

Fortune Bay celebrates 22 years as entertainer, employer, neighbor

From Bingo Hall to first-class entertainment venue, the Bay has come a long way

TOWER, MINN. – Fortune Bay Resort Casino will celebrate its 22nd anniversary with two concerts, cash drawings, free tournaments and lots of food. The diverse lineup slated for Oct. 13-19 reflects the versatility that has made Fortune Bay a destination unto itself, a full-service, first-class entertainment venue.

It began as a humble bingo hall that expanded into a hotel, acquiring campgrounds/RV park, a marina, then a heritage center and a golf course that regularly wins national awards. Fortune Bay has revamped its walking trails, added an Arcade, upgraded its marina, revamped its restaurants, enlarged Whispering Winds Gift Shop and substantially expanded and remodeled the hotel.

Meanwhile, the resort casino has become a popular workplace for businesspeople, providing more than 7,000 square feet of banquet and meeting space, including two dedicated meeting rooms and an executive boardroom overlooking Lake Vermilion.

“We’re 22 – there’s lots new and fun to do,” the anniversary slogan, sums up the continual expansion of services and features at Fortune Bay.

“We just kept asking: ‘What else? What more?’” said General Manager Gary Gotchnik. “And we responded to guest needs, both spoken and unspoken. Today, Fortune Bay is bigger and better than ever. We have much to celebrate!”

As part of the celebration, Roy Clark will perform Oct. 17 and The Guess Who will perform Oct. 18, both in the Woodlands Ballroom. Cash drawings will take place every half hour from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m., and free blackjack, slot and poker tournaments will be held throughout the week.

Gamers will be able to experience revolutionary gaming software. Fortune Bay was recently selected as one of two casinos across the country pioneering Sentinel III software, which fosters social bonds and distributes joint prizes to teams of gamers. Fortune Bay's sophisticated IT department and attentive customer service team earned this distinction, which no Las Vegas casino can claim.

Fortune Bay's attention to detail and responsiveness to guests has set it apart, allowing it to buck a downward national trend in gaming. "We've had a great year here," Gotchnik said. "Our staff always goes the extra mile, and a result, our guests are happy to drive the extra mile to escape at Fortune Bay. It's true that we're a few miles north of ordinary."

Meanwhile, locals appreciate Fortune Bay for other reasons. It has become one of the region's biggest employers, and a good one, at that. It provides competitive wages, excellent health care and retirement packages, along with terrific education opportunities and regular employee recognition.

Fortune Bay is a philanthropic member of the community. It hosts Winter Blast, for example, the largest fundraiser for Northeast Minnesota's United Way. It takes an active role in supporting countless local events and sports teams, such as Virginia youth hockey and Ely girls track, while also supporting the March of Dimes and over a dozen other health promotion programs.

"We're known as a fun place, a spirited entertainment venue, but there are issues we take very seriously and causes we are proud to support," Gotchnik said. "Being a good neighbor means a lot to us."

That's why we are inviting all of our neighbors to come celebrate our 22 Anniversary."