

= President Casino Broadwater Resort =

The President Casino Broadwater Resort was a combined casino and resort that was located in Biloxi , Mississippi . It was a fixture on the Mississippi Gulf Coast for over 60 years .

Originally known as the Broadwater Beach Hotel and Broadwater Beach Resort , it opened in 1939 as a venue for the illegal but tacitly approved gambling that was flourishing along the coast . In the late 1950s and 1960s , the gambling stopped and the facility was renovated and re @-@ purposed as a resort destination with a state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art marina and other amenities . In its heyday the Broadwater Beach Resort hosted movie stars , leading politicians , and top business figures as well as people on vacation . It became the Gulf Coast 's flagship resort and its colorfully lit front sign was iconic .

In 1992 , President Casinos gained control of the facility , and after changing the name , added a casino riverboat and barge . The casino had a successful niche following among lower @-@ end gamblers , but the problems of the parent company resulting in bankruptcy filings in the early 2000s . In 2005 , new owners closed the resort and casino shortly before Hurricane Katrina destroyed them .

= = Resort era = =

The Broadwater Beach Hotel was built in 1938 by investors seeking to gain the business of gamblers coming to casinos along the Mississippi Gulf Coast . It opened in 1939 , and was built in Art Deco style . The first owner was Pete Martin Sr. , a well @-@ known gambler and rum runner along the coast . He openly ran a casino within the hotel , as even though it was nominally illegal at the time , gambling was part of the social and economic fabric of Biloxi . After Martin died , openly illegal gambling was frowned upon , and new owners tried to appeal to just the tourist market . In 1958 , it was bought by Joe Brown , a Texas oil millionaire .

Following his death in 1959 , his widow Dorothy Brown , who was a noted New Orleans philanthropist , renovated the property for a more modern look , including a wide arched canopy in the front . In the early 1960s , the Mississippi Gulf Coast was emerging as a prime alternative to Florida as a southern vacation destination , and the Broadwater Beach Resort was considered the pacesetter for the area . In 1963 , Dorothy Brown spent \$ 3 million to build a marina and a heliport . The Broadwater Resort Marina plan was especially ambitious , involving hosting up to 150 sail and powerboats , and offering shore @-@ to @-@ ship maid service and room service to those docked , all in an effort to capture blue @-@ water game fishing business . When the marina opened in 1965 , it was considered state of the art . In 1968 , she built the Broadwater Beach Sun Course on land originally owned by Jefferson Davis , and thus added golf as a prime attraction for visitors ; by 1974 a Sea Course was also present . During the 1960s , a men 's store was present in the hotel . For entertainment , the hotel featured musicians from New Orleans and elsewhere . From the 1950s on , operational control of the hotel and resort rested with Leigh MacConnell , one of the few women to rise to the top of the local hotel industry in that era . In the 1960s the Broadwater Beach Resort found its glory years . Hosting movie stars , leading politicians , and top business figures , as well as people on vacation , it became the Gulf Coast 's flagship resort . During this decade , the iconic and colorfully lit Broadwater Beach Resort front sign was added .

Hurricane Camille devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast in August 1969 . The resort golf club pro and his wife fought for their lives as the storm wrecked their pro shop apartment . The hotel 's first floor was carved out by the storm surge , expensive furniture floated out of the lobby , and the marina suffered moderate damage . But the resort rebounded and by 1977 it was described as a " bustling colony of rooms , cottages , restaurants , golf courses , tennis courts , and its own marina . " Conferences were held there , and the Broadwater Beach Hotel was the setting for a fictional regional sales meeting in the 1982 Frederick Barthelme short story " Box Step " .

