

LAWRENCE WELK'S REAL ESTATE EMPIRE

USING THE PROCEEDS OF his musical career, Lawrence Welk began a second career as a real estate entrepreneur in the mid-1960s. In 1964, he bought nine hundred acres of land near Escondido, California, that included a nine-hole golf course, a motel, and a mobile-home community. Welk expanded the golf course, improved the motel to a hotel, added a restaurant and gift shop, and drew attention to the property by holding concerts there and promoting it on his television show. Welk expanded his real estate holdings in 1971 when he constructed the Lawrence Welk Plaza in Santa Monica. The development consisted of a sixteen-story apartment building and a twenty-one-story office block. The office block contained the headquarters of Welk's company as well as the headquarters of General Telephone Company (today known as GTE). After Welk's death in 1992, the Welk Resort Group, which was controlled by the Welk family, continued to expand its holdings to include two other locations in California as well as in Branson, Missouri; Breckenridge, Colorado; and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. The family sold the Welk Resort Group to Marriot Vacations Worldwide Corporation in 2021.