

A Positive Outlook

A Night with the Golden Knights



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In just their first month of existence, the Knights have captured our community's attention and enthusiasm. The team has been selling standing-room only tickets to accommodate fan demand, and home attendance based on capacity percentage is third in the league among hockey hotbeds Chicago, Minnesota, Toronto and Pittsburgh. While the commitment of our local fans has been a driving factor in the attendance numbers, there is no denying the impact that visiting fans are making. The Knights' home schedule has already featured matchups against popular NHL franchises such as the Detroit Red Wings, Boston Bruins and Chicago Blackhawks, and their dedicated fans have helped fill T-Mobile Arena.

While some opposing fans are transplants now living in southern Nevada, many are visitors who traveled here to get away from the frigid weather back home and spend a few days vacationing in the nation's top tourism destination. During the Winnipeg game, I spotted a fan wearing a Jets jersey, shorts and flip-flops. That shouldn't have been a surprise since it was 75 degrees here, a relative heat wave compared to the 21 degrees in Winnipeg, which is situated about 50 miles north of Minnesota. That fan left the game disappointed, but he was here for several days to vacation and enjoy everything else that Las Vegas has to offer. When he returned to Canada, the game was just one of the memories he brought back with him.

The visiting fans who flock from Winnipeg, Boston and everywhere else are a visible sign that the addition of an NHL franchise to southern Nevada has created new economic development opportunities. As it has decade after decade, Las Vegas is continually evolving to maintain its status as a top tourism destination for visitors from the United States and around the world. That evolution has led to the development of world-class resorts, high-end shopping malls, celebrity chef restaurants, and renowned entertainment options that make Las Vegas what it is today. Each new amenity provides another potential reason to visit. That list of reasons now includes the Knights, and it will soon include the Raiders and the dozens of large-scale events that will be held at the new stadium at the south end of the Las Vegas Strip.

The stadium's ability to leverage southern Nevada's existing tourism infrastructure to host new and impactful events was a key consideration in the state committing \$750 million in new room tax revenue toward construction. Between Raiders games, concerts and other events, an estimated 450,000 additional visitors will come to southern Nevada each year, creating an annual economic impact of \$620 million. Among those visitors will be plenty of Raiders fans, a team with a global brand and the following to match. As the Golden Knights have proven in just a short time, the emergence of professional sports in southern Nevada provides not only a growing sense of civic pride, it also adds to the ever-evolving tourism landscape and strengthens our economy.

