

February 20, 2015

Volume 21, Issue 6

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Editor in Chief

David D. Waddell, Esq.

Phone: 517.507.3859

waddell@rmclegal.com

Senior Gaming Analyst & Editor

Robert R. Russell, II

Phone: 517.507.3858

russell@rmclegal.com

Reporter and Associate Editor

Dustin M. Ford

Phone: 517.999.5414

dford@rmclegal.com

Reporter

Blaine R. DeGracia

Phone: 517.507.3857

degracia@rmclegal.com

Subscription information:

info@michigangaming.com

A publication of

RMC Ventures, LLC

Asher Court

321 W. Lake Lansing Rd.

East Lansing, MI 48823

Phone: 517.507.3860

Fax: 517.908.0235

www.rmclegal.com

The MICHIGAN GAMING Newsletter



ISLAND RESORT AND CASINO PLANS \$8M EXPANSION PROJECT

This week, the Island Resort and Casino, located near Escanaba, Michigan in the Upper Peninsula announced plans for an \$8 million expansion to occur over the next two years. The Island Resort and Casino is owned and operated by the Hannahville Indian Community.

The Hannahville Tribal Council recently approved plans to build a second golf course, full-service spa, and a new bar. In addition, the Tribe approved plans include the renovation of its current sports bar, bingo hall and redesign of the exterior hotel entrance.

The resort casino operates over 1,200 slot machines and a variety of table games, in addition to multiple restaurants and entertainment venues. The resort is also home to the Sweetgrass Golf Club.

INDIANA LEGISLATURE ADVANCES GAMING REFORM LEGISLATION

On Thursday, February 19, 2015, the Indiana House Committee on Ways and Means voted 20-3 to approve [House Bill 1540](#) (“[HB 1540](#)”), legislation aimed at reforming the state’s gaming laws, for a floor vote. The bill includes amendments that make changes to the state casino admission’s tax and licensing process from its original version, introduced on January 20, 2015.

The amended legislation would repeal the state admission’s tax. The tax is based upon the number of visitors to the property with the funding provided

to local units of government. Indiana casino operators have expressed support for removing the tax, as well as for replacing the local funding through other means, due to the difficulty in tracking patrons as they enter and exit the riverboat. While the tax was easier to account for when the boats were required to cruise when offering gambling games, past policy changes allowing the riverboats to remain moored at their docks and allowing patrons to enter and exit multiple times in a single day have made calculating the tax difficult for operators. HB 1540 does not contain a replacement for the state admission's tax, but it does require each operator to renegotiate local development agreements.

The bill has also been amended to require Majestic Star, which currently operates two riverboats near Gary, Indiana, to relinquish one of the company's gaming licenses if it decides to relocate to a land-based location. While the original text of HB 1540 included the opportunity for existing licensees to move from riverboat to land-based facilities, it did not limit Majestic Star to a single land-based option for its two existing licenses.

The bill is scheduled for its second reading on the House floor for Monday, February 23, 2015.

For more information on HB 1540, please see Volume 21, Issue 5 of *The Michigan Gaming Newsletter*, available by [clicking here](#).

POKAGON BAND ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO MICHIGAN ECONOMY; ANNOUNCES 2015 FOUR WINDS GOLF INVITATIONAL

Today, February 20, 2015, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians ("Pokagon") announced that it made more than \$88 million in additional contributions to the Michigan economy in 2014. These contributions do not include annual payments made to the State of Michigan as a part of the Pokagon's tribal-state compact. The Pokagon also estimates that it has made approximately \$167 million in additional contributions to the Michigan economy over the past three years.

"The Pokagon Band is proud to have called Michigan and Indiana home for hundreds of years and we are fortunate to be in a position to give back in such meaningful ways. This includes direct contributions, payments to local businesses and vendors, and support of other charitable organizations," said John P. Warren, Chairman of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. "We are also pleased to be one of the largest employers in Michiana with more than 2,500 people."

In 2014, the Pokagon provided \$1.8 million to the Pokagon Fund, which is supported by electronic gaming revenue from the Pokagon's Four Winds New Buffalo. Through revenue generated at its casino locations, the Pokagon also made contributions of \$5.4 million to the New Buffalo Local Revenue Sharing Board, \$990,956 to the Hartford Local Revenue Sharing Board, and \$667,356 to the Dowagiac Area Local Revenue Sharing Board.

2015 Four Winds Invitational

On Thursday, February 19, 2015, the Pokagon and its Four Winds casinos announced that the 2015 Four Winds Invitational will be held from Friday, June 19 through Sunday, June 21 at Blackthorn Golf Club in South Bend, Indiana. The tournament will feature 144 professional women golfers competing on the Symetra Tour—Road to the LPGA competing for a \$150,000 purse.

"We are pleased to continue as the title sponsor for the fourth annual Four Winds Invitational," said John P. Warren, Chairman of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. "Over the past three years, the tournament has had an economic impact of more than \$500,000 to the local economy and provided more than \$200,000 in charitable contributions to worthy causes such as Memorial Children's Hospital."

Several other Symetra Tour events, including the Four Winds Invitational, will be part of the second annual Potawatomi Cup, which awards players a bonus based upon performance at events sponsored by five Potawatomi nations' casinos.

Additional information including the 2015 charity beneficiary, volunteer opportunities, and ticket sales can be found at www.fourwindsinvitational.com.