

Runner's Guide to Vegas, baby! - by Jack of Hearts

Planning to go to Lady Luck's hometown of Las Vegas? Or more likely, you woke up here without your pants and a couple platinum credsticks and don't know how. Well, fortunately for you chummer, I took my time to create this guidebook just for you. Yes, just for you, kiddo! Aren't you special?

First thing you gotta know about Vegas is that it's had a rough time. During the Awakening in 2012, the Mojave around it came alive with all sorts of spirits and crazy parazoological abominations that decided to wreck havoc on the Strip. While it was contained and controlled by some local shamans that happened to be on the casinos' payrolls, the damage was significant and Vegas was declared a national disaster zone by the US- not that they were able to do much, their hands were a bit tied at the time. Because the feds couldn't do shit, the crime bosses around Vegas stepped in to restore what order they could and ruled de facto until a couple years later when the Treaty of Denver put Sin City square into the hands of the Pueblo Corporate Council.

So you think the PCC would step in and clean the mob bosses out of there and take complete control, right? Well, to them, that was an investment risk and potential lost profit so they took a different route. The Corporate Council turned Vegas into something they called an Entrepreneurial Free Sector and created the subsidiary Vegas Enterprises Company to manage it. How's that related to the mob bosses? Well, they also gave all the big fish of the Vegas underworld significant stock shares for Vegas Enterprises, meaning their de facto power was now supported by the PCC. What does that mean for schmucks like you and I, you ask? Well, now when you try to skip town on your gambling debts to the Mafia, it's perfectly legal for them to break your legs and leave you dying in an alley. Not that the legality changed much in that situation in the first place. This gave the crime bosses power, but also made them have to answer to the PCC, win-win for everyone, right?

This worked for a while, the PCC using their partnerships with the various criminal factions to rebuild Vegas and fortify it against the Awakened Mojave as the awakened critters and spirits only became more populous and active as time went on. The strongest walls and wards went up around the Vegas Strip where the biggest and best casinos, hotels and attractions were, becoming a haven of sin and vice for the corporate elite. Of course the Strip wasn't the only place in Vegas if you were looking for sin and vice. Beyond the Strip there was Lower Vegas, where all the wage slaves and middle management lived and came to visit to get their share of sin and vice that Vegas had to offer. Beyond Lower Vegas was the Vegas Sprawl, the portion of the city that hadn't been rebuilt after the awakening and the chaos that followed.

While Sin City kept living up to its name, the Mojave around it changed dramatically with the Awakening. Overnight it became a hotbed of spirits and leylines, changing the flora and fauna throughout. Lizards grew to the size of wolves, plants moved up a few places in the food chain, and spirits roamed free. This made it a place of pilgrimage for many of the world's newly-awakened shamans and a destination for parabiologists and big game hunters. This strengthened Vegas' tourist industry, creating a subsector of guided Awakened Mojave Desert spirit tours and hunting tours.

Things carried on like this for a while until 2028, when the Big Ones hit all along the west coast and San Andreas fault. Vegas wasn't spared from the tremors, suffering widespread destruction in every part of the city. It didn't help that the recovery efforts weren't near completion when the Crash of 29' hit and Vegas fell into chaos. The Crash resulted in the PCC losing track of who held shares in Vegas Enterprises, meaning that all the official power the mobsters had was lost. When the PCC had recovered from the Crash, Vegas Enterprises found itself with a completely new Board of Directors and shareholders. Funny how things ended up that way.

The newly reformed Vegas Enterprises Company set to the task of fully rebuilding Vegas to achieve a splendor it had never had before. The city's defenses against the Awakened Mojave were heavily fortified, the Vegas Strip and Upper Vegas being guarded by 20 foot tall concrete barriers between them and the rest of Vegas. Lower Vegas got a new chain-link fence around it and some checkpoints. Leading to Vegas, Highways 15 and 95 to the northwest and northeast were given regular checkpoints and drone patrols along with guarded convoys of tourists going to Vegas to lose all their nuyen. Of course this was if you could afford VEC's Deluxe Protection Plan, otherwise you had to pay the toll at the gate and hope that some 10 foot long awakened lizard doesn't decide that your beat-up sedan would make a good snack. For the really important folks, you could get a ticket by plane or helicopter to fly safely over the Awakened Mojave. At time of writing, the VEC are planning to build an armored monorail line out of northern Vegas- but I'm not sure how that investment's gonna turn out for them.

But what about the highways south out of Vegas? After the chaos that followed in the Awakening, the quakes, and the Crash, the deserts and roads south of Vegas had become warzones. A plethora of gangs and tribes constantly fighting over stretches of the highway with crazy armored cars and trucks. These highways, the now called Fury Roads, became the territory of warlords and tribes. The PCC decided that the investment to remove the gangs was greater than the potential profit from people using the highways to come up from the Aztlan, and left the highways as they were.