

Harrah's to open new casino hotel tower in Atlantic City

This gambling mecca's tallest building is now attached to a major casino. The new 960-room, 44-story Waterfront Tower debuted yesterday at Harrah's Marina casino in the Marina District. It is the first among a wave of new casino hotel towers opening this year in Atlantic City.

New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine and Harrah's Entertainment chairman and CEO Gary Loveman participated at the ribbon cutting ceremony. The Waterfront Tower represents the final phase of a USD 550 million expansion at Harrah's Marina. At 525 feet, it becomes Atlantic City's tallest building, and the second tallest structure in the state. It also increases Harrah's Marina's hotel room capacity by nearly 60 percent, to 2,590 guest rooms and suites.

„The aggressive expansion of our landmark marina property has transformed Harrah's Resort Atlantic City from a traditional day-trip property into a magnetic regional destination resort with luxury amenities,“ said R. Scott Barber, senior vice president and general manager of Harrah's Marina.

Two other hotels – the Borgata's USD 400 million, 800-room Water Club tower and a USD 255 million, 786-room tower at the Trump Taj Mahal – will open in the summer. The new towers represent a critical step in Atlantic City's metamorphosis into an overnight destination with fine restaurants, upscale shopping and fancy hotels, in addition to gaming.

For the last four years, Atlantic City has gradually weaned itself off a less profitable day-tripper clientele, which new slots parlors in Pennsylvania and New York are now aggressively courting.