

David Walley's hangs on to celebrate 150 years in business

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

David Walley's Hot Springs Resort, which dates back to when Nevada was a territory, was on the brink of fading into history.

The Carson Valley property, built in 1862, was near closure two years ago. The restaurant was closed, the property was in disrepair and time share fees weren't paid.

In 2010, Pat Joyce, founder and CEO of Branson, Mo.-based Summer Winds Resort, and his partners stepped in to buy the troubled property as a favor to their lender, Bank of America.

"They came to us and asked if we would have any interest in the property," Joyce said. "Me and my partners flew out there and looked at it. We walked through the property, and we could see some potential there."

Summer Winds officials said it was a good fit within its vacation ownership portfolio because of the variety of outdoor activities nearby.

"Right now in the resort and vacation business, people are driven more by amenities and by active lifestyle-type choices," he said. "That's why the Genoa and Lake Tahoe area is attractive to us because the type of customers that are interested in our resorts are normally people who are middle or upper-middle class folks (who are active)."

So far, the company has invested millions to renovate the restaurant into a fine dining experience and update resort amenities. More money will be spent on the famed outdoor

mineral pools and the spa to bring the resort back as a first-class health spa destination.

On Saturday, the resort will celebrate its 150th anniversary with a barbecue and free concert. In September, it will honor the history of the area with re-enactments open to schools and the public.

“(Walley’s) has had a high profile over 150 years,” said Guy Rocha, former Nevada state archivist. “It has had its ups and downs, but when you look at all (the area hot springs), I would say the hot springs resort emerges as the premier resort.”

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