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\$4M Huntridge acquisition closes

By **Eli Segall and Shea Johnson**
Las Vegas Review-Journal

After multiple attempts to revive the Huntridge Theater went nowhere, a local developer has completed his purchase of the World War II-era venue and intends to bring it back to life.

Dapper Companies founder J Dapper closed his \$4 million acquisition of the long-shuttered Las Vegas property and will spend the next three years renovating it, the firm announced Wednesday.

The sale has been in the works for

New chapter in saga of shuttered property

some time and marks a new chapter for the once-popular theater, which closed more than 15 years ago, is in visible need of repairs and has drawn homeless people outside.

Dapper, who owns other commercial real estate nearby, told the Review-Journal on Wednesday that he tried on and off for the past decade to buy the historic venue, located at the southeast corner of Charleston Boulevard and Maryland Parkway.

He said that a few national concert

operators have expressed interest in the property and that some local food-and-beverage operators have eyed the complex too.

The walls were scanned to make sure the building is structurally sound, and the vast majority of the property "is in better shape than we expected," Dapper said.

Still, he figures it will cost around \$10 million to renovate the theater building and \$5 million to \$8 million to fix up the adjacent retail space.

"This was not an easy lift," said former Las Vegas City Attorney Brad Jerbic, who worked with other city officials to facilitate the sale. "There's so many things that go with the Huntridge."

'Wishing for this moment'

Las Vegas Councilwoman Olivia Diaz, whose ward includes the theater, said Wednesday that she was seeing positive reaction from her constituents to the news of the sale.

"This is another hurdle cleared in

See **HUNTRIDGE** 7B



L.E. Baskow Las Vegas Review-Journal @Left_Eye_Images
Rep. Dina Titus, left, joins SBA District Director Joe Amato, center, and Esther's Kitchen Executive Chef James Trees following a news conference to discuss how the American Rescue Plan will aid Southern Nevada inside Esther's Kitchen on Wednesday.

Titus touts aid plan for Vegas

Federal fund promises to help revitalize struggling restaurants

By **Subrina Hudson**
Las Vegas Review-Journal

Las Vegas restaurateur John Anthony said things are looking up for his business, thanks to a new federal grant for restaurants and bars.

"Prepandemic we were about to open three new restaurants," said Anthony, managing partner of Sparrow+Wolf. "We obviously were able to circle the wagons very quickly. We were able to back out of any conversations we were having with landlords and just kind of went dormant."

Now, he said, "we're starting those conversations again because

this (grant) is there. This is going to allow us to get back into a growth mindset."

Anthony was one of several local restaurant representatives who spoke at a news conference Wednesday to discuss the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, a \$28.6 billion program under President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan Act signed into law March 11.

U.S. Rep. Dina Titus hosted the conference outside of Esther's Kitchen in downtown Las Vegas to showcase how the fund will benefit Southern Nevada restaurants. It's another lifeline for one of the state's hardest-hit groups following

state-mandated shutdowns and capacity restrictions, efforts meant to curb the spread of COVID-19.

"The restaurant business has really been negatively impacted by our inability to get out," Titus said. "We lost over 100,000 restaurants in this country over the last year — that's about 2.5 million employees — some of those will come back and some of them may not. So, we want to do all we can to help them because not only are they a fun place to go but they add to the diversity and the culture of our community."

Esther's Kitchen owner and chef

See **TITUS** 7B

Nevada gives nine businesses tax breaks

Some plan to grow, others moving here

By **Jonathan Ng**
Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nine companies that are considering building or expanding operations in Nevada were awarded \$4.7 million in tax abatements from the Governor's Office of Economic Development on Wednesday.

The incentives will help create an estimated 1,325 high-paying jobs over the next five years in the state. Some of the companies already have roots in Nevada and are looking to expand their footprints in the Silver State, while others are eyeing to build offices and facilities in the state.

The tax abatements, designed to spur economic growth, come at a crucial time when public health and economic trends are shaping up: U.S. companies are looking to expand their operations or relocate entirely. Michael Brown, executive director of GOED, said that since Inauguration Day, his office has received formal requests for information from companies looking to relocate in Nevada.

"I think if we continue to be agile and move with urgency, there's some great opportunities coming together with what we have programmed out in the governor's State of the State post-COVID economy," he said.

