

Former Caesars Tahoe exec returns to Vegas after stint in Reno

By Bill O'Driscoll, Reno-Gazette-Journal

Larry Woolf's five-year run operating the casino inside Reno's Grand Sierra Resort will be over on Monday.

The long-time gaming executive, whose formative years are tied to such legends as Bill Harrah and John Ascuaga, will head back to his Las Vegas headquarters of Navegante Group, the casino management firm he's owned and operated since the mid-1990s.

The Grand Sierra's new owner, The Meruelo Group, has hired another veteran gamer, Tony Santo, whose Santo Gaming firm already manages the hotel, to take on the casino, too.

Woolf magnanimously acknowledges the change, saying, "It's best to run a hotel and casino as one unit."

But even the competitor in a hotly competitive market, Woolf also points to his success in growing casino revenue last year at the 2,000-room hotel, opened in 1978 as the MGM Grand-Reno, while the overall Reno-Sparks market sputtered.

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