

No One Gambles With Appearance At Binion's Horseshoe Casino

Switch to HOST® Dry Extraction Cleaning Saves Annual Carpet Replacement, Slashes Chemical Costs, and Frees Up Labor

Success at Binion's Horseshoe Casino Hammond is spelled "Appearance, Appearance, Appearance." Or that's how Gary Sheahan, environmental service manager and Dianne Whitaker, environmental service supervisor, spell and define it.

The floating casino is spread out over four floors of a large watercraft moored on Lake Michigan. It occasionally motors on the lake and then



Binion's Horseshoe Casino is boarded by more than 14,500 visitors a day.



Gary Sheahan, environmental service manager and Dianne Whitaker, environmental service supervisor, found a cleaning system solution that ensures the carpet in the Horseshoe Casino no longer needs to be replaced annually.

returns to its home in Hammond, IN. It is boarded by more than 14,500 passengers a day from the large land-based, adjacent pavilion that connects to the vessel via a walk-bridge. More than 100,000 square feet of Couristan carpet covers most of the pavilion, (encompassing shops and restaurants) and each of the casino floors.

Maintaining High Levels of Appearance in a Casino That Never Sleeps

"Visitors have a 'total' experience here – and we take that perception very seriously,"

notes Sheahan. "Cleanliness is everything; it's the floors, furnishings, chandeliers, common areas; it's also how you are treated when collecting your winnings; how appealing the buffet and bar look; a total perception."

"The cleaning challenge – and opportunity – particularly as it relates to carpet, is that a casino never sleeps and downtime is out of the question," said Sheahan, who left The Palmer House Hilton Hotel in Chicago three years ago to take the casino job.



Spills of juices, coffee and drinks around buffets and bars are the hour-to-hour cleaning challenge for each carpet specialist.

For the first two years after Sheahan's arrival, the highly trafficked casino floors, combined with the general, aggressive use of the carpet, required frequent wet extraction cleaning to achieve acceptable levels of appearance. But this regimen also required routing visitors around carpeted areas while they were drying, it accelerated wear on the carpet and required it to be replaced annually.

This capital expense and labor-intensive methodology led Sheahan and Whitaker to look for other solutions. The carpet manufacturer recommended dry cleaning, and an in-service demonstration from the local jan-san distributor, Metro Professional Products, showed them how use of a dry extraction cleaning system would offer an alternative strategy, more fitted to carpet

usage and objectives.

Sheahan proceeded cautiously, gathering facts and science by attending the HOST® School Carpet Cleaning College at Racine Industries, Inc. "We bought the HOST System a year ago, began using it immediately and what we saw was the colors coming back into the carpeting," said Sheahan. "It amazed me." He notes that this is really easy to see on Monday mornings, following record numbers of visitors to the casino on weekends.

The Replacement Cycle is Broken

Use of the system has broken the cycle of annual replacement, particularly the carpet on the upper levels of the casino. "Our carpets' longevity is increased and we no longer need to look and say, my gosh, we have to replace the carpet," Sheahan said.

Carpet Cleaned While In Continuous Service

Equally important, on a day-to-day basis, the dry cleaning system keeps the carpet *in continuous service* and focuses cleaning on those areas where it is needed. Cleaning specialists brush the safe, nontoxic and biodegradable cleaner through specific and general areas, then vacuum up the cleaner; there's no mixing of chemicals, no risk of damage. The system maintains appearance and avoids all the previous hassles of routing visitors around cleaned carpeted areas waiting to dry out enough to put back into service.

Patch Replacements Blend In

The casino has solved the "checkerboard" problem too – what the floor can look like when a clean patch of carpet is put into an area where the carpet was permanently stained. "We put in a new patch, clean the area with the dry extraction system and it's all blended; looks great," said Whitaker.

Silent Spotting Removes Spills as They Occur

Spills of juices, coffee and bar drinks, along with the soiling from high traffic areas such as entranceways, are the hour-to-hour cleaning challenge for each carpet specialist maintaining their respective casino floor. "We deal with these *right as they occur* and don't worry about getting the carpet wet," she said. Specialists use a HOST ZAPPER® brush to work cleaner through the spills, or use the HOST Liberator® extractorVAC™ to clean the larger common areas. All the carpet is

kept in service.

