

The background is a solid teal color. It features a faint, repeating pattern of casino-related elements: stacks of coins, four-pointed stars, and the words 'LAS VEGAS' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The text 'las vegas' is positioned in the lower right quadrant, with 'las' in a smaller font size than 'vegas'.

las vegas

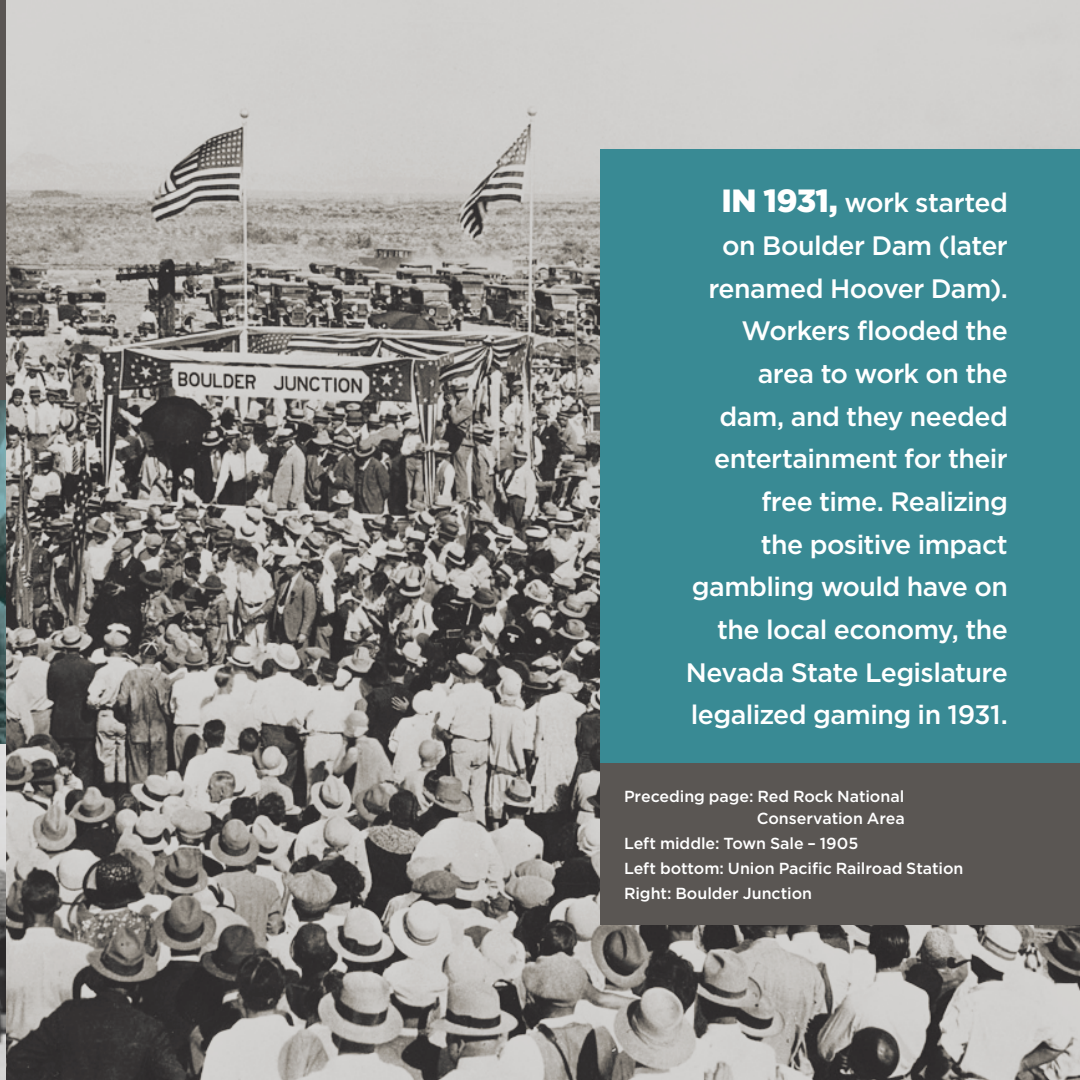
A HISTORY OF THE LAS VEGAS CONVENTION AND VISITORS AUTHORITY



AS THE 20TH CENTURY DAWNED,

Las Vegas was a dusty spot in the desert. The area was largely agricultural, and most visitors were traders who had dealings with area ranchers. Wanting to grow the town, area leaders found a way to pipe well water into the town. Las Vegas soon became a safe water stop for wagon trains heading through the area.