Gov. Steve Sisolak said Wednesday that as the state starts to hand

See **JOBS** 7B

Soon-to-open Resorts World details restaurant, bar offerings

By **Al Mancini**
Las Vegas Review-Journal

Resorts World has unveiled more details about its food and beverage lineup, announcing more than a dozen new restaurants and bars.

The hotel, set to open this summer, adds Mexican, Italian,

Cantonese and Japanese cuisine, a vegan ice cream spot and a popular Nashville honky-tonk to its growing list of amenities.

Among the newly announced chefs who will be featured on the property are a local James Beard finalist and an Esquire Chef of the Year.

One of the highlights for local

food lovers undoubtedly will be the return of James Beard Award semifinalist Nicole Brisson to the Strip. The chef, who ran all of Mario Batali's local restaurants and oversaw the opening of the Las Vegas Eataly before heading off-Strip to open Locale in Mountain's Edge, will collaborate with former Mina Group

Vice President Jason Rocheleau on two new concepts.

"I'm super-excited to be back on the Strip," Brisson said of her return to Las Vegas Boulevard. "I feel like I'm going home again."

The first of Brisson's two Resorts World concepts will be

See **RESORT** 7B



Nicole Brisson

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▶ HUNTRIDGE

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this very lengthy process to bring the Huntridge back to our community," she said.

The theater holds personal significance for Diaz, who was born and raised in the district and recalled watching a production with artists from Mexico when she was 18 and being able to meet actors behind the scenes.

"I think the community has been wishing for this moment," she said.

Built in 1944, the Huntridge showed movies for decades and was a top concert venue by the 1990s. The Mizrachi family acquired it in 2002 and closed it for renovations in 2004, but amid escalating construction costs, owner Eli Mizrachi said the next year that he and the building were in "limbo."

Efforts were launched to reopen the venue. In 2007, a bill in the Nevada Assembly proposed spending \$8.5 mil-

lion to buy and restore the Huntridge as a cultural and performing arts center. By 2008, Mizrachi was discussing plans to make it an office and retail complex, and in 2013, three downtown businessmen banded together to buy and renovate the theater.

City steps in

Nevada sued Mizrachi in 2014, alleging his group had breached grant provisions by failing to pay for maintenance work and by keeping the theater closed for years. The grants were initially given to prior owners, and Mizrachi's group said the lawsuit was "an attempt to extort" more than \$1 million before funding covenants expired and the building was sold.

They settled the case in 2016, but the state later filed court papers alleging the owners had let the theater "fall further" into disrepair.

Human waste, rotting food and other debris were seen outside on several visits, and security fencing

and gates were damaged, suggesting people tried to force their way in, according to the state.

The Las Vegas City Council approved a plan in 2019 to help the sale of the Huntridge to Dapper, whose real estate holdings include the Huntridge Shopping Center across Maryland Parkway.

The city intervened in state litigation against the Mizrachi family, leading to a settlement approved by city lawmakers in October that absolved the family of existing debt owed to Nevada and cleared a path for the theater's sale.

The settlement also called for the theater, which is on national and state registers of historic places, to be added to the city's historic register too.

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▶ JOBS

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over the reins to local jurisdictions related to COVID-19 restrictions, his office will focus more into economic development and creating jobs.

"We need to create more jobs — a lot of the jobs that we lost are not coming back, especially in Southern Nevada and the casino industry," Sisolak said. "We now have to do as much as we can to find new applications, new jobs, and training for this workforce. So any help we can get in that regard is certainly appreciated from all of our development partners."

Four of the companies, helped by the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance, will relocate or expand in Southern Nevada.

"We're thrilled to welcome these innovative companies to Southern Nevada," Jonas Peterson, president and CEO of LVGEA, said in a statement. "After a challenging year for our region, these companies will create jobs for many and help diver-

sify the Southern Nevada economy."

Abatement approvals for Southern Nevada companies:**Boxabl Incorporated**

Awarded tax abatements: \$319,578
Jobs: 100

Average hourly wage: \$29.97
Nevada-based Boxabl is a modular construction company that manufactures Accessory Dwelling Units across the U.S. The units aim to provide more affordable housing solutions by reducing build time and construction costs. The units are portable and can connect and stack to build different styles of homes, which range from 400 to 800 square feet.

Merastar Insurance Company

Awarded tax abatements: \$509,795
Jobs: 600

Average hourly wage: \$32.34
Merastar, a subsidiary of the Kemper Corporation, provides employer-sponsored personal property and casualty insurance. Merastar will establish a customer service center in Henderson.

