

The Indiana Casino Gaming News

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“The District” opens at Aztar

After months of planning, construction, and seemingly endless hype and anticipation, Casino Aztar threw open the doors to its newest investment in Evansville this month.

Aztar representatives cut the ribbon for The District at Casino Aztar on Friday, September 15, for a crowd of VIP invitees, before opening the district to the public September 18. The \$40 million project, located next to Casino Aztar on the Evansville riverfront, has been under construction for about a year.

“We’re incredibly excited about opening The District at Casino Aztar,” said Jim Brown, president and general manager of Casino Aztar. “This project has created a real buzz around Evansville; it’s a unique project that brings something entirely new to our facility and the Evansville area.”

The ribbon cutting marked the first openings in The District, with Ri Ra’s Irish Pub and Jillian’s Billiards Club opening their doors. In December, Aztar also will open its new luxury hotel, which will feature a hip, edgy Ultra-Lounge.

In between those two sections of The District will be a small park, with a view overlooking the Ohio River.

The current openings, however, are expected to draw hundreds of people into Downtown Evansville to enjoy the city’s most unique entertainment destination. Ri Ra’s Irish Pub comes to town with an authentic Irish flavor – everything from the furniture and menu to many of the staff members are imported from an actual pub in Ireland, giving Ri Ra’s a genuine Irish feel.



AZTAR ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX

And Jillian’s Billiards Club will offer countless exciting entertainment options, ranging from bowling and billiards to a large gaming room and big-screen televisions, where patrons can watch all their favorite sporting events.

Between the two, there is something in The District for everyone, making it Downtown Evansville’s hottest, most unique entertainment destination.

“There really is nothing like it in Southwestern Indiana,” Brown said. “Where else can you park your car and walk to an area with so many different opportunities? In addition to casino gaming, you can go bowling, you can have lunch or dinner, enjoy cocktails, play billiards, video games, enjoy live music, experience an authentic Irish pub with darts, music, and a huge variety of beer, and so much more.”

“There are so many options, and it’s all about choice and variety for our guests.”

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Four “Licensed to Win” at Majestic Star

Four lucky visitors to the Majestic Star Casinos drove away in style this month, as winners of the properties’ “Licensed to Win” promotion.

Every Thursday between August 24 and September 14, Majestic Star drew 10 names from the contest’s entry pool. Nine won cash prizes; the 10th, however, had the chance to drive home in the brand new luxury car of their choosing.

Options for the winners included a Mercedes C280, Nissan 350Z, Jaguar X-Type, or a Cadillac CTS.

The contest’s final winner, identified as Elizabeth W. of Valparaiso, Indiana, chose the Cadillac CTS, valued at \$35,000. The other winners were Elouise M. of Crete, Ill.; Cathy H. of Dyer, Indiana; and Majestic Star’s first winner, Lamia S. of Highland, Indiana.

Elouise M., of Crete, Ill., was one of four lucky winners to win a brand new luxury car at Majestic Star Casinos last month.



Recommending a few Responsible revisions

Gaming officials in Missouri are causing quite a stir this month, after suggesting they will review - and may revise - part of their Responsible Gaming program.



The changes would come to the voluntary self-exclusion program, which was the first of its kind in the country. Since its inception, more than 10,000 Missourians have agreed to voluntarily ban themselves from the state's casinos for life.

But is it really necessary to ban them for life? That's the question the state will ask in reviewing the policy, with an eye toward implementing less permanent options to the self-exclusion program.

As part of a state that already has had that discussion, I'd like to offer some advice to Missouri: In the words of those old Nike ads, "Just Do It!"

We did, and it was the right decision.

Remember, this is a VOLUNTARY program, aimed at helping people who recognize their problem, and want to seek help. It is a program we want people to enroll in; if they have a problem, we want them to get help, and we want them to do it voluntarily.

How many people, truly, would voluntarily ban themselves forever? If that is their only option, many likely will forego it, and as a result likely would not receive the treatment and help they needed.

We've learned that in Indiana. Here, there are options; I believe that have played a significant role in our program's success. I believe many people have signed up for temporary bans while they sought treatment - people who would not have signed up for lifetime bans. If that were their only option, they may very well still be suffering from their addiction.

Recent studies have shown that problem gambling is not like alcoholism; it is not a permanent affliction, and can be reversed over time and/or through counseling. That's why I believe Indiana's approach to this issue is the right one: Give people options, and they are likely to take them; force them into a lifetime ban, and they will likely ignore you.

