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# The MICHIGAN GAMING Newsletter



## **MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES GIVES ITS APPROVAL TO GUN LAKE BAND CLASS III COMPACT**

Yesterday afternoon, the Michigan House of Representatives took up two separate resolutions related to the approval of the Tribal State Class III Gaming Compact signed on May 9, 2007 between the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians of Michigan (the Gun Lake Band) and Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm.

The House, by a vote of 63 – 41, passed House Resolution (“HR”) 158, which sets forth the chamber’s approval of the Compact. The House, by a vote of 60-43, also approved House Concurrent Resolution (“HCR”) 39, which ratifies the Compact and calls for Senate concurrence. However, after passing this measure, the House reconsidered the vote, which, from a procedural standpoint, will keep HCR 39 in the House before transferring it to the Senate for action.

In order for the Gun Lake Band’s Compact to obtain the necessary state approval, the measure requires action by the Michigan Senate. The Gun Lake Band Compact would permit the Tribe to construct a casino in Wayland Township, approximately 20 miles south of Grand Rapids, which is Michigan’s second largest city.

## **MICHIGAN LOTTERY COMMISSIONER TO STEP DOWN FRIDAY; WILL CHALLENGE FOR CONGRESSIONAL SEAT**

Michigan Lottery Commissioner Gary Peters will leave his post with the Michigan Bureau of State Lottery on Friday, August 10. He has served the Michigan Lottery since being appointed the Bureau’s seventh Commissioner by Governor Jennifer Granholm on April 9, 2003. Peters has accepted a position as the Griffin Endowed Chair in American Government at Central Michigan University. In his new position, Peters will teach two political science seminars and organize two annual forums to address political and public policy issues.

In addition, on August 7, Peters announced that he will seek the Democratic Party nomination to challenge U.S. Representative Joe Knollenberg (R-MI) for Michigan's 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District seat in the United States House of Representatives. The Michigan 9<sup>th</sup> District will be a key national race and political experts are expecting this to be an intense and aggressive election battle, while many are projecting that this could be one of the most expensive U.S. House races in Michigan history.

Under Peters' stewardship, the Michigan Lottery added Club Games to its portfolio of game offerings and, in fiscal year 2006, contributed \$688 million to the state's School Aid Fund. This was a \$102 million increase over fiscal year 2003.

## **THE MEADOWS RACETRACK AND CASINO ANNOUNCES PLAN FOR PERMANENT SLOTS CASINO**

On Wednesday August 8, 2007 The Meadows Racetrack and Casino in Meadowlands, Pennsylvania, unveiled plans for its new permanent slot machine casino and grandstand. The Meadowlands Racetrack and Casino, billed as the first casino to open in the Greater Pittsburgh area, has been operating in an 82,000 square foot temporary casino with 1,738 slot machines since June, 2007.

Plans call for a new 350,000 square foot, two-story casino which will hold 3,000 slot machines, three new restaurants and a lounge and bar area. The casino complex will also contain a covered grandstand area, VIP boxes with select views of the track, a food court, and a 200-seat simulcast area which will connect to the outdoor track seating. In addition, the permanent casino will include a 200-room hotel and luxury spa.

Construction on the permanent casino and grandstand is expected to be completed in early 2009. The track's current grandstand will be demolished to make way for the new casino. Due to this construction activity, live racing at The Meadows Racetrack will be suspended for two months, though simulcast wagering will still be available as will The Meadows' off-track sites.

"I wish we could open our new permanent casino today because our plans are spectacular," said Bill Paulos, a principal of Las Vegas-based Cannery Casinos Resorts, which owns The Meadows. "The addition of a hotel and luxury spa will make The Meadows Racetrack & Casino a true destination entertainment experience that will draw more visitors to southwestern Pennsylvania. It also enhances our desire to contribute to the economic development of

the region."

The Cannery Casino Resorts team includes Bill Paulos, the former manager of Detroit's Greektown Casino, who oversaw Greektown's opening in November, 2000, and its early years of operation.

## **FOUR WINDS CASINO RESORT REPORTS SUCCESSFUL GRAND OPENING WEEK**

The new Four Winds Casino Resort in New Buffalo, Michigan, which is owned by the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and managed by Lakes Entertainment, Inc., opened to the public on August 2, and has reported a successful grand opening week. According to a statement by the casino, since opening last Thursday, the Four Winds Casino Resort has averaged over 20,000 guests per day, and operated at overflow capacity during its opening weekend. Grand opening festivities at the Four Winds Casino Resort included appearances by former Chicago Bull Scottie Pippen, former Chicago Bears Richard Dent and William "The Refrigerator" Perry, and The Pointer Sisters, among others.

## **SOARING EAGLE CASINO & RESORT'S EXPANSION PLANS DRAW EARLY SUPPORT**

On August 2, 2007 the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe announced its plans for expanding the Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. The preliminary plans call for the new complex to occupy more than 600 acres and, among other developments, add three additional hotel/casinos, a theme park, a water park, retail developments, an indoor ski and skating venue, along with expansions of the current hotel and casino property. In its announcement, the Tribe did not state when such an expansion would begin, though it has said that negotiations are under way to move expansion plans forward.

Despite the current lack of financing and development details available to the general public, many local and regional players have voiced initial support for the expansion plans. The Mount Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce has been quoted in *The Midland Daily News* as saying that it believes that the expansion will be "great in a lot of ways", as it will bring jobs and economic development to the entire region. Likewise, the Mount Pleasant Area Convention and Visitors Bureau has described the plan as "exciting", though they do not know how long it will take to put the plan into action.