

# Hotel on Grand Island is set to rebrand as part of Radisson chain



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A hotel on Grand Island, one of Western New York's largest, is being rebranded as part of the Radisson chain.

The Byblos Niagara Resort & Spa on Grand Island will become the Radisson Hotel Niagara Falls-Grand Island on Monday, reintroducing that international hotel chain to Western New York after a long absence. A temporary sign will go up Monday, with permanent signs to be installed in mid-June, said general manager Scott J. Swagler.

Located at 100 Whitehaven Road, the 263-room, six-story hotel sits on 12.6 acres of Niagara River waterfront, next to a golf course and marina. Included in its 181,245 square feet of space are 28,000 square feet of meeting and banquet space, both indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a sauna and whirlpool, and a fitness center. Rooms have private balconies.

Formerly the Holiday Inn-Grand Island, the hotel was acquired in a 2013 foreclosure auction by Byblos Hospitality Group of Dubai, which in turn sold it last summer for \$6.25 million to McSam Hotel Group of Great Neck, Nassau County. Swagler said officials now plan to undertake a "desperately needed" \$5 million renovation starting in the fall to stabilize and enhance the aging property, which has 125 employees.

"We're in the same boat as all the other hotels in this market that are older," Swagler said. "There's been a lot of new hotels that have come online. We need to just keep up with the changes and reinvent the market."

Work will include "pretty much a gut of the guest rooms," including new carpets, wallpaper, drapes, fixtures, sinks, mirrors and other finishes. "You'd be surprised how quickly it adds up," Swagler said. "It is a serious investment."

Bookings are up by about 20 percent for the year so far, with advance reservations "very strong" through August, including the National Softball Association and a couple of auto shows that the hotel is hosting.

"We started the season with a very mild winter. That makes a huge difference for us," Swagler said. "I'm hoping the whole market stays up all summer."