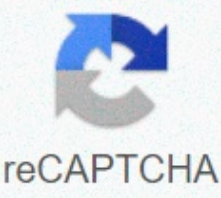




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Bear river casino reopening

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The new hours will include 9AM to 5AM, operating at 30 percent maximum capacity and smoking is prohibited. Food and beverage offers and services may initially close. To allow social estating, all other slot machines will shut down and board games will have a limited number of players. The hotel will be closed as the property will reopen its phases. Screenshot of part of the Bear River Casino resort website taken at 5:10 p.m. on May 15. Around 4:25 p.m., Bear River Casino Resort announced that they would begin reopening their business in phases. Despite a website announcing that the bear is back... with a new level of security and fun, some employees are saying privately that they are afraid to return to work and fear being fired if they refuse. Four different casino employees in the area, who tell us about the condition of anonymity, expressed concern for their safety. Most received letters telling them to show up for work early next week. We are all terrified and very opposed to these casinos reopening right now, but our feelings are being ignored, one told us. They are taking precautions, but even at the best of times any kind of disease simply breaks through the casino... There's no way of social distance, everyone's side to side, side by side. We have clients spitting on the ground. She and others expressed concerns about managing the money. I appreciate you taking extra precautions, but that just goes so far, he said. Another worried employee: We spent hours at close range with the players. There's no way you can on a black table and being six feet away [from the player]. And we're there for hours and hours. One employee from another casino stated: I think the biggest concern is taking a step ahead of the state and the County Health Officer. I'm not entirely sure how security [casinos will be launched] will be effective. I saw the interview with the County Health Officer this afternoon and your concerns are valid. Humboldt County Public Health Officer Dr. Teresa Frankovich, when asked about opening casinos before the announcement, said: We're too early on this, and ultimately there's no way around the fact that these are massive gatherings, it's a place of entertainment, and people aren't just together in large numbers , but they are together for large periods of time that extend the risk. So what I'd say is I'd be disappointed to hear that. I don't think it's time. I would clearly oppose opening casinos right now in our community, although I am happy to have ongoing discussions about when that time might be right. Most of the employees we spoke to said some version of whether we had the choice, most of them would stay home. However, they feel they don't have the choice. If we choose not to come back next week, then they tell us it's an abandonment of work and they start [unemployment], explained one. We've been trying to get job development all day. We've even called the Governor's office to see what our options are. One person told us that most of the employees there live the paycheck. She said, I don't have a cushion... what do you do if you don't have a job or unemployment?... I'd have to try to move in with my parents. One employee stated: We are more or less a hostage to this whole situation. I love my job. I don't want to lose him. But she said, she is also afraid to get sick and spread the disease to her loved ones. Another explained: I'm close to people who are immunocompromised. I have children. He was concerned about the potential to expose my children and my family to this [disease]. You don't know what might happen. A fourth employee said to us: I feel threatened... I don't have the luxury of choosing. I have to go back. If I chose not to come back, the casino said they'd tell unemployment it was quitting work. If I don't come back, I don't have any money going anywhere. Beyond their own concerns, many expressed fears about how the reopening of casinos could be a vector in propagating coronavirus brought from other areas. One of the employees of Blue Lake Casino noted: We are concerned that we will be the first place people hit when they come from Redding... Our hotel is very popular... When it's open, it's like sending a message to outsiders,' Well, come here'. Another explained: I think they're making really hasty decisions. They are putting their business before the people of the community and their employees... I'm super upset and sincerely scared. Several told us that their bosses had told them that a sovereign sovereign and the state government has no jurisdiction. However, a native employee said she contrasted this with the efforts of the Hoopa and the Yurok to prevent the disease from entering tribal lands. I think we have some tribes that are doing a very good job of protecting their elders and their communities, he said. He particularly mentioned that the Yurok refuse to operate their own tourist businesses and not allow them to open a restaurant. Almost all employees said the casinos were trying to provide protection to their workers and their customers, but they felt that the efforts were not enough. I'll say they're doing everything they can to be safe, one told us. They've thought a lot about protecting everyone, but I still don't think it's the right time. Finally, one pointed out angrily, the people who are making these decisions are not going to be on the front line. You can sit in his office. Our exposure risk is significantly higher than yours. Below is Bear River Casino's press release announcing its reopening: Bear River Casino Resort is pleased to announce that we are reopening our doors on Sunday, May 24. Since our temporary closure on March 17 due to COVID-19, we have been deeply cleaning up the property, installing new safety features and planning the health and safety of guests, employees and tribal members. The property will reopen in phases. Some gaming machines, food and beverage offerings and services may initially close. Bear River plans to re-evaluate and make the necessary adjustments during the reopening phases. During the first phase, the Express Café and Rivers Edge Restaurant will be open with takeaway orders, sitting dining service, once opened, there will be limited seating to allow social estating between guests. There will be changes to menus and special gastronomic offers and alcohol will not be available for at least the first week. The thirst for bears will remain closed. To allow social estating, all other slot machines will shut down and board games will have a limited number of players