IN MAY 1905, the city of Las Vegas was officially founded. More importantly, however, the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad was completed. Providing a direct link between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, the railroad also sparked the growing Las Vegas economy.



IN 1931, work started on Boulder Dam (later renamed Hoover Dam). Workers flooded the area to work on the dam, and they needed entertainment for their free time. Realizing the positive impact gambling would have on the local economy, the Nevada State Legislature legalized gaming in 1931.

Preceding page: Red Rock National Conservation Area

Left middle: Town Sale - 1905

Left bottom: Union Pacific Railroad Station

Right: Boulder Junction



Above: Hoover Dam construction / Next page left: Hoover Dam construction / Right: Hoover Dam, 1930s / Bottom: Downtown Las Vegas, 1947

TWO CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE 1930s HELPED CHANGE THE PERCEPTION OF LAS VEGAS AS A DUSTY RAILROAD STOPOVER TO A VACATION DESTINATION:

THE BOULDER DAM AND A HIGH-PROFILE HOLLYWOOD DIVORCE.



During the Great Depression, construction workers erected one of the greatest engineering works in history. Completed under budget and ahead of schedule in 1935, the dam created a steady stream of travelers, which was a windfall to area businesses.

A few years later, actress Ria Langham propelled Las Vegas and its recreational activities into the national spotlight with her divorce to matinee idol Clark Gable. While staying in town for the six weeks that was required to establish residency, she played in the casinos, cruised on Lake Mead, and went horseback riding while talking freely to the news media about Hollywood and her famous husband.



THE POST-WAR YEARS

THE 1940s brought World War II and focus turned to the battle overseas. But after the Allied victory, business owners were eager to recapture the attention of tourists. They decided they could capitalize on the appeal of Nevada's indoor and outdoor recreation, and its liberal marriage and divorce laws that had piqued interest in the prior decade.

The Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce took the lead and rallied businesses to take the first real step toward promoting Las Vegas as a leisure travel destination. With \$84,000 in contributions from its members, the chamber hired a national advertising agency and launched a successful publicity campaign. Born of these efforts were Vegas Vic, who served as Las Vegas' spokesman in advertising campaigns, and the Las Vegas News Bureau.



1950s

THE 1950s brought the growth of the hotel and casino industry, and Las Vegas offered glamorous shows and Hollywood stars, buffets and games of chance.





From left: Patrons lounging poolside at the Flamingo / El Rancho Dice Girls / Lena Horne at the Sands / Frank Sinatra at the Sands / Far right: Convention Center groundbreaking

WHILE TOURISTS CROWDED

hotel pools, showrooms and casinos on weekends, on Monday, the playground reverted to a sleepy little burg. Town leaders knew they needed something more to keep Las Vegas' economy flourishing.

LVCVA MISSION:

IN 1955, the state legislature formed the Clark County Fair and Recreation Board and charged it with developing a plan to draw visitors during the slow weekday periods when Las Vegas seemed to shut down.

Visionary elected officials determined that developing Las Vegas as a destination for conventions was the answer.

However, it was not a popular idea. “It would cost too much,” said critics. It was too far from town. No one would bring a convention to Las Vegas.

