

National Auto Museum honors Bill Harrah's centennial

By Mel Shields, Sacramento Bee

As we near the centennial of the birth of William Fisk Harrah (1911-1978), Reno should be the site of several commemorative celebrations.



Nothing yet out of his first hotel, Harrah's Reno, but the National Automobile Museum is honoring him with a "Bill Harrah Legendary Collection" exhibition through Dec. 11, 2011.

In fact, the entire museum is based on the Harrah Automobile Collection, which was broken up and mostly sold off after his death. Harrah owned 1,400 automobiles in what has been called the largest and most historically significant collection in history.

These days, most visitors pay little attention to the museum's subtitle, The Bill Harrah Collection, and it's about time to remind them, or educate them, as to the man himself.

This exhibit hardly does him justice – a few showcases of memorabilia, some explanatory and educational posters, some showgirl outfits, and a stunning centerpiece, a 1933 Duesenberg originally owned by Tahoe's George Whittell – but it is a good introduction to Harrah and his legacy, as is the film, running on the hour, which accompanies it.

Read the whole story