Nuro Inc.

Awarded tax abatements: \$170,519
Jobs: 60

Average hourly wage: \$28.80
Nuro is a robotics company that develops self-driving vehicles made for delivering local goods of all kinds. The company was founded in 2016 and made its first driverless delivery to the public in 2018. The company will establish a new autonomous vehicle testing site in Las Vegas.

Advanced Hemp, Inc.

Awarded tax abatements: \$883,501
Jobs: 155

Average hourly wage: \$26.51
Advanced Hemp is a new company in Clark County that will manufacture plant fertilizer from hemp. The company's products will help farmers improve crop yields in the U.S. and in developing countries. The company will establish a facility in North Las Vegas.

Contact Jonathan Ng at jng@reviewjournal.com. Follow @ByJonathanNg on Twitter.

▶ RESORT

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Brezza, a 300-seat restaurant with a patio overlooking the Strip and the newly expanded Convention Center. The restaurant will specialize in upscale and modern Italian cuisine and premium steak, seafood and chops cooked on a white oak grill.

"We're taking really, really great, simple ingredients, and we're keeping the integrity of them," the chef said of Brezza's cuisine. "It's going to be clean, fresh, handmade pastas, which you've seen in my repertoire for so many years — but light. ... Not the red sauce (and) heaping, endless plates of pasta. But more like that light primi, and then you go into a beautiful, well-curated secondi and finish it with an after-dinner amaro, and you have the whole encompassing experience. But then if you also want to just pop in and have a really light salad and a quick pasta, you can have that experience as well."

Brisson's second collaboration with Rocheleau will be Bar Zazu, described as a "vibrant, chic café" that will offer hot and cold tapas, charcuterie and sweet and savory pastries. Guests will be able to wash those down with their choice of beer, cocktail or wine by the glass, bottle or flight.

Fans of Mexican cuisine will want to

check out ¡Viva! by Ray Garcia, Esquire magazine's 2015 Chef of the Year. Known for his L.A. restaurants Broken Spanish and BS Taqueria, Garcia will bring a modern take on regional Mexican cuisine to the new hotel.

On the Asian front, the resort will add a pair of sit-down options to a portfolio that already includes the Famous Foods Street Eats food hall. Genting Palace will focus on Cantonese cuisine, seafood and dim sum. Kusa Nori, described as a "modern Japanese bistro," will specialize in sushi, teppanyaki and yakitori.

While those five spots round out the hotel's signature restaurants, the company also has released some details on the resort's casual dining options, including several imports from other markets.

The popular Los Angeles ice cream brand Craig's Vegan will have plant-based pints, sundaes and shakes at their first-ever scoop shop. San Diego's Tacos El Cabrón will offer their Tijuana-inspired Mexican street food in a "hip, casual setting." And New York pizza comes to the resort by way of Southern California, in the form of Richie Palmer's Mulberry Street Pizzeria of Beverly Hills.

Among the homegrown casual eateries, local restaurateur Billy Richardson has created a concept called Marigold, specializing in American staples such as burgers, lobsters and

house-made desserts. Sun's Out Buns Out will demonstrate that eggs are not just for breakfast. The Market Eat & Drinks will offer grab-and-go bites 24/7. And the hotel's three-meal restaurant will be known simply as The Kitchen at Resorts World. At the pool, guests will find Mediterranean fare and grilled seafood at Agave Bar & Grill and a snack bar known as Bites.

The company also has revealed details on a few more of the property's bars. Nashville, Tennessee, favorite Dawg House Saloon will provide beverages and Southern pub fare as well as and live music and dancing at the Resorts World sportsbook.

Starlight on 66 will offer an elevated cocktail experience on the hotel's 66th floor. And the sophisticated Crystal Bar will take center stage on the casino floor.

All of these newly announced food and beverage options join a culinary lineup that includes the previously announced Gatsby's Cocktail Lounge and a local outpost of California's Wally's Wine & Spirits.