per table. All play areas, slot machines and board games will be cleaned frequently. Poker will remain closed in the initial phase and reopen at a later date to be determined. Please note that hotel service and guest services will be limited. Valet parking, room service, gym and swimming pool will be closed in the initial phase. High-contact areas, including elevators, door handles and lobby areas, will be cleaned and maintained frequently. As part of a comprehensive and aggressive health program and Bear River has developed several new initiatives such as the use of a self-cleaning antimicrobial coating throughout the property, non-invasive temperature controls at the entrances, social estating practices by using soil decals, additional cleaning protocols, plexiglass plexiglass Personal protective equipment (PPE), comprehensive team member training, safety and hygiene signage, and various other procedures throughout the property to ensure a safer environment. We will limit capacity to 30% to further ensure safe distance. Smoking is initially prohibited. Please note that guests are also required to wear masks during the property. Bear River has always prided itself on maintaining a clean and fun environment and will continue these higher standards and greater cleaning measures moving forward to ensure the health and safety of our guests, team members and community. New hours of operation: 9AM-5AM DAILY *Closed 5AM-9AM to allow extensive deep cleaning of the property to reopen in phases with the 100% smoke-free aggressive sanitation and health program operating at 30% maximum Bear River Casino capacity. [File photo.###Bear River Casino this afternoon issued a press release defending his health and safety precautions, while acknowledging that an employee recently tested positive for COVID-19 after getting sick at work. Several other employees remain quarantined after exposure to the infected co-worker, but all have tested negative, according to the statement. The press release comes on the heel of a scoop by the Shomik Mukherjee of the Times-Standard, who today broke the news of the infected employee. T-S's story cites anonymous casino employees who say they are concerned about their own health and safety and believe the casino should close again to protect customers during the coronavirus pandemic. Bear River Casino reopened on May 24 against the board of public health officials, including Dr. Teresa Frankovich, Humboldt County Public Health Officer, who warned that large indoor meetings pose an increased risk of viral transmission. Cher-Ae Heights Casino reopened that same weekend. The Blue Lake Casino reopened on July 12, but closed again four days later, saying tribal leaders were choosing to do what's best for employees and the community. [Disclosure: The Blue Lake Rancheria is a partial owner of outpost's parent company Lost Coast Communications, Inc.] As sovereign nations, Native American tribes are not required to comply with state and local health orders. Here's Bear River's press release: As with all responsible companies navigating the uncertain waters of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bear River Casino Resort has continuously monitored recommendations from CDC and other government agencies. Above all, we have tried to establish far-reaching protocols for cleaning, distance, disinfection and personal hygiene for our guests and team members alike. We have developed extensive cleaning and security practices to provide a safe and fun environment for our friends and neighbors to enjoy and for our team members to be protected while they work. We have disinfectant disinfectant throughout the casino, hotel, and restaurants that are convenient and plentiful. We offer free access to PPE for all members of our team and provide masks and gloves to our guests who may require them. We take the temperature and record the ID of each guest entering the property. Similarly, we take the temperature of each team member who arrives at work, before they can begin their turn. Among guest identification documents, our team's electronic time clock records, and temperature controls for all, our measures also allow us to be prepared to be effective partners with Humboldt County Public Health, in case the need for contact tracking and testing arises. Bear River Casino Resort is very proud of the work we have done to make our facilities safe for both guests and team members. In the last two weeks, we had a team member who came to work as they normally would, disinfected his hands and scanned his temperature. By completing those protocols and showing no evidence of, or complaining about any other symptoms, this team member went to his job and began his day. Later in the day, this team member told his supervisor that they were not feeling well. The supervisor asked what symptoms the team member was experiencing and when hearing a description that included several [symptoms] that might possibly be related to COVID. The team member was asked to quit the job and go get tested. Human Resources was also contacted immediately and, in turn, teamed up with Humboldt County Public Health to begin the contact tracking process. The team member stayed away from work and two days later the team member's test results revealed a positive result. Through the contact tracking process, Public Health determined that several other team members had an exposure that was significant enough to warrant a test. These team members were immediately asked to take the test and they did. Based on Public Health recommendations, some of the people with exposure were asked to be oussed for 14 days. With some others, public health determined that their exposure was not significant enough to indicate isolation. Through all this, we have communicated with our team and have been very intentional about the importance of remaining vigilant with our cleaning protocols and that we are really all in this together. We've gotten all the test results for all team members public health and all tests tested negative for COVID-19. Team members who were asked to isolate themselves for 14 days continue to adhere to that mandate until their conclusion and can return to work. Bear River Casino Resort continues to focus on the health and safety of our team and our guests. Like everyone else, we look forward to the moment when a more normal way of trading can continue. For now, however, we are offering Go only from our Express Grille, no alcohol service, no smoking, and an abundance of PPE, disinfectant stations, and distance protocols to go above and beyond to keep equipment and guests safe.###.###PREVIOUSLY safe.###PREVIOUSLY

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