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HENDERSON HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

Southeast corner of Water and Atlantic

Recreation

Despite the intense focus on industrial production to aid the war effort, Henderson workers and families also sought ways to relax and have fun.

In October 1942, the BMI Post of the American Legion hosted a community-wide party to celebrate the opening of the new Railroad Pass School, later renamed Victory and then Basic High School, as it stands today.

BMI workers formed the BMI Recreation Club to organize and sponsor activities. Their first social event was a dinner with dance and floorshow on July 25, 1942.

As the town grew into a permanent community, more recreational opportunities were developed. In July 1943, local businessperson N.D. Van Wagenen opened the Victory Theatre on the corner of Army and Panama streets. The first movie shown was Presenting Lily Mars starring Judy Garland.

To show their community pride, residents held a huge 10th anniversary celebration in 1952. The following year, this community-wide event about Henderson's history became known as Industrial Days, a tradition that still continues.

Like Las Vegas, Henderson has legalized gambling, but it was not always that way. In 1953, the newly formed city government voted to ban gambling and the sale of alcohol within the original townsite. By 1956, the city reversed its position, and the Lucky Star Club held its grand opening on New Year's Eve in 1957.

In 1960, the Royal, a popular upscale restaurant and cocktail lounge, celebrated its 4th anniversary in downtown Henderson by adding a casino. The Eldorado Club opened next door on July 1, 1962. The Royal closed in 1964, and the Eldorado owners purchased the building. The Rainbow Club opened in 1967, and Lucky Star closed in 1972. The Rainbow and Eldorado, joined by Emerald Island Casino on the Lucky Star site, remain an integral part of downtown today.