THE BOTTOM LINE**Stocks of local interest**

Name	Ticker	Last	Chg	YTD %Chg
Allegiant Travel	ALGT	244.06	-3.52	+290
Barrick Gold	GOLD	19.80	+2.29	-131
Boyd Gaming	BYD	58.96	-0.08	+374
CaesarsEnt	CZR	87.45	+3.32	+177
Everi Holdings	EVRI	14.11	+3.32	+2.2
Full House Resorts	FLL	8.51	-1.4	+116.5
Golden Entertain	GDEN	25.26	-37	+270
Howard Hughes	HHC	95.13	-	+20.5
Las Vegas Sands	LVS	60.76	-4.6	+1.9
MGM Growth Prop.	MGP	32.62	+1.6	+4.2
MGM Resorts	MGM	37.99	-2.2	+20.6
Penn National	PENN	104.84	+2.00	+21.4
PlayAGS	AGS	8.08	+1.0	+12.2
Red Rock Resorts	RRR	32.59	-0.9	+30.2
Scientific Games	SGMS	38.52	+3.4	-7.2
Southwest Airlines	LUV	61.06	-0.85	+31.0
Southwest Gas	SWX	68.71	-3.9	+13.1
Spirit Airlines	SAVE	36.90	-0.72	+50.9
Switch	SWCH	16.26	+5.6	-7
Wynn Resorts	WYNN	125.37	-0.8	+11.1

OTHER AREAS BETTER OFF**Jobless rate for Las Vegas drops to 9.3% in February**

Las Vegas' jobless rate moved lower in February but remained well above other areas of Nevada.

An estimated 9.3 percent of the valley's workforce was unemployed in February, down from 9.8 percent in January, the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation reported Wednesday.

By comparison, the Reno area's unemployment rate was 4.9 percent in February, and Carson City's was 5.4 percent, according to DETR.

Statewide, it was 8.3 percent.

Las Vegas' casino-heavy economy has been clawing back from its pandemic-sparked economic meltdown. At one point, one out of every three people in the valley was out of work after the coronavirus outbreak led to business closures last March.

STARTING APRIL 19**Midweek reservations soon to be a go for Rio**

The Rio is set to take hotel reservations throughout the week, starting April 19. The Caesars Entertainment Inc. property has not been accepting midweek stays, but its casino has been operating 24/7 since opening in December.

The Strip-adjacent property is Caesars' final Las Vegas resort to resume daily operations.

Two other Caesars properties, Planet Hollywood and The Linq, expanded operations in March. Both had only accommodated weekend hotel stays.

STARTING IN MAY**Job search requirements returning soon for filers**

As Nevada's economy reopens, the state workforce agency will bring back jobless requirements for people who receive unemployment insurance benefits.

All filers will be required to show that they are looking for work starting May 1, according to the state Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation.

Claimants will need to keep a record of the companies or individuals they contact for employment. The change does not impact Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program filers.

At the onset of the pandemic, Gov. Steve Sisolak waived the work search requirements.

The agency, starting this week, will start to send Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment program notifications to selected regular UI claimants regarding job search and training opportunities.

DETR said participation, if invited, is required for eligibility.

▶ TITUS

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James Trees said that while the restaurant has been able to create workarounds to stay afloat, added funding options will not just help Esther's Kitchen but the entire restaurant supply chain.

"We have the ability to get back to our suppliers, to get back to using our farmers, and that's going to help local businesses all around the Valley so we're really excited about that," Trees said.

Helping hand

The restaurant fund outlines eligible business as "restaurant, food stand, food truck, food cart, caterer, saloon, inn, tavern, bar, lounge, brewpub, tasting room, taproom, licensed facility or premise of a beverage alcohol producer where the public may taste, sample, or purchase products."

Eligible businesses can receive a tax-free federal grant equal to the amount of its pandemic-related revenue loss, calculated by subtracting 2020 gross receipts from those in 2019. The grant amount cannot exceed \$10 million and is limited

to \$5 million per location. Owners with more than 20 locations as of March 13, 2020, are ineligible as are publicly traded companies.

Applicants can use the funds to cover business-related costs such as payroll, rent, utilities, maintenance, supplies, covered supplier costs and operational expenses.

The Small Business Administration is responsible for administering the grant.

Nevada SBA Director Joseph Amato, who spoke at the news conference, said he expects businesses to be able to start applying in May, while noting the state SBA is still waiting for federal guidance.

"With the Restaurant Rescue program it's really coming down to us going over the guidance and how we're going to distribute it fairly, using the proper priorities and making sure that all businesses that need the most help will get the most help, especially in the underserved communities," he said.

Amato said that, including other SBA-administered federal funding programs such as Economic Injury Disaster Loan and the Paycheck Protection Program, the state has received more than \$6 billion in support and aid.

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