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Seneca Indian Nation breaks ground on ca spa hotel

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NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. -- The Seneca Indian Nation began construction Tuesday on a 600-room hotel next to its Casino Niagara.

The hotel will include three restaurants, a gaming floor with 1,000 slot machines and 50 tables, 7,000 square feet of meeting space and a spa.

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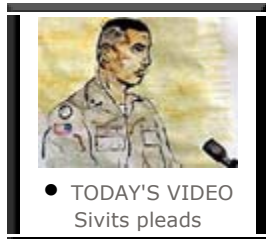
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"It's going to give us an opportunity to cater to national and international travelers," said G. Michael Brown, president and chief executive of Seneca Gaming Corp.

The Senecas' Niagara Falls casino, the first of three planned in western New York, has exceeded financial expectations since its Dec. 31, 2002, opening. Seneca President Rickey Armstrong said the luxury hotel would help generate the kind of spin-off development that so far has been lacking.

"It will really be a catalyst here in the city," he said. "I think people will come here and stay longer and wherever there's more traffic and added people, you're going to have development of some type."

The nation earlier this year purchased the nearby Holiday Inn, with plans to renovate it and reopen it by Oct. 1, Brown said.

"It's going to get us in business right away ... That will give us an interim solution to the lack of control over hotel rooms and that will be used continually for tour and travel groups."

Construction of the spa hotel is expected to be complete in January 2006.

Seneca Gaming Corp. this month completed a \$300 million bond sale to fund construction of the hotel, the Holiday Inn purchase and other projects.

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