

# Some Nevada casinos still closed, some may never reopen

By [Dylan Svoboda](#) Las Vegas Review-Journal

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Despite the state's full reopening on June 1, several Nevada casinos remain closed. Some won't reopen for at least another year. Others have closed their doors for good.

As of June 1, Gov. Steve Sisolak gave Nevada the green light to remove capacity limits and social distancing requirements. Las Vegas casinos had been operating under capacity restrictions since reopening last summer. But even as masks come off, doctors administer hundreds more vaccines a day and tourists come from across the world, some gaming houses are still getting their bearings.

Off the Strip, Boyd Gaming Corp.'s Main Street Station and Eastside Cannery remain shuttered. Both properties have been closed since March 2020. Last year, Boyd Gaming executives said that Main Street Station would open sometime this year.

Spokesman David Strow said the company could not comment on recent business trends as it was nearing next month's quarterly earnings report. In March, Strow told the Review-Journal that the reopenings will depend on business volumes.

During an earnings call in April, CEO Keith Smith said that “as COVID vaccinations continue to roll out and restrictions lift, (the company) expect(s) visitation among our rated destination customers to improve.”

Others will stay closed for another six months to a year, possibly more.

This month, Station Casinos’ Texas Station and Fiesta Rancho casinos placed their “non-restricted gaming, non-restricted gaming liquor and full liquor off-sale business licenses” on hold for the second year in a row — through June 4, 2022 — citing the state’s “uncertain economic conditions.” The licenses can be placed on hold for a maximum of two consecutive years.

The two North Las Vegas casinos’ sibling casino, Fiesta Henderson on Lake Mead Parkway, also remains temporarily closed. The Henderson casino received approval from City Council in May to maintain its nonoperational status until the end of the year. Since COVID-19 restrictions have been relaxed, Station Casinos has reopened Boulder Station, Sunset Station, Santa Fe Station, Palace Station, Wildfire Gaming, Green Valley Ranch and Red Rock Resort.

Palms, which was bought from Red Rock Resorts by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for \$650 million in May, remains closed, according to the casino’s website. A call to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians was not returned. Cal-Nev-Ari Casino and Bar remained open during the day but only because it also operates as a post office. Cal-Nev-Ari reopened its bar April 1, but its gaming area remains closed.

## **‘Solidly on the way’**

Brendan Bussmann, director of government affairs for Las Vegas-based Global Market Advisors, said the casino shutdowns were part of the long recovery process for the region’s entertainment industry.

“Gaming is returning at a different pace in different markets,” he said. “Things that have remained shuttered, either it’s because they weren’t necessarily profitable or demand in that area hasn’t returned to the level that would allow them to open, from the operator’s point of view.”

Bussmann added that the state’s largest industry is still a notch or two away from full recovery.

“At this point, we’re solidly on the way to recovery,” Bussmann said. “And I say that not only for Las Vegas but also for the regional market. I think the critical next step is the return of meetings and conventions. The third step is going to be the international visitors.”

## **Northern Nevada casualties**

Some other casinos won’t be coming back at all. In Northern Nevada, two casinos shut their doors for good last year.

Harrah’s Reno, whose owner, Caesars Entertainment Inc., had announced plans to sell to Las Vegas developer Chris Beavor, founder of CAI Investments, for \$50 million in January 2020, shuttered in the early days of the pandemic. Lakeside Inn and Casino in Stateline, shut its doors for good in 2020.

Despite lingering difficulties, the most recent data from the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority show that the valley's tourism industry is improving as the weather heats up and the pandemic wanes.

Visitation to Southern Nevada in April was the highest it has been since pre-COVID-19. That month, Southern Nevada welcomed more than 2.5 million visitors, which was up more than 15 percent month over month. Hotel occupancy increased to more than 65 percent, with weekend hotel occupancy improving to 83.5 percent.

Still, Las Vegas is far from a full recovery after a pandemic plagued the area for 15 months. Visitation was down in April roughly 27 percent vs. pre-COVID levels in April 2019.

## **Situation looking up for some**

That slight improvement in April has started to show in some of Nevada's smaller casinos. In mid-March 2021, 13 Nevada casinos were still closed. Since then, two have reopened.

After more than a year of closure, the former Eldorado Casino reopened on April 1 as The Pass. The former Eldorado, then owned by Boyd Gaming Corp., closed in March 2020 because of the pandemic. Boyd Gaming sold Eldorado to Joe DeSimone in December 2020.

The Pass' new ownership group, DeSimone Gaming, spent \$7 million renovate the previously slots-only casino, offering new restaurants, a new sportsbook, gaming machines, table games, an event space and two bars.

And The Pass isn't the only casino to return after a year-plus hiatus. Say When Casino in tiny McDermitt, which sits on the Oregon border, brought back its casino and bar in mid-April, according to the business' Facebook account.

After being sold early in the pandemic, the Siegel Slots and Suites apartment complex's casino will reopen and rebrand as Dotty's in the coming months, according to Siegel spokesman Michael Crandall.

DeSimone said Monday that the first two-and-a-half months have gone well at his rebranded and remodeled casino. "We're constructively and organically building business, and we're having no shortage of customers," DeSimone said. "It's about as busy as expected, but we see that increasing as things continue to open up."

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