

Leisure, hospitality employment growing in Nev.

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Next year, the number of people employed in Nevada's leisure and hospitality sector could return to the highest level it had reached before the recession hit.

Since falling to a low point of slightly fewer than 304,000 employees in November 2009, the state's leisure and hospitality labor force has rebounded back to 335,500 people in July of this year, data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show. Leisure and hospitality employees include casino, hotel, restaurant, nightlife and entertainment workers.

July's level is only 7,100 jobs lower than the sector's peak of 342,600 workers in December 2007. If employment grows at the current rate, the sector should close that gap in the second half of 2015.

"Basically, because the recession impacted consumer spending and disposable incomes so much, that sector was very hard hit. We've turned a corner, and we've been adding jobs the past couple of years," said Bill Anderson, chief economist for the research and analysis bureau at the state Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation. "We think that reaching the pre-recessionary peak is in sight."

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