NEILSEN CRAIG H
Form 4
December 17, 2004

FORM 4

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

OMB APPROVAL

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Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. *See* Instruction 1(b).

(Print or Type Responses)

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person *
NEILSEN CRAIG H

(Last) (First) (Middle)

(Street)

(City) (State) (Zip)

2. Issuer Name **and** Ticker or Trading Symbol
AMERISTAR CASINOS INC [ASCA]

3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)
12/16/2004

4. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)

5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer
(Check all applicable)
__X__ Director
__X__ 10% Owner
__X__ Officer (give title below)
_____ Other (specify below)
CEO/President

6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)
_X_ Form filed by One Reporting Person
___ Form filed by More than One Reporting Person

Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

1.Title of Security (Instr. 3)	2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year)	3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8)		4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)			5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4)	6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)	7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)
			Code	V	Amount	(A) or (D)	Price			

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

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Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned
(*e.g.*, puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

1. Title of Derivative Security	2. Conversion or Exercise	3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any	4. Transaction Code	5. Number of Derivative Securities	6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year)	7. Title and Amount Underlying Securitie (Instr. 3 and 4)

(Instr. 3)	Price of Derivative Security	(Month/Day/Year)	(Instr. 8)	Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4, and 5)							
			Code	V	(A)	(D)	Date Exercisable	Expiration Date	Title	Amou Numb Shares
Stock Options (Right to Buy)	$ 42.6	12/16/2004	A		105,000		12/15/2005(1)	12/16/2011	Common Stock	105,0

Reporting Owners

Reporting Owner Name / Address	Relationships			
	Director	10% Owner	Officer	Other
NEILSEN CRAIG H	X	X	CEO/President	

Signatures

Peter C. Walsh, Attorney-in-Fact	12/17/2004
**Signature of Reporting Person	Date

Explanation of Responses:

***** If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, *see* Instruction 4(b)(v).

****** Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. *See* 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

(1) Option vests in five equal annual installments commencing on December 15, 2005.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, *see* Instruction 6 for procedure.
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