

Morongo Casino, Resort and Spa Cabazon, CA

The Morongo Band of Mission Indians envisioned a world-class casino, resort and spa that will be the premier recreational gaming destination on the West Coast. A beautiful and unique design inspired by the forces of nature that will bring a piece of paradise to the desert.

As a result of Morongo's existing gaming operation and the soon-to-be-recognized success of the new resort facility, Morongo has eliminated welfare dependency on the reservation, will continue to pay for a wide range of its community services including water storage and distribution systems, waste management, road maintenance, public safety, college education funds, recreational facilities, Head Start program assistance and more. The new facility is expected to bring billions of dollars in new jobs and economic benefit to the reservation and surrounding communities in the next few years.

Project Design and Construction

The buildings' total floor area is approximately 680,000 square feet, split between a 23-story hotel tower and a 2-story attached low-rise structure. The tower contains 272 guestrooms and 32 suites, with the top two floors containing a fine dining restaurant and a lounge.

The low-rise structure houses the administration and operations spaces, a steak house restaurant, a nightclub, buffet, café and food court along with the gaming floor for slots, table games, poker and the associated restrooms, cashier stations, bars and service stations. Also within the low-rise is the 12,000-square-foot spa with salon, gym, saunas, steam rooms and treatment rooms, and approximately 25,000-square-feet of ballroom and meeting space.

Adjacent to the new casino is the pool oasis with a beach entry pool, lazy river, jacuzzis, private cabanas, pool bar and six private luxury casitas with private pools all set in lush landscaping. The project includes 1,500 spaces of landscaped surface parking and an attached 1,700-space parking garage.

Morongo's design is created through curved walls compound radiuses, oblongs, ellipses, and offset shapes. With the exception of the hotel tower, there are few straight lines to be found.

One of the resort's most unique design elements is the 40-foot by 100-foot diameter structural steel art piece that adorns the main entryway. The self-supporting steel structure is in the shape of a flower with four petals that rise up 40-feet and cross the resort's porte-cochere.

Construction Challenges

The biggest challenge of the Morongo Casino, Resort and Spa project has been its fast track approach, finishing design and construction documents as the building is coming out of the ground in less than 18 months. Perini worked closely with the design team and the owner to ensure that the construction drawings were in line with the construction schedule, establishing a critical path to prioritize the sequence of drawing completion in advance of the sequence of construction. This required detailed scheduling and tracking of the construction material and equipment lead times within Perini's construction schedule which was updated and reviewed with the design team and owner on a weekly basis.

The project is located in one of the windiest valleys in the country as evident by the hundreds of wind turbine towers within a few miles of the site. Construction of the 300-foot tall hotel tower with large formwork panels, prefabricated exterior panels and windows required constant adjustment and creative thinking by all the contractors involved. By monitoring wind conditions and forecasts, crews and equipment were scheduled to lift these materials during different times of the day and night when wind speeds allowed.