Caesars separating online, brick and mortar gaming

By AP

LAS VEGAS — Caesars Entertainment is taking steps to spin off its online gambling venture into a separate company.

The casino operator, which owns Harveys and Harrah's Lake Tahoe in Stateline, said in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing Wednesday that it plans to raise $1.2 billion by selling stock in the company.

The new company also would include the Planet Hollywood Hotel & Casino and a Baltimore casino under development.

Caesars plans to launch an online gambling site in Nevada in the coming months, and it already operates sites abroad.

The company said in its regulatory filing that it is "actively participating in the U.S. lobbying effort" to expand legalized online gambling beyond the three states where it is currently permitted: Nevada, New Jersey and Delaware.

Once the world's largest gambling operator, Caesars has struggled with debt recently.

It's the only major U.S. casino company without a presence in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau.

The company posted a smaller loss last quarter but still missed expectations.

Rivals Wynn and Las Vegas Sands posted big quarterly gains, helped by their lucrative Macau resorts.

Caesars operates 10 Las Vegas Strip casinos and controls several dozen casinos throughout the country.