

In Las Vegas for setup for World Of Concrete 2009 — My second year. Town is much quieter this year. There are a slew of half finished construction projects seemingly frozen in time. The huge cranes, derricks and boom pumps are all still standing, but they are still and calm. Everyone seems a little bit more on edge, the gaming floors less peopled, the lounges more empty.

Several of the big attractions are closed or closing. The Hilton has one fewer restaurant, and another on reduced hours. Tom Jones closes in a couple days. The Doobie Brothers are here for a limited engagement, and Heart will play for only two days. Upkeep on the hotel seems to be down as well; it takes longer for the hot water to reach the upper floors, the windows are filthy. Kind of goes hand-in-glove with the US Airways charging for the 1st checked bag, and for water...

Took a walk along Desert Inn Drive this afternoon and the air was acrid with exhaust and diesel fumes. At 57 degrees I feel fine in my shirt sleeves, but the locals are wearing jackets. The show floor is succumbing to a fresh blanketing of carpet. Tens of thousands of square feet of carpeting with under-foam, will be laid today and tomorrow morning, then covered with plastic sheeting so that the thousands of tons of construction machinery can be driven around on it and maneuvered into perfect position. Once positioned the trucks will be detailed, touched up, tricked out. The furniture and potted plants will be brought in, the structures will rise up out of thousands of crates which appear and disappear in seemingly perfect choreography...or is it barely controlled chaos? Large format plasma screens will alight like so many butterflies on so many exhibit walls. Cables will be plugged, connected, strung and stretched (and cut and broken).

When all is set the plastic sheets will be trimmed back from everything, the candy dishes will be filled, the coolers stocked with fluids of all sorts. The computers booted up, the badge readers plugged in, the booth-bunnies given their marching orders...etc.

Ahh yes, WOC 2009.