

Prairie's Edge Casino Resort hits 'refresh' with smoke-free expansion

Written by Administrator
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This Monday it celebrates the grand opening of a new 22,000-square-foot addition that is completely smoke-free. Although joined to the main casino, convention center and hotel, the new addition has its own heating, cooling and ventilation system, and it is separated from the main facility by its own doors.

It's believed to be the largest no-smoking area with an exclusive ventilation system in a Minnesota casino, according to Eric Preuss, marketing director for Prairie's Edge.

"This is a completely unique environment," said Barry Joannides, general manager, as he and Preuss led reporters on a tour of the new addition Friday. "It truly is clean air. You will notice the difference between the two spaces."

The two-story addition represents a \$4.7 million investment in new construction by the Upper Sioux Community, owner and operator of Prairie's Edge Casino Resort. It is the first major expansion at the facility since 2011.

Prairie's Edge Casino Resort nearly doubled in size in 2011 with a \$14 million expansion. That project doubled the number of hotel rooms, developed a large banquet and convention center, and provided the space for over 1,000 gaming machines.

Like many casinos, Prairie's Edge has offered a separate, non-smoking area for customers for a number of years as part of the main casino. Joannides said the non-smoking area continued to grow in popularity, leading to the decision to develop the new area with its own ventilation system. It's hoped the fresh-air facility will attract new customers and bring people from greater distances.

Joannides said that planning for the new addition also led to a decision to "make it a complete experience." Along with adding space for gaming machines, the new addition holds a taproom known as the Prairie Tap Room, a dining area known as the Prairie Cafe, and an outdoor patio called the Sunset Lounge and Patio.

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The new area also offers a stage and a high-resolution video screen about the size of a small truck, measuring more than 8 feet by 14 feet. The screen will feature Twins and Vikings games, and can be divided into four screens for simultaneous viewing of as many games.

The smoke-free area holds 150 gaming machines, which helps assure the greater variety of games that many patrons want, according to Joannides. There is ample room to add more machines in the fresh-air section in the future, he added.

The addition also includes a new kitchen. Its development was needed due to continued growth in the banquet and convention center, he said.

All told, the expansion means that Prairie's Edge Casino Resort includes 160,000 square feet of interior space. It also offers an RV camping park and gasoline and convenience store on the grounds.

Gaming represents just over 90 percent of total revenues for the operations, but there is also continued growth in non-gaming activities, according to Preuss and Joannides. Joannides said he would not be surprised to see an expansion to the hotel in a few years' time based on current use trends.

Prairie's Edge Casino Resort is one of the area's largest employers with a staff ranging from 330 to 350, according to Joannides. The new addition is creating 12 new positions.

Miller Architects and Builders, St. Cloud, designed and served as general contractor for the new addition.

Read more <https://www.wctrib.com/business/restaurants-and-bars/4629113-prairies-edge-casino-resort-hits-refresh-smoke-free-expansion>