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Wynn Opens Encore, MGM Prepares to Hire 12,000

By [Brian K. Miller](#)

LAS VEGAS-It's a time of irony on the Las Vegas Strip. Wynn Resorts on Tuesday night opened the luxury casino-resort Encore as spending in the market is declining at a record pace. MGM Mirage and its Citycenter partners, in the face of rapidly rising unemployment, will begin accepting applications two weeks from now for some 12,000 jobs--but won't be issuing any paychecks for those jobs until nearly 2010.

MGM's hiring for Citycenter is the largest single new employment opportunity in Las Vegas' history, which is appropriate considering that, at 18 million square feet, it also is the largest single-phase development project on the planet. The problem is, with all the cutbacks that have already occurred at casino resorts, workers need employment now, not nine months from now when the \$11-billion development will be close to opening its many doors.

Beginning Jan. 5, MGM Mirage will be accepting applications for positions at Citycenter's ARIA Resort & Casino, Vdara Hotel & Spa and the Crystals, the development's retail and entertainment district. In addition, Mandarin Oriental and the Harmon Hotel, Spa & Residences, each managed by other companies, will be accepting applications through the Web site beginning Spring 2009. Opportunities are available in food and beverage, hotel operations, casino operations, retail management, entertainment, finance, human resources, facilities, security and more.

Set to open in late 2009 on 67 acres between the Bellagio and Monte Carlo resorts, Citycenter will include 4,000 hotel rooms, 2,600 condominium residences, 500,000 square feet of retail and entertainment and a \$40-million public art program. To enhance its liquidity while it completes the project amid the downturn, MGM Mirage is [selling](#) one of its other Strip resorts, Treasure Island, to Wichita billionaire Phil Ruffin.

Meanwhile, opening today is Wynn Resorts' Encore, a \$2.3 billion, 2,000-room casino resort in a curved tower of bronze glass that more-or-less mirrors Wynn Las Vegas, the company's three-year-old luxury casino hotel that sits next door. The grand opening comes amid a [28% decline](#) in the amount casinos win from gamblers every month, a [10% drop in visitation](#), a 720 basis-point drop in occupancy and a 14.3% drop in room rates.

Moreover, it comes as Fitch Ratings predicting that the industry will remain under significant pressure through 2009, with a [recovery not likely until 2010](#). That may turn out to be great timing for Citycenter but many industry workers will suffer in the meantime.

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