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PHOTO/AMY SPANGLER

**Forrest Tipsword, left, and Linwood Fielder of Centre County-based G.M. McCrossin Inc. guide a precast-concrete form into place at the construction site of Hollywood Casino at Penn National in Dauphin County.**

# Hollywood on track for 2008

## High-tech features to be part of casino

BY JIM T. RYAN

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They're seeing stars in East Hanover Township, Dauphin County, among the steel girders and concrete floors.

Managers of Hollywood Casino at Penn National are excited because construction is on schedule for the first-quarter 2008 opening of the

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new horse-racing and gambling facility near Grantville. That facility, one of many around Pennsylvania *hosting slot-machine gambling*, is going to be full of high-tech entertainment. But first, construction companies from around the state, including a cadre from Central Pennsylvania, have to finish the 365,000-square-foot building.

The five-story steel structure is up, and the parking garage is nearly complete, said J. Gary Luderitz, vice president and general manager of Hollywood Casino, which is owned by Wyomissing-based Penn National Gaming Inc. Eighty percent of the concrete floors are poured, and crews have begun installing the building's siding systems. Surface parking, drainage and

# HOLLYWOOD: Casino to include 77-foot, serpentine video screen

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underground utilities are also nearly finished.

"We're enclosing the structure to get it water-tight and then we'll begin constructing the interior," said Barry Leonard, construction project manager for Hollywood Casino.

The grounds and roads around the new facility will be rough until the building is enclosed and the heavy trucks are finished delivering hardware and materials, Leonard said.

"The roads are going to continue to be rutted because of the heavy trucks," he said. "It makes no sense to finish the street work now."

At Hollywood, first impressions will be everything, Luderitz said. The casino plans to hit its guests with a media blitz from the moment they enter. That includes a 77-foot serpentine, high-definition video screen; a large, indoor, dome amphitheater that doubles as a 3-D video screen similar to Imax theaters for big-concert special effects; a four-restaurant food court catering to guests' appetites; a mezzanine sports bar overlooking the casino floor; support columns that double as hosts for LCD monitors; and television



Roy Wertz, a laborer with Novinger Group Inc. of Lower Swatara Township, assembles scaffolding in the area that will be the concourse level of the new grandstand at Penn National Race Course in East Hanover Township, Dauphin County. A horse and its rider, background, are on the track for a morning workout.

PHOTO/  
AMY SPANGLER

pods hanging from the ceiling.

And that's just the beginning. It doesn't take into account the grandstand for horse races, a fine-dining restaurant and buffet (both restaurants will be finished af-

ter the opening), or the luxury boxes, banquet and conference halls on the upper floors.

There are other aspects of the casino that are more modern than the 34-year-old grandstand that

was torn down last year. The facility will have a central core that allows staff to uavigate the five floors with ease. The casino floor is being built with a sectional design allowing management to move machines

and remodel to maximize guest use.

"With thousands of slot machines, that type of cellular approach is the only way to layout the

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# HOLLYWOOD: Twenty-two companies working on \$310M project

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floor," Luderitz said.

There are 22 companies working on the \$310 million project, many of which are local, Leonard said. One such firm is Handwerk Contractors of Hummelstown, a site contractor and subsidiary of The H&K Group in Skippack, Montgomery County. Pennsy Supply Inc. of Harrisburg is delivering raw materials such as concrete, asphalt and stone; Hershocks Inc. of Harrisburg is installing the aluminum and glass; and Johnson Controls/York is installing the heating, ventilation and air conditioning. More companies could join the construction when additional work bids are awarded.

Pennsy Supply provided most of the concrete for the casino and garage, said Lee Martz, a sales representative for the company. The concrete is made with expanded shale, a stone mined in North Carolina and processed for use in concrete. The concrete is light yet strong, which makes it ideal for handling high-traffic areas such as those in a multiple-floor casino.

"It's lightweight, so you can cut down on the structural steel," Martz said.

Contractors and companies also



ILLUSTRATION/SUBMITTED

This artist's rendering shows how the indoor dome amphitheater of Hollywood Casino at Penn National will look when it is completed.

"We want to be, as much as we can, contemporary Hollywood. That's what we're trying to achieve with all the high-tech electronics"

**J. Gary Luderitz,  
Hollywood Casino at Penn National**

like the product because it has a high fire-proofing factor to it. That's an added plus in buildings that will host thousands of people.

"It's been around for 25 years, but it's being specified more in larger projects," Martz said.

Hershocks is constructing the glass wall that will separate horse-racing enthusiasts from the weather on the facility's track-facing side.

The glass is heavy and used infrequently on most other projects, said Greg Deaven, Hershocks' senior project manager.

"We've been fortunate to do some sizeable projects lately," he said.

The glass comes in 128 pieces, each a little bigger than a four-door sedan. The glass wall doesn't use a frame, which obstructs spectators' views. Instead, the panes are bolted

## By the numbers

Hollywood Casino at Penn National near Grantville, Dauphin County, isn't the only major construction project using huge amounts of materials. Harrisburg University of Science and Technology just started constructing its new \$73 million building in downtown Harrisburg. Here are a few facts about the building materials used for the two projects:

### Hollywood Casino

**Weight of concrete for project:** 115 million pounds  
**Largest concrete pour in one day:** 1,300 cubic yards  
**Weight of structural steel:** 2,000 tons  
**Weight of steel roof joists:** 200 tons  
**Area of five-story facility:** 365,000 square feet  
**Number of slot machines:** 2,000  
**Cost of new construction:** \$310 million  
**Penn National property:** 615 acres

### Harrisburg University

**Amount of concrete:** 10,000 cubic yards  
**Weight of rebar:** 260,000 pounds  
**Weight of structural steel:** 6 million pounds  
**Area of metal decking:** 350,000 square feet  
**Total construction cost:** \$73 million  
**Building height:** 16 stories  
**Gross building area:** 371,000 square feet

—Jim T. Ryan

to the building structure.

The multi-million-dollar glass installation could begin within a month, as soon as the panes arrive from England, Deaven said. Until then, Hershocks workers are completing welding work to support the glass. The project is fast-tracked because Penn National wants the building enclosed so workers can begin interior work, Deaven said.

Hollywood Casino's Leonard finds it impressive to watch the new

structure rising at the foot of the mountains, surrounded by the farms and quiet residential areas of Central Pennsylvania. He also oversaw the old grandstand's demolition. Just thinking about it brings a smile to his face.

Luderitz is just as excited. "We want to be, as much as we can, contemporary Hollywood," he said. "That's what we're trying to achieve with all the high-tech electronics." ■