

Stratosphere and Las Vegas Union workers reach a tentative pact

Unions representing about 1,200 workers at the Stratosphere hotel-casino reached a tentative labor contract with management over the weekend and plan to hold a vote on the deal Saturday.

The agreement involving Culinary Workers Union Local 226 and Bartenders Union Local 165 is the latest in a series of contract agreements reached with Las Vegas Strip employers in the last several months. Union negotiator D. Taylor, the Culinary Union's secretary-treasurer, said the Stratosphere deal protected the „Las Vegas dream“ for workers.

The unions agreed last month to a five-year contract covering 21,000 workers at properties owned by MGM Mirage and agreed in June to a deal covering 15,000 workers at properties owned by Harrah's Entertainment Inc. Union members also ratified a new contract last month with the Riviera hotel-casino.

The Culinary Union's 60,000 members include hotel and casino workers, as well as employees at McCarran International Airport and at industrial laundry facilities throughout Las Vegas.

Almost 10,000 union members continue to work under extensions while negotiators work on new contracts with smaller casinos on the Strip and downtown. A strike authorization vote is set for Wednesday.

Stratosphere owner American Casino & Entertainment Properties LLC is seeking approval from Nevada regulators for the sale of the iconic casino and tower, plus other properties, to Whitehall Street Real Estate Fund for us\$ 1.3 billion.