“It was going to be the biggest white elephant,” says Lorraine Hunt-Bono (LVCVA 1993–99), *“and the taxpayers were going to have to bear the burden of the cost of this horrendous mistake.”*

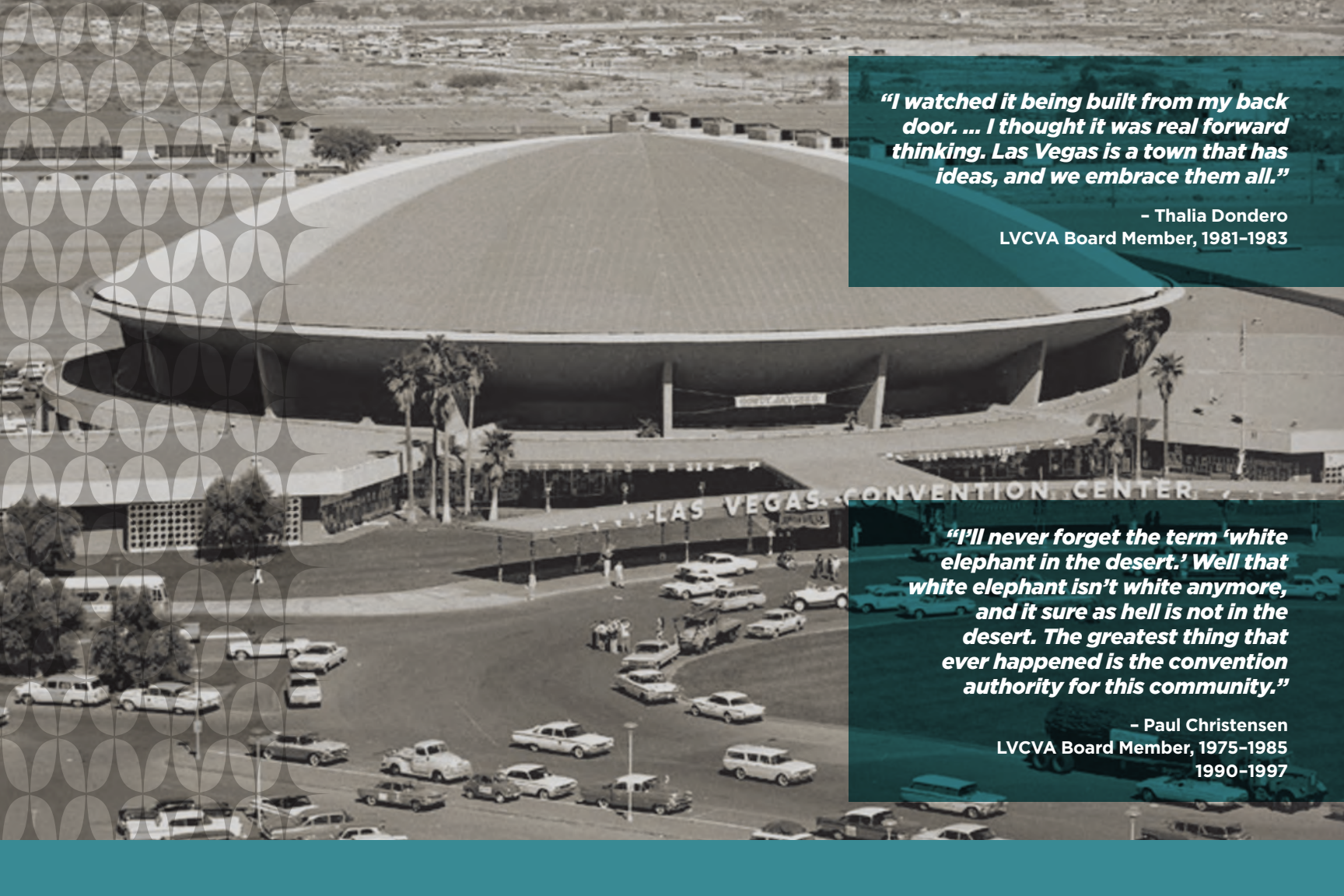
Convinced that convention business was crucial to the growth of the city, leaders lobbied the Nevada State Legislature for funding. In 1955, the State Legislature agreed to finance the construction of the Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC) with moneys collected from a room tax levied on hotel and motel properties in Clark County. Room tax revenue also created the Clark County Fair and Recreation Board to operate the convention center and begin a program of destination marketing.

