

The Indiana Casino Gaming News

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Horseshoe shows off new facility

More than 28,000 guests were in Hammond recently to catch a glimpse of Indiana's newest casino facility.

Horseshoe Hammond officially unveiled its new casino on August 8, bringing people from across the Midwest and the nation to see the structure. Celebrities and invited VIPs were treated to an elaborate meal and first-rate entertainment, including performances by alternative music star Josh Kelley and a "side-splitting" music and comedy set by legendary Hollywood entertainer Bette Midler.

"This was a day to celebrate the hard work and dedication of the thousands of individuals who worked to bring our new casino to life," Rick Mazer, Harrah's Entertainment's Indiana regional president and general manager of Horseshoe Hammond, said of the event. "This party was also a way to say 'thank you' to our loyal guests and new guests for their support during our



Above: Horseshoe's New Facility

Left: Rick Mazer does a television interview at the opening.

time of transition. I could not have scripted a better evening."

Harrah's spent more than \$500 million on the new facility. The casino now includes more than 350,000 square feet of entertainment

space, including a 108,000-square-foot gaming floor (more than triple the size of the property's previous casino). With 34 poker tables, Horseshoe Hammond is now home to the largest poker room in the Midwest and

offers more than 3,200 slot options.

The casino also features a new, 650-seat buffet (a total of 300 more seats than the previous buffet), which includes offerings such as American, Latin, Asian, and Italian cuisine, seafood, and more. Two casino floor bars, Vintage 51 and Push, provide guests with a large selection of micro-brews, wine, champagne, and other cocktails.

The entertainment section of the facility, The Venue, has a general admission floor can fit up to 2,400 people, and a total room capacity of more than 3,300. Acts that have already performed include rockers the Smashing Pumpkins and Stone Temple Pilots, comedians Jay Leno and Sarah Silverman, and entertainer Liza Minnelli.

As for the grand opening itself? According to Janet P. of Chicago: "Horseshoe definitely knows how to throw a party!"

Change is in the Air at French Lick

The Midwest's largest non-smoking area has opened this month at the French Lick Resort.

The 9,500 square-foot space includes nearly 300 slot machines, roulette, craps, Crazy 4 and black jack tables.

"The non-smoking area has nearly everything you can find on the main casino floor including Wheel of

Fortune, Gold Fish, Quick Hits, Life of Luxury Deluxe, Hot Shots, Cashman, Keno and video

poker," said Brian Marsh, Vice President of Casino Operations. "We are also featuring a Cadillac and a Harley Davidson carousel."

Focus On

French Lick

In addition to a variety of new slot machines and table games, the room also features "PokerPro"

poker games.

Since the project began in May, the casino has significantly increased the fresh air intake on the main casino

floor. With the additional air-handling equipment in place, visitors and staff are already noticing the enhanced air quality.

"Along with opening a non-smoking gaming venue, we are equally committed to making the main casino floor as exciting and comfortable as possible from an environmental standpoint," Marsh said.

Take a look at what our casinos are doing!

Every month, I look at our newsletter, and I'm excited

I'm excited by what our casinos are doing - the investment, the philanthropy. The way our casinos are affecting people..

This month's issue is a terrific example. Looking through the pages of this month's Indiana Casino Gaming News, I see a terrific cross-section of what Indiana's casinos offer this state. Take a look.



On the cover, we have the grand opening of Horseshoe Hammond's new casino. What's happening at Horseshoe is what keeps Indiana's properties at the top of the casino heap. The property is growing, changing - staying ahead of the competition, so that when another state (see the story to the right about Ohio, for example) starts expanding their gaming options, people will still come to Indiana, because this is where they will find the *best* gaming options.

They also will find the gaming atmosphere they want, as evidenced by the other story on Page 1. The French Lick Resort Casino recently opened a non-smoking section on their property. They are testing the market research indicating that non-smoking areas make less money.

To your right, you'll see a great example of casino philanthropy, with a fun story about Casino Aztar's contribution to the Muscular Dystrophy Association. This is merely one of countless such stories we could tell every month, from every property.