“If we get a large spill at the buffet,” said Whitaker, “we can sprinkle a little cleaner on there, take a brush through it – and you know you have dealt with that; removed it and it will not come back. You don’t have whatever the spill is sitting there for hours, until you can get back to extract it. It’s the best part about this whole system. It is not intrusive to the guests or the activity, and no sign is needed – ever – warning guests away from, or around, that area.”

Preventive Cleaning Focus on the “Hot Spots”

Carpet areas such as those adjacent to bars, buffets, trash receptacles and narrow traffic lanes that merge into main aisles, Whitaker dubs “hot spots” and prescribes daily dry extraction cleaning for each of these areas. “It’s preventive!” she notes. “Don’t wait for the hot spot to enlarge 10 times and suddenly find yourself cleaning the whole aisle. Nip it in the bud; hot spots we clean every day.”

In the interest of speed and efficiency, larger hot spot areas often require more than the handheld brush, Sheahan noted. The specialists use one of the casino’s seven HOST Liberator Machines for brushing in the cleaner and then vacuuming it up. “We call this ‘liberating the carpet,’” he said. The casino also uses clear water extraction in some areas, as a complement to the mainstay HOST Program.

Hottest of the hot spots is the service entrance area – the separate access from the pavilion to the boat’s diamond floor level for all casino suppliers and employees. “Everyone and everything goes through the door and down this carpeted area – the trash, the money, supplies, drinks, food,” said Sheahan. “And there are a lot of slot machines, so guests can look back into and through this access area. Before this dry cleaning it was terrible, it was dark all the time, it was nightmarish.”

The carpet specialist cleans the area daily, and it is the rigorous use that makes the area a first candidate for carpet replacement. “You can tell just by looking through the clear hopper of the vacuum on the Liberator how much soil this area traps and holds,” said Whitaker. “Without this daily focus, this area could

look horrendous but it doesn’t. We think the service area has to be presentable, too – to our guests and to our suppliers.”

Hot spot cleaning is documented in a master cleaning plan that Whitaker created and that breaks down by area and frequency the cleaning schedule for daily, weekly, bi-weekly and monthly cleaning, using the HOST Dry Extraction System. “Hot spots all get cleaned daily,” she said. “Then, every day we do a section here, and then the next section, so that the cleaning rotates, following the master plan.”

Flying Colors on the Secret Shopper’s Test

No one knows whom the secret shopper is that boards the casino monthly for two days and rates *all* services. What Sheahan and Whitaker know is that in the last year their marks on cleanliness



The HOST® Dry Extraction Cleaning System keeps the casino carpet in continuous service and focuses on cleaning key areas, including this restaurant lobby.

have sustained high levels. In the last three months, they've earned a 100 percent scoring twice, with the rest in the high 90's. "Those scores are a lot higher than they were a year ago," Sheahan said. "Yes, customers comment on how clean we are. Professionals from a rival casino have visited and told our administration how clean our pavilion, boat and specifically our carpets are. We are very proud of that."

Reduced Cost; Less Time

To be clean – does it have to be costly? No, according to the experience and numbers documented at the Horseshoe Casino. "We're using less chemical," said Sheahan, "we're not using an extraction chemical, nor a shampoo, and we've eliminated several spotters. So, overall, our costs are down. We also spend less time than before maintaining carpet, so that found time can be deployed to other cleaning jobs."

"The real way to say it is, our cost of carpet maintenance is down because we are spending less time on the carpet. And we've



Even at night, the Horseshoe Casino never sleeps. This creates unique challenges for cleaning the over 100,000 square feet of carpet that covers the casino floors and the adjacent entrance pavilion.

raised the productivity of our department."

Sheahan's advice to his peers at other casinos and hospitality facilities: "Get the best for your

carpet; you have to have something that's workable around people. This system makes us look good. We don't have to worry about wet carpet and resoiling."



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