**TO ATTRACT VISITORS BY
PROMOTING LAS VEGAS AS THE
WORLD’S MOST DESIRABLE
DESTINATION FOR LEISURE
AND BUSINESS TRAVEL.**



“Everybody wanted a convention center but nobody wanted to pay for it.”

**– George “Bud” Albright,
LVCC Executive Director, 1959–1967**



“I watched it being built from my back door. ... I thought it was real forward thinking. Las Vegas is a town that has ideas, and we embrace them all.”

**- Thalia Dondero
LVCVA Board Member, 1981-1983**

“I’ll never forget the term ‘white elephant in the desert.’ Well that white elephant isn’t white anymore, and it sure as hell is not in the desert. The greatest thing that ever happened is the convention authority for this community.”

**- Paul Christensen
LVCVA Board Member, 1975-1985
1990-1997**

1957



Far left: Las Vegas Convention Center / Above: Convention Center groundbreaking, 1957

In 1957, the board broke ground for the new convention center. Designed to attract business travelers, the LVCC featured a 90,000-square-foot exhibit hall and a 6,300-seat arena.



LAS VEGAS CAN BECOME WORLD MEETING CENTER



LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER

IT DEBUTED IN APRIL 1959 with the World Congress of Flight, and drew attention from international audiences, as well as local residents and visitors. Before long, the facility was booked with not only meeting and convention groups from across the globe, but became home to local sports teams and tournaments, school graduations and community events.

*Convention
Hall Awes
Its Visitors*

to the widespread interest among
through the Las

Above: Inside the Convention Center rotunda.

MORE THAN \$1 MILLION SPENT IN VEGAS

World Congress Financial Success

Last April's "World Congress of Flight" contributed more than \$1 million to the area's economy, figures released yesterday by the Las Vegas Convention Bureau disclosed.

According to the figures based on a sampling of 350 exhibitors, the convention's total receipts were approximately \$1,040,820 was spent while the Congress was in session, April 12-19.

The expenditure of each delegate, according to Kelly, was about \$10 a day more than most delegates spend at normal conventions.

Out of the 556 responses, 508 rated the Convention "excellent," 45 "good," 28 "fair," 10 "poor" and 1 "very poor."

Other categories and their "excellent," "average" and "poor" ratings were: food, 442, 154 and 44; transportation, 442, 154 and 44; and bus service, 167, 16 and 12.

A breakdown of the \$4 average daily expenditure (Continued On Page 2)



Las Vegas Convention Center made headlines with the debut of the World Congress of Flight. / Images from the Convention Center parking lots.

