

Nevada not a sure bet for Obama

By Mitchell Landsberg, Los Angeles Times

RENO – Women are bowling in the middle of a downtown street. Men are climbing the sides of a high-rise hotel. As necks crane and bowling balls skitter into pins, a loudspeaker blares Bruce Springsteen’s “Glory Days.”

There is, it would seem, almost nothing this town wouldn’t do to revive a moribund gambling economy and bring back its glory days. For decades, casinos were the golden key to prosperity, luring in tourists, cranking out jobs around the clock and flooding the state treasury with a perpetual stream of cash.

Those days are over, and all the outdoor bowling championships and climbing walls installed to attract visitors probably won’t change that. The local economy is in shambles, done in by the double whammy of the national recession and the rise of Indian casinos in California. Unemployment is rampant.

That presents a serious challenge to President Obama as he tries to repeat his 2008 victory in Nevada, a key swing state then and now.

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