

Thunder Valley's upgrades designed to challenge Tahoe-Reno

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

C.J. Graham is a master multitasker. With less than a week to go before the Thursday grand opening of Thunder Valley Casino's new hotel, spa and expanded gaming area, there is no time for otherwise.

He and the tribal owners have high hopes for Thunder Valley. The United Auburn Indian Community – with Graham as general manager – wants to transform the casino and surrounding amenities from a regional draw to a luxury resort that can compete with Lake Tahoe, Reno and even Las Vegas.

"I could drop this in the middle of the Las Vegas strip and compete with anyone," Graham said.

Graham and casino owners want to persuade Bay Area gamblers to forgo a plane flight to Las Vegas or the drive to Reno or Lake Tahoe and spend their time and money at Thunder Valley.

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