including this mid-size suite. The hotel will feature 150 rooms, and prices will range from \$99 to \$320 for a presidential suite.

Rick Holmes, vice president of field operations for Form Tech Concrete Forms Inc., talks about plans for the color scheme for the hotel's exterior.

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