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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

Douglas L. Minke
Phone: 313.221.9380
minke@rmclegal.com

Reporter

Blaine R. DeGracia
Phone: 517.507.3857
degracia@rmclegal.com

Subscription information:
info@michigangaming.com

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RMC Ventures, LLC

University Place Center
333 Albert Ave, Suite 450
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: 517.507.3860
Fax: 517.908.0235
www.rmclegal.com

The _____ MICHIGAN GAMING _____ Newsletter



JIM PLAKAS APPOINTED TO THE MGCB

Yesterday, *Crain's Detroit Business* reported that former state representative and Garden City mayor Jim Plakas has been appointed to the Michigan Gaming Control Board ("MGCB") by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm.

Today, the Governor's office confirmed with *The Michigan Gaming Newsletter* that Mr. Plakas's term runs through December 31, 2012, as he is filling the seat held previously by Mr. Don Robinson.

Mr. Plakas was elected as a state Representative in Michigan's 17th District in 2000. He previously served on the Garden City Council for 17 years, and as Mayor Pro-Tem and Mayor from 1983-1993. Mr. Plakas is also recipient of the Ford Motor Company's National Award for Community Service.

Mr. Plakas's appointment comes after prior Chairperson Damian Kassab resigned in December, 2009, leaving the five person board with only three members. As reported in Volume 16, Issue 6 of *The Michigan Gaming Newsletter*, Ms. Barbara Rom has been appointed by the Governor as the Board's new chairperson. The other two board members include the Honorable Benjamin Friedman of Huntington Woods and Mr. Michael Watza of Northville.

Mr. Plakas's appointment by Governor Granholm permits him to attend the March 9, 2010 public meeting of the MGCB. From a procedural standpoint, the Michigan Senate has 60 days to accept or reject Mr. Plakas's appointment. If the Senate does not act on the appointment, then Mr. Plakas's appointment will be deemed confirmed.

The MGCB is responsible for implementing the Michigan Gaming Control & Revenue Act, as amended (Public Act 69 of 1997; MCL 432.201) or

("the Act"). Section 432.204 (17) (i) of the Act states that three members of the board are required to constitute a quorum, except when making determinations on applications for casino licenses, where four members are required to constitute a quorum. It further states, "[t]hree votes shall be required in support of final determinations of the board on applications for casino licenses."

Currently, there are four members appointed to the MGCB, with the final seat previously held by Mr. Kassab remaining vacant.

U.S. SENATE PASSES TOURISM PROMOTION ACT

Yesterday, February 25, 2010, the Senate passed the Travel Promotion Act (S. 1023) by a vote of 78 to 18. The Act seeks to create a public-private partnership to execute a nationally coordinated travel promotion program that will help reinvigorate the country's image as a premier travel destination.

"This is a historic victory for the U.S. economy and the one in eight American workers whose jobs depend on travel," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. "The United States Congress has sent a clear message that travel is a high priority to our nation and that tangible steps must be taken to increase travel to and within the United States." Michigan Senators Carl Levin (D) and Debbie Stabenow (D) both voted in favor of the Bill.

According to an analysis by Oxford Economics, the Travel Promotion Act (S. 1023) could potentially attract 1.6 million foreign visitors and is projected to generate \$4 billion in new visitor spending annually. Supporters of the Act believe it will spur domestic and international tourism to the U.S., thus bringing millions of new visitors to casinos across the country.

George Zimmermann, Vice President of Travel Michigan, Michigan Economic Development Corporation stated, "[t]he Travel Promotion Act is what this economy needs right now—in Michigan and throughout the United States. Travel employs 7.7 million Americans whose jobs cannot be outsourced, and more international tourism means more American jobs."

The legislation, which passed the House in November of 2009, is expected to be signed into law by President Barack Obama in the coming days.