

N. Nevada casinos remember Elvis on his birthday

By Mel Shields, Sacramento Bee

In July 1971, huge letters atop the Sahara Tahoe (now the Horizon) announced Elvis Presley's first Northern Nevada engagement.

It cost \$15 plus tax to see the show. He would play the High Sierra Theater at the hotel several more times until his last date in May 1976, each visit prompting huge press and long lines, along with increasing prices.

In 1973 he donated money to Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake Tahoe for its new intensive care unit (now named for his mother, Gladys); five days after doing so he was admitted with the flu and had to cancel his remaining concerts.

It has become traditional in the past few years for casinos to celebrate the King's birthday (his 78th would have been Monday) during the post-holiday slump. Impersonators are booked practically everywhere to celebrate the man who entered the Nevada showroom market and changed it forever. Plenty of stars had played the rooms before his first concerts at the Vegas International, but Elvis made every appearance an event.

- The Silver Legacy hosts "Elvis and Friends" tonight with a series of parties. Johnny Baron (a veteran of "Legends in Concert") performs as Elvis at 8pm in the coincidentally named Silver Baron Lounge.

- Another "Legends in Concert" Elvis-impersonating alum plays the Jackson Rancheria on Sunday. Johnny Fortuno got his start playing with Don Ho in Hawaii but moved on to master Elvis, winning Vegas' Ultimate Elvis Competition in 2011. He will be joined by members of the Stamps Quartet (backers of Elvis from

1972-77).

- Brian Andrews (once an "American Superstars" regular) performs as Elvis in the cabaret of the Carson Valley Inn through Jan. 12.