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MGM Springfield breaks ground on \$800 million casino resort - developed by Davenport Properties

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MGM Resorts International hosted the groundbreaking of MGM Springfield, an \$800 million casino resort slated to open in fall 2017 in downtown. The event marked the start of the construction phase of this unique urban mixed-use development, the Commonwealth's first destination casino resort.

Hundreds of people were in attendance at the groundbreaking celebration, emceed by Kathy Tobin, former local news anchor and current director of program development at Friends of the Homeless. With the Zanetti School - severely damaged by the June 2011 tornado that tore through Springfield's South End - as a backdrop, speakers highlighted the history of Springfield, the rebirth of the South End neighborhood, and the energy and optimism that is filling the region.

Jim Murren, MGM Resorts International chairman and CEO, said, "With every licensing milestone and every campaign victory, we have honored the potential of MGM Springfield. Today is even more special, though, as we put shovels in the ground to officially celebrate what we came here to do, put people back to work and begin a rebirth of the once thriving urban center of Western Mass."

The crowd that included many state and local elected and appointed officials gathered to hear from Murren, MGM Springfield president Michael Mathis, Mass. gaming commission chairman Steve Crosby, Springfield mayor Domenic Sarno, and Revitalize CDC associate director Ethel Griffin. More than 30 construction workers representing various trades were at the site to honor the moment when thriving development returned to this hard-hit section of Springfield.

MGM Springfield is being designed to ignite a downtown revival and enhance the region's urban center. The mixed-used development includes a 25-story, 250-room hotel with a world-class spa, a pool and roof deck; 125,000 s/f of gaming space with 3,000 slot machines, 75 gaming tables, a poker room and high limit VIP gambling area; about 55,000 s/f of retail and restaurant space that will accommodate 15 shops and restaurants; and a multi-level parking garage.

Plans also envision a high-energy dining, retail and entertainment district with an eight-screen cinema, bowling alley and an outdoor stage. This will be developed by Davenport Properties of Boston, MA, in partnership with MGM on land now occupied by the tornado-ravaged South End Community Center and the Zanetti School.

Over the next several weeks, site activity will largely consist of necessary abatement work to clear hazardous materials from buildings scheduled for demolition. In parallel, the MGM Springfield team is working on agreements with multiple contractors who can meet the spring and summer construction timelines for several project components, including excavation, waterproofing and utilities. Other team members will continue to work closely with local workforce training partners to develop curricula and job training that will match the needs of an MGM Springfield workforce.

Mathis said, "As we celebrate this moment, we know plenty of work lies ahead. I think we have proven that we are not afraid of hard work, and as always we will remain transparent and inclusive

as we build a better future for this region."

Guests of the ground breaking were treated to an interactive event as they were asked to participate by writing their wishes for the future of the City of Springfield and Western Massachusetts. Their wishes were then dropped into an MGM Springfield wishing well. MGM will put all of the wishes into a capsule that will be placed in the resort foundation as construction begins. The outdoor event also featured a traditional first shovel of dirt ceremony as well as celebratory confetti blasts.

In keeping with MGM's commitment to engage local businesses, Springfield vendors Langone's, AC Produce and Palazzo provided dÃ©cor and beverages. Zascos Productions of Chicopee provided the staging, risers, sound and technical equipment. And Taylor Rental of South Hadley provided additional tables and chairs.

The day was about recognizing the rich history of the City of Springfield while moving the Gateway City into a new era of commerce and economic opportunity.

Mathis said, "The City of Springfield's people welcomed us into their hearts and homes and trusted us with their hopes for the future. This property was designed with the input of residents who wanted more for their families and their community. Today is the day we start to realize that future as we activate the most robust construction site Springfield has ever seen."

MGM Springfield will bring 3,000 permanent jobs and 2,000 construction jobs to downtown. MGM has established a hiring goal of 35% of the workforce from the city and 90% from a combination of Springfield and the region. Additionally, MGM Springfield has entered into surrounding community agreements with neighboring communities providing for tens of millions of dollars.

Sarno said, "The Springfield Renaissance is under way and MGM Springfield is the catalyst our city needed to jump start our revival. With thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in economic activity; the economic center of Western Massachusetts is on the rise. We look forward to working with our residents, businesses and MGM during the construction process."

Crosby said, "Today is a very exciting day for the Commonwealth and Springfield. The Commission is pleased to participate in this truly historic moment. It's official: today's groundbreaking signifies not only the arrival of a world-class gaming operator, but the catalyst for a new era of job creation and economic opportunity for the residents of Massachusetts."

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