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The _____ MICHIGAN GAMING _____ Newsletter



MICHIGAN GAMING LEGISLATION UPDATE

On Wednesday, April 13, 2011, three bills were introduced in the Michigan Legislature that would clarify existing statutes regarding gaming and wagering activity in the state. In addition, the legislature acted on bills regarding the Michigan Gaming Control Board and the use of Michigan bridge cards at casinos. Each of these bills is summarized below.

Introduced

House Bill 4539 (Primary Sponsor: Lisa Brown, D-West Bloomfield) – This bill would serve to amend existing criminal statutes to clarify that gaming activities are legal if authorized by other sections of Michigan Laws. Specifically, the bill would exempt legal gaming activities from the state's general prohibition on gambling activities and the state's general prohibition on privately-run lotteries. The bill has been assigned to the House Committee on Regulatory Reform.

House Bill 4540 (Primary Sponsor: Harold L. Haugh, D - Roseville)– This bill would add language to the state's lottery act to explicitly authorize individuals to operate a lottery pool. In addition, the operator of the pool would be allowed to charge members of the pool a greater amount than the price of the tickets. The bill has been assigned to the House Committee on Regulatory Reform.

House Bill 4541 (Primary Sponsor: Harold L. Haugh, D - Roseville)- This bill would amend the state's judicature act to state that gambling activities that are authorized by law do not create a nuisance. The bill has been assigned to the House Committee on Regulatory Reform.

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Recent Action

House Bill 4151 (Primary Sponsor: Cindy Denby, R - Handy Twp.)– This bill would amend the Michigan Gaming Control and Revenue Act to require that at least one member of the Michigan Gaming Control Board be “a representative of the equine industry.” The bill would not affect laws regarding board member selection or political affiliation restrictions currently in place. The bill was referred for a second reading in the House Committee on Agriculture.

Senate Bill 0109 (Primary Sponsor: Rick Jones, R - Grand Ledge) – This bill would prohibit Michigan bridge card holders from using their card to access cash from automated teller machines located in a casino or a casino enterprise. On Thursday, April 14, 2011, this bill passed a Senate vote and was referred to the House Committee on Families, Children, and Seniors.

TRIBE ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR OPENING OF NEW FOUR WINDS CASINO

On Tuesday, April 12, 2011, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians (“Tribe”) announced its plans to open a new casino in Hartford. The new facility, named Four Winds Hartford, is scheduled to open in August of 2011.

The new casino will be approximately 52,000 square feet and will be located on Interstate 94 outside of Hartford. The location will feature 500 slot machines and nine table games. In addition, there will be a 100 seat restaurant modeled after the Timbers Fast Food and Deli located at the Tribe’s Four Winds Casino Resort in New Buffalo. The Tribe estimates that the casino will provide approximately 300 permanent jobs.

In a press release, Tribal Chairman Matt Wesaw stated “we are thrilled to bring this first class entertainment facility to the community along with hundreds of new jobs. We also expect the casino to support the development of ancillary business in the area.”

The Tribe currently owns the Four Winds Casino and Resort in New Buffalo. According to the Tribe’s gaming compact with the state, the Tribe is allowed up to three Class III gaming facilities in Michigan. In addition to the New Buffalo and Hartford locations, the Tribe has the option of opening a third Class III location on Indian lands near Cass County if proper approvals are received.

For more information regarding the Four Winds Hartford, visit the casino’s website at: <https://www.fourwindscasino.com/hartford/index.asp>

GUN LAKE CASINO HIRES NEW GENERAL MANAGER

On Friday, April 1, 2011, the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi (“Tribe”) announced that Rob McDermott has been hired for the General Manager position at the Tribe’s Gun Lake Casino.

Mr. McDermott has held several management positions during his career in the casino gaming industry. His most recent experience includes several executive positions within Station Casinos, which operates numerous gaming facilities in Nevada. Prior to his work with Station Casinos, McDermott held management positions at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. In a press release from the casino, Mr. McDermott stated that he is “ecstatic to join such a phenomenal gaming and entertainment facility here in Wayland, Michigan.”

The Gun Lake Casino, located off of U.S. 131 between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids, is owned by the Tribe and is operated by MPM Enterprises, an affiliate of Station Casinos. The casino opened on February 11, 2011 and features 1,450 slot machines and 28 table games. In addition, the facility offers a food court, multiple dining options, lounges, and live entertainment.