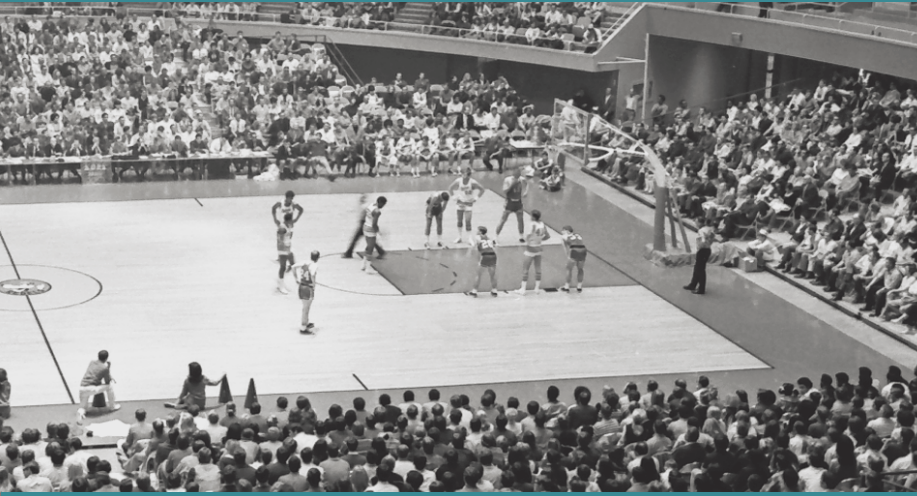
OVER THE YEARS



Left to right: U.S. President John F. Kennedy, 1963 / The Beatles, 1964 / Cassius Clay (Mohammad Ali) vs. Floyd Patterson, 1965

The Las Vegas Convention Center has been home to heavyweight boxing matches, The Beatles' only Las Vegas appearance, UNLV basketball, and a host of U.S. presidents. Large conventions such as the NAHB International Builders' Show (IBS) and Consumer Electronics Show (CES) were instrumental in putting Las Vegas on the map. Since the mid-'90s, Las Vegas has been the No. 1 convention destination in the world.

OVER THE YEARS



Left to right: UNLV Rebels / SEMA Show

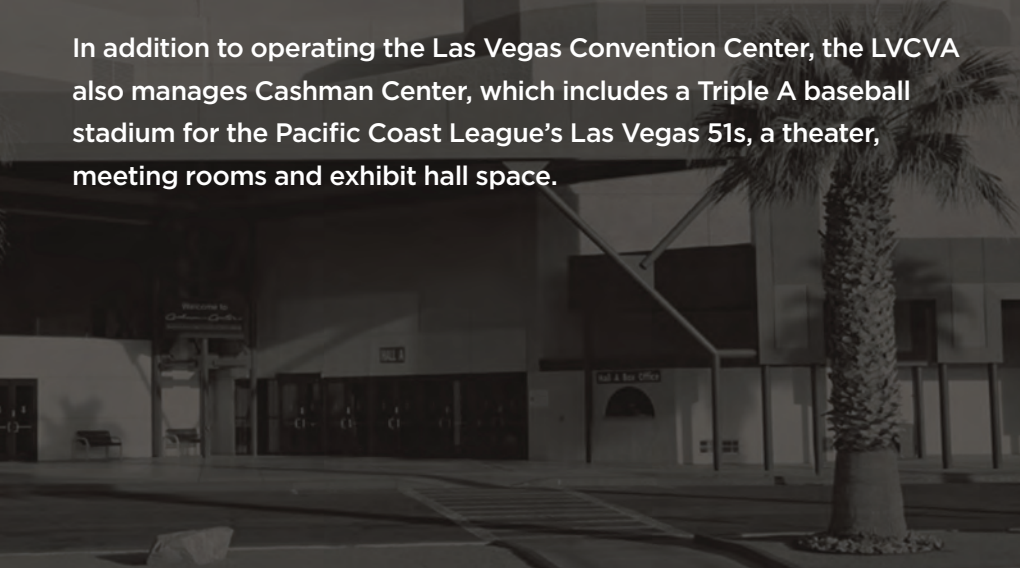


THE CLARK COUNTY FAIR AND RECREATION BOARD

evolved into the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) and today serves as the official destination marketing organization of Southern Nevada. Its mission is to promote Las Vegas as the world's most desirable destination for leisure and business travel. It provides a vital service for the public by contributing to the growth of the economy in all of Southern Nevada.

The LVCVA's marketing efforts encompass all of the hotel and motel rooms in Southern Nevada, and reach audiences around the globe.

In addition to operating the Las Vegas Convention Center, the LVCVA also manages Cashman Center, which includes a Triple A baseball stadium for the Pacific Coast League's Las Vegas 51s, a theater, meeting rooms and exhibit hall space.