And on the next page is one of my favorite things to see: the story of a young woman whose life was improved by the casino industry. Heather McKeag, who works in accounting at Horseshoe Southern Indiana, got help attending college from the casino industry - then got a job in her field when she graduated!

That doesn't even factor the great story on Page 4, where Majestic Star helped create community investment by hosting a group of investors from China!

These are the kinds of stories that make me proud to represent the casino industry. We really are making a difference in Indiana!

- Mike Smith, President

Random Notes



An employee at Casino Aztar in Evansville was "arrested" this month, charged with aiding and abetting the Muscular Dystrophy Association's Labor Day Telethon.

Jennifer Morgan (above left), the casino's director of finance, was taken to the "Maximum Appreciation Prison, located in Jillian's Billiards Club - a venue located in The District at Casino

Aztar.

With bond set at \$1,800, - an amount paid by Director of Marketing Stacey McNeill (above right) answered the phone and arrived to present the \$1,800 check to representatives of MDA.

The money will go toward MDA's local healthcare service program and worldwide research efforts.

Ohio looks at casinos ... again

If the results of a new Columbus *Dispatch* poll have anything to say about it, Ohio may be taking another look at casino gaming.

The state, which has seen several efforts at expanded gaming fail, still is hearing discussion about a casino along Interstate 71. And according to the *Dispatch*

poll, more than 50 percent of Ohio residents would favor such a proposal.

The poll found that 53 percent favored a proposed \$600 million resort, while 37 percent opposed. Those in favor already have collected 760,000 signatures to put the issue on the November ballot.

Admission and Wagering Taxes

Admission Tax, August '08	\$ 7,217,407
Wagering Tax, August '08	\$51,603,612
Admission Tax, Fiscal YTD	\$14,035,565
Wagering Tax, Fiscal YTD	\$92,274,201
Total Admission and Wagering Tax	\$106,309,766

*Fiscal Year Defined as July 1 to June 30



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Casino Aztar in Evansville, Ind.

Casino Aztar sale delayed; auction expected in November

A potential sale of Evansville's Casino Aztar is on hold.

Tropicana Entertainment, which had appeared set to sell the property to Eldorado Resorts LLC, now is hedging on the sale, after a shake-up in the company's management. The new management, which has brought a new attitude to the bankrupt company, believes that the company can escape bankruptcy with most of its assets in tact – or, at least, get a better sale price for those of which it disposes, according to *Indiana Gaming Insight*.

Thus, the sale of Aztar – which, according to the publication, was already set for a fair market price – may go on hold while Tropicana either attempts to find a new buyer at a higher price, or opts to keep the casino for itself. Aztar's performance has improved since the Indiana Gaming Commission appointed a trustee to handle operations.

"I think, if we're not able to get a value we think is fair, then we would be prepared to" maintain ownership of the casinos, new

Tropicana Chief Executive Officer Scott Butera told the *Wall Street Journal*. "At this point, our commitment is to try and get a fair value for the property ... The whole profile of the company is dramatically different than when we entered into the (Eldorado) agreement; we've tried to correct a lot of the things that weren't working."

At this point, that doesn't necessarily mean that Tropicana will attempt to maintain control of the casino. However, the word is that the casino will go up for auction through Lazard, Freres & Company on November 10, with auction closing November 18. A sale then could go into motion by November 20.

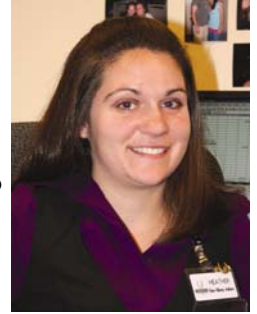
Dropping the Eldorado deal would cost Tropicana a break-up fee of \$6.6 million and other fees not to exceed \$500,000, according to *Indiana Gaming Insight*.

At present, the Gaming Commission is proceeding with the due diligence required to complete the sale to Eldorado. Stay tuned to this space for more information on Aztar's status as it unfolds.

Spotlight On Heather McKeag

The Indiana casino industry touched Heather McKeag's life at a very young age.

