

Herbst Approved to Buy Primm Casinos

Las Vegas (AP) – Herbst Gaming Inc. won approval Thursday from gambling regulators to acquire three casinos on the Nevada-California state line from MGM Mirage Inc.

Herbst chief executive Ed Herbst said the company planned to introduce its Terrible's brand to the properties at Primm while keeping their current identities, Buffalo Bill's, Primm Valley and Whiskey Pete's.

Primm, about 40 miles south of Las Vegas, is the first gambling stop for southern California motorists entering Nevada along Interstate 15.

„The Terrible's brand will be introduced right away with signage,“ Herbst said after the Nevada Gaming Commission meeting. „That I-15 value-conscious person will become Terrible-ized.“

Herbst plans to spend up to \$ 45 million on capital expenditures this year, mostly to upgrade slot machines at the Primm properties, introduce signs and upgrade Sands Regent properties it acquired in northern Nevada.

Herbst will spend \$ 400 million to buy the Primm properties, after spending \$ 148 million to acquire the Sands Regent properties, which include the Sands Regency in downtown Reno, Gold Ranch in Verdi, Rail City in Sparks and The Depot in Dayton.

The Primm casinos deal is expected to be completed next month.

The Whiskey Pete's, Primm Valley and Buffalo Bill's hotel-casinos have 2,644 guest rooms and 136,000 square feet of casino space. Three gas station-convenience stores and a mini-

market are included in the deal.

The company also said it was negotiating with MGM on a deal to manage the Tom Fazio-designed Primm Valley Golf Club, and include it in marketing travel packages.