

Nevada needs to focus on economic diversity

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Economic development and diversification in Nevada have for decades been largely ineffective.

The problem over the past decade is that for every nongaming job created by economic development initiatives, dozens more jobs in the gaming industry were created with the opening of megaresorts such as Wynn Las Vegas, Encore, Palazzo and CityCenter.

State statistics show that despite all the talk and money spent on economic diversification in Nevada, the economy is less diversified as gaming's domination has actually grown.

About 305,000 Nevadans were employed in the leisure and hospitality sector through May – equaling 27.2 percent of the state's 1.123 million jobs.

With the near-decimation of the construction and real estate development industries, that percentage is up from 26.4 percent of the state's workers employed in leisure and hospitality in May 2006.

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