I wish Missouri luck in their pursuit of this issue, and hope they come to the same conclusion.

- Mike Smith, Executive Director



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In Brief...

Kentucky, Illinois again talk gaming expansion

Expanded gaming could again become an issue in neighboring states next year, as both Illinois and Kentucky politicians have broached the subject.

Illinois gubernatorial candidate Judy Topinka proposed a land-based casino in Chicago and expanded gaming throughout the state as a way to raise funds for public schools and property tax relief. She is the latest of several Illinois politicians to propose expanded gaming.

Experts, however, already have noted that her proposal could come to nothing, as she currently trails sitting Gov. Blagojevich in the polls.

Kentucky's 2008 gubernatorial race also could see gaming as an issue. So far, the state has refused all attempts at introducing gaming, but Secretary of State (and likely gubernatorial candidate) Greg Stumbo is advocating the issue to help phase out vehicle property taxes.

That issue could again be raised in Kentucky in 2007, despite the state's rejection of the same issue this year.

No words as to whether or not the state's "Indiana Sucks" slogan, decrying the millions Kentuckians spend in Indiana casinos, will be resurrected.

What about expansion in Indiana?

The Indiana Licensed Beverage Association began a series of public meetings this month, aimed at drumming support for expanded gambling in Indiana.

Specifically, the group hopes to persuade the legislature to legalize video gambling machines at local

clubs, such as American Legion posts. Despite a current law against them, many such clubs already have these machines, supporters say.

The Indianapolis *Star* quoted both state lawmakers and members of the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission as in favor of the idea.

Admission and Wagering Taxes

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Admission Tax, August '06 | \$ 6,867,528 |
| Wagering Tax, August '06 | \$42,551,139 |
| Admission Tax, Fiscal YTD | \$14,260,161 |
| Wagering Tax, Fiscal YTD | \$77,495,289 |
| Total Admission and Wagering Tax | \$91,755,450 |

*Fiscal Year Defined as July 1 to June 30

Rivera living the American Dream

Horseshoe employee embraces community involvement through Winning Together program

In the last few years, Adriana Rivera has met the governor.

She has been a part of numerous voter participation drives, and volunteered in countless East Chicago activities. She's even been promoted to EVS Shift Supervisor by her employer, Horseshoe Hammond.

And she's done it all after leaving her home country of Mexico, in part because being a woman kept her from doing those things.

"Being active and involved in my community is in my blood," Adriana said. "And (Horseshoe) allows me to show my commitment to both my country and to my company."

Adriana was born March 5, 1966, in Mexico City. As the youngest child of Felix Molina and Consuela Bello, she was the only one in her family to attend college, graduating from textile school. But when she reached the job market – despite having numerous offers – she found that very few people were interested in her ideas and opinions because of her gender.

So, in an effort to empower herself and women around her country, Adriana became an educated voter. She cast her first ballot at the age of 18, waiting in line – despite her mother's protests – to exercise her right.

"By becoming an active and educated voter," she said. "I felt that I honored people like my grandfather, father, and others who had to fight for the freedoms that we often take for granted."

She moved to America in 1996, after visiting her sister in East Chicago. It was on that visit that she met her husband, fellow Horseshoe employee Jesse Rivera.

Marriage let her stay in America; hard work eventually made her a citizen.

Today, Adriana is an active member of the East Chicago community. She is a member of Horseshoe's Winning Together community service team; she is involved in registering voters, and has even become president of the Northern Indiana chapter of the International Executive Housekeepers' Association.

Many of these things, she notes, she



Adriana with Governor Mitch Daniels at a recent Winning Together event.

could not have done in her home country. But she feels at home in East Chicago, serving the community and giving everyone she meets the same advice: Vote.

Because, as Adriana says, "Being active and involved in my community is in my blood." That's why Adriana represents the values Horseshoe looks for in every employee.

And Horseshoe has given her as much as she has given her community.

"Working at Horseshoe Hammond has allowed us to have a home, two cars and happy surroundings to raise our children in," Adriana said.



Labor Day 2006 featured even more action than normal at Caesars Indiana, as the Harrah's property hosted the Louisville area broadcast of the Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon.

Caesars personnel handled telephones for the final six hours of the telethon, where Kentuckian residents raised a new local high of \$527,483.

It was the fourth straight year Caesars hosted the event. Above, General Manager Ed Garruto and another team member man the phones.

Internet gambling bill dying in Senate?

The bill to ban Internet gambling, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly this year, may die in the Senate.

