



HOTEL SYRACUSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

DEVELOPER SAYS HE'LL CHANGE THE NAME
OF THE HISTORIC HOTEL AFTER \$57M RENOVATION

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Say goodbye to the Hotel Syracuse name. The historic building's name will soon be history.

The Hotel Syracuse's new owner said he's planning to dump the moniker — its name since the hotel opened in 1924 — when it reopens in 2016 after a \$57 million renovation.

Ed Riley said he'll rename the hotel to include the name of whatever national hotel brand it affiliates with following the renovation.

Just what that name will be is not set in stone. Riley said he's in discussions with a number of top-tier hotel chains but has no agreement yet.

The hotel developer has made no secret of the fact that one of the brands with which he is holding discussions is Hyatt. He has told county lawmakers that if the hotel affiliates with Hyatt, its name will be changed to the Hyatt Regency Syracuse.

The Hotel Syracuse name has been around for 90 years and holds a lot of nostalgic value to the generations of Central New Yorkers who attended weddings, parties and other events in its famous

Grand Ballroom or Persian Terrace room.

However, its reputation — and name — took a major hit in the years leading up to its closing in 2004. As its financial problems grew, service quality declined and the condition of its rooms deteriorated.

The low point came in 1999, when thousands of bowlers and their families came to Syracuse for the four-month American Bowling Congress tournament. Many who stayed at the Hotel Syracuse during the tournament complained about the condition of their rooms, some of which had been closed for years and reopened just for the tournament.

Riley said a new name, combined with totally rebuilt and enlarged rooms, will go a long way toward wiping away the bad reputation the downtown Syracuse hotel developed before its bankruptcy and eventual closure.

Not only that, but having the name of a top hotel brand will help draw customers who look for hotels with high standards for quality and service, he said. It also will allow the hotel to tap into a top brand's national reservations system and sales



A doorman and bellhop unload luggage for a guest arriving at the Warren Street entrance to the Hotel Syracuse circa 1945. (Onondaga Historical Association)

(Top), The room between the hotel registration and the bar at the Hotel Syracuse. May 6, 2014. (Dennis Nett / dnett@syracuse.com)

force, he said.

He's expecting some criticism from fans of the old name, but he said they'll get over it quickly.

"Any blowback, I think, would be very, very minor, and people who come from outside the area will be more concerned about the rooms and ballrooms than they are about the name," he said.

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