= = Casino era = =

Entrepreneur John E. Connelly , founder of President Casinos , then gained control of the property , and the President Casino Broadwater Resort was opened aboard a riverboat docked at the Broadwater Resort Marina in August 1992 . It was the second casino to open on the Mississippi Gulf Coast , following the Isle of Capri Casino which opened two weeks earlier . In June 1995 , President Casinos replaced the riverboat with the former Mississippi Gold Shore Casino barge . The table games there were known for having lower limits than most other Biloxi casinos . Major country music stars performed there on Wednesday through Saturday nights , and the hotel had 550 rooms available across two structures . In 1997 and 1999 , titles to the resort property and barge were formally transferred from Connelly to President Casinos .

By the early 2000s , the President Casino Broadwater Resort sat on 260 acres ( 1 @. @ 1 km<sup>2</sup> ) . The powerboat @-@ oriented Broadwater Resort Marina had 118 berths , and was regarded as " one of the best full @-@ service , luxurious marinas between Mobile and New Orleans . " The President Broadwater Golf Club offered a full @-@ length 18 @-@ hole course . The casino featured over 38 @, @ 000 square feet ( 3 @, @ 500 m<sup>2</sup> ) of gambling with over 900 slot machines . However , no work had been done on the old resort and its hotel , resulting in its declining in appearance to a run @-@ down state . The hotel capacity was down to 450 rooms and suites , and functioned mainly as a place for the casino barge customers to sleep briefly ; furniture was piled up in corridors , the hotel main floor entertainment rooms were empty , and weeds grew on the resort 's tennis courts . Nevertheless , the resort still made reference to its pre @-@ casino past , calling itself " one of the last great Southern resorts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast . "

The casino itself found a niche market among local gamblers and was a reliable earner . President Casinos was saddled with corporate debt , however , and a planned new \$ 2 billion resort at the site , to be called Destination Broadwater , never materialized . In April 2001 , the President Broadwater Hotel , which represented the non @-@ casino operations , filed for bankruptcy . President Casinos filed for bankruptcy in June 2002 , and the Broadwater casino the following month , but operation of the President Casino Broadwater Resort continued .

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In January 2005 , Broadwater Development LLC ? a casino holding company owned by two local construction figures , Roy Anderson III and Cotton Fore ? won a bankruptcy auction bid for the casino and resort for \$ 82 million , amid speculation that they had overpaid . Anderson said of the barge , " It 's a nice structure . But overall aesthetically , it 's not going to fit into our master plan . " On April 15 , 2005 , the deal closed ; as part of it , the President Casino barge was purchased for \$ 6 @. @ 8 million by Silver Slipper Casino Venture LLC with the intention of operating it under the name of President Casino until it could be moved to their site in Hancock County , Mississippi , where the Silver Slipper operators thought it would fit in . On July 31 , 2005 , the Broadwater Beach Resort closed its doors , with Broadwater Development announcing plans to tear it down and build a new resort and casino .

Less than a month later , on August 29 , 2005 , Hurricane Katrina tore the casino barge from its moorings and washed it ashore ½ mile west of the Broadwater Resort Marina . The barge was a total loss , it was cut up as scrap and removed by a salvage company . ( The new Silver Slipper Casino would be built from the ground up instead and open in late 2006 . ) The hotel in the resort part was still standing but heavily damaged by Katrina , with the storm surge reaching the second floor . The famed sign was destroyed . The marina too was wrecked and closed . The golf course did not reopen . The hotel subsequently underwent demolition , which concluded by November 2006 with even the foundation slabs removed .

Once the post @-@ Katrina building boom began , the Broadwater site increased in value and several other casino operations indicated an interest in it . In March 2006 , Broadwater Development LLC gained city approval for creating The Broadwater resort , a \$ 1 billion plan that would feature two casinos , 3 @, @ 375 condo units , 1 @, @ 900 hotel rooms , an 18 @-@ hole golf course , large amounts of retail entertainment space and convention space , and a marina again . By September 2007 , the Broadwater developers said they were close to signing with an international

entertainment corporation to begin the work , and the Biloxi Planning Commission granted them an 18 @-@ month extension . But by October 2008 , the global financial crisis had prevented anything from happening , and the Mississippi Gaming Commission gave an indefinite extension to the Broadwater site approval .