As a high school senior in New Albany, Indiana, she was trying to figure out how she would afford to attend Purdue University. Already, she had taken out student loans; it was beginning to look like her parents would have to take out additional loans before their daughter could go after her degree.



"Fortunately, I was number 10 in my high school class," said McKeag, now a 22-year-old graduate of Purdue. "Because of that high ranking, Horseshoe Southern Indiana (then known as Caesars Indiana) gave me a scholarship for \$2,000 a year, renewable for four years. It was the only scholarship that I got, and it helped me pay for college a lot."

McKeag was one of about 20 students at her high school to receive such a scholarship. Several students at two other New Albany-area high schools also received similar scholarships – part of the casino's ongoing commitment to the community.

And now, after four years of help with college, the casino industry has taken a new role in McKeag's life.

After graduating Purdue in May with a degree in actuarial science and statistics, McKeag applied for an entry-level job in the Horseshoe Southern Indiana accounting department. Two interviews later, McKeag was offered the job; she started May 19.

Now, four months in, she doesn't intend to leave the industry anytime soon.

"I really enjoy all of the people I work with," McKeag said. "And the casino industry is pretty exciting – it always keeps you on your toes. You never know what's going to happen day to day."

She's also proud to be part of an industry that continually gives back to the community – and that, this year, once again gave her family a little boost.

"They still give away those scholarships every year," McKeag said. "My little sister actually got one this year, to go to Indiana University Southeast. So it's exciting that the industry is helping her out, as well!"

Visitors open economic opportunity for Gary

Earlier this month, Majestic Star Casino joined the city of Gary in welcoming an economic development delegation from China to discuss investment opportunities in the northern Indiana city.

The Lao Ban Economic Development Delegation arrived in Gary on Sept. 4 and stayed through Sept. 9. While in Gary, members worked with Majestic Star and city officials to exchange ideas, discuss investment opportunities, and foster understanding, friendship, and cooperation between their group and the city.

“On our end, this was a public-private partnership between the city and Majestic Star in inviting foreign investors to Gary,” said Joel Rodriguez, special assistant to Mayor Rudy Clay, from



Representatives of Majestic Star and the city of Gary, Indiana, pose with the Lao Ban Economic Development Delegation during the group’s visit to Gary this month.

Clay’s Department of Economic Development. “Majestic Star has a terrific Asian connection, both with China and with Chinatown in Chicago, and they did a terrific job rolling out the red carpet for this delegation.”

Along with hosting the delegation at the Majestic Star Hotel, the property helped embrace the delegation with a Welcome Dinner

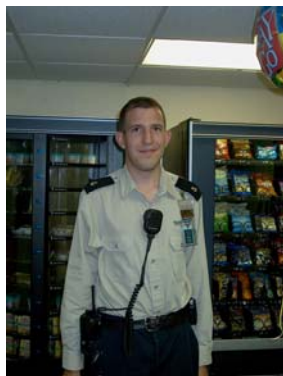
at Don Barden’s restaurant. The trip also included a roundtable discussion, press conference, and a presentation on the City of Gary at City Hall.

Majestic Star also spoke with members of the group about potential investment in the property’s Lakefront Master Plan, Rodriguez said. The plan involves revitalizing the lakefront for mixed-

use and residential developments.

“In order to go that route, we would first have to create a municipal cooperation with the group, which we did while they were here,” Rodriguez said. “So, through a partnership with Majestic Star, we were able to open an economic opportunity for this group to invest in our city.”

Honorees



Grand Victoria Casino recognized its most recent Shining Star Award recipients for the month of July. The monthly inductees included Marine employee Peter Steigerwald (middle), Food and Beverage employee Rachael Thies (right) and Food and Beverage employee Kristen Lazo (left).

During a special luncheon hosted at the property’s premier restaurant, Wellington’s Steakhouse, General Manager, Steve Jimenez presented the honors, including several custom mementos and gifts for their efforts.



Andy Richmer, room chef at Belterra Casino Resort & Spa, this month achieved two levels of ProChef Certification from the Culinary Institute of America. The CIA is known for its commitment to excellence, and has been developing the nation’s best chefs for more than 50 years. Congratulations, Andy!