TODAY

Today, the entire Southern Nevada economy is dependent on the hotel, gaming and convention industries, which employ nearly half of the county's labor force. The viability of the economy in Clark County is dependent upon the volume of visitors to the region. The LVCVA provides a vital service for the public by contributing to the growth of the economy in all of Southern Nevada.



freedom

IN THE 1990s, the LVCVA launched a campaign to market Las Vegas as more than a convention or gambling destination. Guided by extensive research, the LVCVA strategically evolved its marketing of Las Vegas to capture and convey the emotional experience Las Vegas offers and to promote the unique, liberating differentiator of “adult freedom” that Las Vegas promises.

freedom

WHAT HAPPENS HERE, STAYS HERE[®],

which showed average people doing things in Las Vegas that they wouldn't necessarily do at home, achieved widespread recognition by the advertising industry: *Brandweek's* Grand Marketer of the Year award; induction into the Madison Avenue Advertising Walk of Fame; named one of the top 10 best destination marketing campaigns ever by *Forbes*; and had an entire hit movie franchise created based on its premise in *The Hangover*. The campaign has been hailed as the most successful in the tourism industry.



BRANDWEEK

Forbes

HANGOVER

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Although a political subdivision of the state of Nevada, the LVCVA board includes elected officials and six representatives from the private sector. Clark County and the city of Las Vegas each have two representatives, while the cities of North Las Vegas, Henderson, Mesquite and Boulder City each have one seat.

Private-sector members, nominated by the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce and Nevada Resort Association, represent the hotel industry and general business interests. The LVCVA board is considered to be one of the most successful public-private partnerships in the country.

In addition to marketing Las Vegas to travelers around the world, the LVCVA also works hard to educate local elected officials, business leaders and other key decision makers on the benefits of the travel and tourism industry to Southern Nevada. Ensuring the health and vitality of the tourism industry is crucial to continuing the success of Las Vegas as a tourist destination. The LVCVA works closely with the Nevada Congressional Delegation, the U.S. Travel Association, and the Commerce Department's Travel and Tourism Advisory Board on any legislation that may impact the industry.

- ◆ Funded construction of a Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Substation on the Las Vegas Convention Center campus.
- ◆ Funds a full-time analyst for the Metropolitan Police Department at the Las Vegas Fusion Center (a multiagency crime-tracking/prevention center).
- ◆ Provided land for construction of a Clark County Fire Department.
- ◆ Works closely with the hospitality programs at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the College of Southern Nevada.
- ◆ Provides space for training and testing for local police and fire personnel, as well as teachers in the Clark County School District.
- ◆ Sponsors the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism at Valley High School.
- ◆ Produces - through the Las Vegas News Bureau - photographic exhibitions on the history of Las Vegas for display throughout libraries, museums and public spaces in Clark County.
- ◆ Established the Las Vegas Host Committee to work with local businesses to promote tourism.
- ◆ Gives (LVCVA Speakers Bureau) presentations to local groups about the impacts of the tourism industry on the community.
- ◆ Bonded \$300 million to fund Nevada Department of Transportation improvements to I-15.

PARTNERS INCLUDE:

- ◆ Las Vegas hotels
- ◆ Fremont Street Experience
- ◆ Henderson Pavilion
- ◆ Neon Museum and Boneyard
- ◆ Sam Boyd Stadium
- ◆ McCarran International Airport
- ◆ Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance to help promote economic diversity
- ◆ Greenspun Media Group Youth Forum
- ◆ Las Vegas Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and area chambers
- ◆ Las Vegas Monorail
- ◆ Regional Transportation Commission
- ◆ University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- ◆ Las Vegas Events

IT'S CRITICAL to continue investing in promoting the destination to existing and new travel markets because the health of the tourism industry translates to economic health for all of Nevada. Travel and tourism create and sustain jobs and contribute to a better quality of life for all of Southern Nevada's residents.





Las Vegas
CONVENTION CENTER

THE LVCVA SALUTES

all Southern Nevadans whose vision made Las Vegas the vital community and worldwide meeting and travel destination it is today, and those whose leadership continues to fuel Las Vegas' future success.



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Photos: Las Vegas News Bureau archives