While Republican leaders believe in the bill, and appear to have a majority ready and willing to pass it, the election year calendar may prevent it. With too many other issues on the table, and plans to recess Congress at the end of September, even Majority Leader Bill Frist – a staunch advocate of the bill – won't commit to its passage this year.

That would mark yet another defeat on an issue that Congress has championed for several years now. Both the House and the Senate have passed several forms of anti-online gambling legislation over the past several years; thus far, the closest vote in the Senate has been 90-10 in favor of the ban. But never have both been able to pass

the same bill in the same Congressional session.

But some Congressional Republicans aren't giving up on the issue. Sen. John Kyl, R-Ariz., is attempting to amend the bill, removing language about betting across state lines to alleviate concerns from the horse racing industry. That could remove some issues on the Senate floor.

Frist also has advocated adding it to a defense bill, which could increase chances of passage.

If that bill is passed, it still would become illegal to use credit cards or other forms of bank payment to collect gambling debts. And it is expected that the House would pass the amended bill quickly, and send it to President Bush to sign.

Bush has vowed to sign the anti-online gambling bill whenever it is passed.

First phase of French Lick project opens

Step one in opening the brand new French Lick Resort & Casino came this month, as VIPs teed off at the newly restored Donald Ross Golf Course at French Lick.

The historic course was officially re-unveiled with a VIP invitational September 8. It is the first section of the \$382 million development to open in Orange County, Indiana.

The course was originally opened in French Lick in 1917, and is rich with golf history. Along with being designed by legendary course architect Donald Ross, it played host to such classic matches as Walter Hagen's dramatic PGA Championship in 1924, as well as to Betsy Rawls 1959 LPGA Championship.

And in this \$4.6 million renovation,



great care was taken to restore and highlight that heritage. Representatives of French Lick Resort & Casino worked closely with the Donald Ross Society to preserve the course's historical integrity, even while adding everything from state-of-the-art irrigation systems to GPS trackers in the golf carts to give players the best, most modern experience in golfing.

"With the reminiscent design, a new computerized irrigation system, redesigned cart paths and a clubhouse that's a throwback to the Hagen era, The Donald Ross Course at French Lick will provide golfers the unique opportunity to walk in the footsteps of history...and make some history of their own," said Dave Harner, director of golf at French Lick Resort & Casino.

As the first section of the new French Lick Resort & Casino opened to the public, Cook Group Chairman Steve Ferguson called the Donald Ross Golf Course – along with two other state-of-the-art courses preparing to open on the property – a "vital component" in the overall restoration project.

"French Lick will be the Midwest's premier casino, resort, and golf destination," Ferguson said.



Ferguson was part of the first foursome to christen the course. Joining him on the first tee were lead golf course architect Lee Schmidt, Donald Ross Society President Michael Fay, and Lauth Property Group Chairman Bob Lauth.

The new casino in French Lick currently is on pace to make its scheduled November opening.

Gaming terms

Chemin de Fer – A form of baccarat where the players compete against one another, and not against the house. Common in Nevada.

Closed Cards – Cards dealt face-down.

Front Loader – In blackjack, a careless dealer who uncovers his hole card while dealing.

Lay Bet – In craps, a wager that seven will roll before the number wagered on. A house commission is charged on the true dice odds amount that could be won.

Pair-Splitting – In blackjack, a hand that contains two cards of the same value that can be split or separated and bet as two separate hands.

Sharper – A card cheat or superior player who takes advantage of novices.

Ohio gambling proposal dodges bullet

Those working toward expanded gaming in Ohio breathed a collective sigh of relief this week, when their issue sidestepped a technical land-mine on the road to November's ballot.

After turning in more than 625,000 signatures to the Ohio Secretary of State's office, backers of the Learn & Earn campaign were disappointed to learn that only about half – 314,183, to be exact – could be certified as registered voters. That fell a little less than 9,000 short of the 323,000 signatures needed to put the issue before voters in November.

But, given an extra 10 days to secure more signatures, the group now has turned in another 44,000 to the office, of which enough were verified to put the issue on the ballot.

It will appear in November as Issue 3. "We didn't want to take any chances," Linda Siefkis, spokesperson for Learn and Earn, told the *Akron Beacon Journal*. "What we're hearing back is we're in good shape."

If approved by voters, Learn and Earn would allow for slots at Ohio's seven racetracks, as well as provide for two casinos to be built in the Cleveland area. The plan is supported by all the major racetrack owners, including Argosy owner (and Casino Association of Indiana member) Penn National Gaming, which favored the plan over one that would have put casino competition into neighboring Cincinnati.