

Trump Casino buyer may be good for business-Taubman

Las Vegas (Reuters) – New owners of Trump Entertainment Resorts Inc. could help Atlantic City, the New Jersey casino town, if they upgrade the properties and generate more business for the area, the head of luxury mall owner Taubman Centers said on Monday.

Taubman Centers has a shopping mall close to the Trump Plaza casino in the seaside resort town.

„Anything that simplifies the structure will allow significant reinvestment to occur, and that is the key because any reinvestment in that asset will show tremendous return,“ Taubman Chief Executive Officer Robert Taubman told Reuters.

The surrounding businesses would also benefit from spruced up casinos, he said while at the International Council of Shopping Centers annual Las Vegas convention.

Taubman Centers raised its stake last month to 77.5 percent of The Pier Shops at Caesars, a 303,000 square-foot retail center jutting out off the boardwalk in Atlantic City.

The complex, which includes restaurants and a soon-to-open wedding center, is being leased. With 90 percent occupancy, it is in the top third of producers among Taubman’s portfolio of high-end retail centers. The Pier Shops has been open less than a year, and has not yet experienced the summer tourist season, Taubman said.

„We wanted to own more of the project since the day we were associated it,“ he said. Taubman originally had a 30 percent stake in 2005.

The Gordon Group Holdings of Greenwich, Connecticut, the

project's developer, owns the rest.

The Pier Shops complex is close to Trump Plaza, owned by Trump Entertainment, which last week said it received conditional indications of interest from parties proposing to acquire the company.

In March, Trump Entertainment, which operates three casinos in Atlantic City and posted a net loss of USD 8.1 million in the first quarter, hired Merrill Lynch to help evaluate strategic corporate options.

Trump is heavily exposed to Atlantic City – the second-largest U.S. gambling market. But the oceanside gaming town faces challenges from new competition in nearby Pennsylvania.