



Gila River Hotels & Casinos Breaks Ground on its Fourth Casino, Santan Mountain

160-acre, \$150+ million project south of Chandler to feature more than 850 slots and table games, BetMGM Sportsbook, dining and will create more than 650 new jobs

CHANDLER, Ariz. (October 18, 2021) – Gila River Hotels & Casinos officially announced its newest project, Santan Mountain, at a groundbreaking ceremony earlier today on Gila River Indian Community land south of Chandler. During the momentous ceremony, Gila River Indian Community (GRIC), Gila River Hotels & Casinos and project leadership invited partners and state officials to celebrate the historic addition of Gila River’s fourth casino, which was approved by the State’s reinstated and amended gaming compact in May.

Described as a “modern, inviting desert oasis,” the dynamic entertainment and gaming venue on the southeast corner of Gilbert Road and Hunt Highway will continue growing the legacy of Gila River Hotels & Casinos in Arizona. With over 27 years of exceptional gaming experience, this new venue was cultivated to bring a desired entertainment destination and convenient location to the growing Southeast Valley. GRIC operates Gila River Hotels & Casinos – Wild Horse Pass and Lone Butte, both in Chandler, and Vee Quiva in the West Valley.

The development will boast lush décor, breathtaking mountain views and state-of-the-art amenities set against the backdrop of the pristine, picturesque desert.

During the morning event, Gila River Indian Community Governor Stephen Roe Lewis and Gila River Hotels & Casinos CEO Kenneth Manuel simultaneously unearthed fresh dirt with the project team which includes Steelman Partners, The PENTA Building Group, Tynan Group and the Casino Expansion Owners Team. Governor Lewis shared his deep appreciation for Community members and his excitement for the future.

“Not only will Santan Mountain bring additional revenue, sustainability and critical services to our Community members, it will elevate our prestige in the gaming and hospitality industry as we continue to craft an entertainment dynasty,” he said, adding that the project is estimated to create 650 new jobs.

Gila River Hotels & Casinos hired renowned international architectural and interior design firm, Steelman Partners, and The PENTA Building Group to design and construct the casino, which is expected to take 18 to 24 months.

Paul Curtis Steelman, CEO of Steelman Partners, was at the groundbreaking ceremony along with Steelman Partners President, Steve Anderson. Steelman is recognized as a visionary designer of global entertainment, hospitality, and gaming architecture. He was the lead architect for the new Resorts World Las Vegas, and he has designed buildings for gaming industry mavericks, including Kirk Kerkorian, Steve Wynn, Sheldon Adelson, and Stanley Ho.

Gila River Hotels & Casinos CEO Kenneth Manuel praised Steelman Partners for their innovative design concepts. “We are thrilled with the architectural renderings and design components that Paul and Steve have presented to us – they are ensuring that Santan Mountain will be a premier gaming destination for years to come.” he said.

Steelman said a key focus of the project is to bring the texture, light and elements of the outdoors - inside. The main casino will feature lush, blooming saguaro carpeting, natural light cascading from circular skylights, custom bubble glass and colors inspired by the rising and setting sun that bring unique serenity to the casino floor.

The PENTA Building Group is a general contractor with extensive gaming and hospitality experience in Arizona and across the U.S. "PENTA is honored to be selected to such an amazing team of qualified professionals. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with the Gila River Indian Community, Casino Expansion Owners Team, Tynan Group, and Steelman Partners on this exciting new project, which will be a remarkable expansion to Gila River's already impressive gaming, hospitality and entertainment enterprise. Large-scale casino/entertainment projects like this are a core competency for PENTA, and we look forward to delivering a world class property we will all take pride in," John Cannito, President of PENTA, shared.

A legacy of two decades of partnership continues with TynanGroup as project lead. Having had the opportunity of managing award winning projects for the Gila River Indian Community for over two decades, TynanGroup is proud of the relationship built with the Community and honored to play a part in their continued success. Tynan is renowned for delivering the utmost in functionality, design, and construction in a timely manner.

"The comfort of Gila River's guests is a top priority. Whether a guest is playing the slots during the day or playing at a high-energy, live table at night, Santan Mountain design elements will provide a striking, serene backdrop for memorable entertainment," Steelman said.

When complete, Santan Mountain will include more than 850 slots and table games including mini baccarat, craps and roulette as well as an exclusive High Limit Gaming Salon. The BetMGM sportsbook will extend the casino floor and offer plush seating, multiple large-screen TVs for viewing live games and convenient sports betting.

The new property will also provide multiple dining options and a lively bar in the center of the casino floor featuring entertainment. A hotel may be added in the future. The project also calls for road and other infrastructure improvements in the surrounding area.

Gila River's Casino Expansion Owner's Team (CEOT) Chairman and Councilman Anthony Villareal, Sr. expressed his appreciation for the many people who came together to bring the project to fruition.

"I'm so proud to witness this historic moment, which really is a testament to the hard work of our board and the collaboration of our partners and team members," Villareal said. "We will have many exciting milestones ahead with Santan Mountain, and all of them will be beneficial to our Community."

The gaming enterprise is also slated to open a \$143 million expansion project at Wild Horse Pass later this year —bringing 205 additional guest rooms, new meeting space, two pools and a rooftop restaurant and lounge to the Chandler property. The project marks the first expansion since Wild Horse Pass opened in 2009.

For details, visit [PlayAtGila.com](https://www.PlayAtGila.com).

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About Gila River Hotels & Casinos

Gila River Hotels & Casinos currently operates three locations in Arizona, all owned by the Gila River Indian Community: Wild Horse Pass, Lone Butte, and Vee Quiva. The hotels at Wild Horse Pass and Vee Quiva are Four Diamond accredited. Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, all three casinos offer a combination of slots, live table games, poker, and other fun games, with BetMGM sportsbooks opening soon. A fourth casino, Santan Mountain, is under construction and is expected to open in 18 to 24 months. Additional information is available at 1-800-946-4452 or at PlayAtGila.com.