

### Briefs and clips . . .

The political jargon of the season will be "job creation," and "referendum" according to gambling industry officials meeting to consolidate strategy for the coming year. Here's a clip from the Las Vegas Review Journal:

"The name of the game in casino development is proliferation, insiders and analysts said Wednesday at the Global Gaming Expo in Las Vegas. The spread of gambling is the best hope Nevada-based operators and slot machine manufacturers have to boost revenues and profitability in the next few years, they said.

"Although recent efforts to expand gaming largely fizzled, governors and state legislatures are again pushing to legalize gambling in new jurisdictions and liberalize regulations where it is already legal.

Still, Chuck Brooke, vice president of International Game Technology, warned that the industry is captive to the political process, but said legislative and initiative petition action are "very dynamic right now."

The new driving force is job creation, with elected officials focusing on the continuing failure of the economy to generate added employment opportunities. "With unemployment numbers up, the job creation element is beginning to manifest itself again," said Steve Rittvo, president of the Innovative Group.

[http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj\\_home/2003/Sep-18-Thu-2003/business/22185919.html](http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2003/Sep-18-Thu-2003/business/22185919.html)

The *Boston Globe* reports a top Rhode Island racetrack executive is facing bribery charges in a slot-machine scandal.

The London-based company's U.S. executives are accused in a federal indictment of trying to steer \$4.5 million over six years to the law firm of Rhode Island Rep. John Harwood (D-Pawtucket), the former House speaker, according to the indictment.

The money was allegedly in hopes of winning permission to expand the dog track's lucrative slot-machine operations.

## Delegates fly into storm; 10th conference to begin

"Into the eye of the storm" seems the motto as delegates of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling head for Maryland for their 10th annual conference next week.

Both the aftermath of hurricane Isabel and a barely settled blizzard of failed gambling expansion proposals dot the landscape surrounding the impending Baltimore gathering.

"We chose Maryland because we won there," says NCALG president Guy Clark of New Mexico. Conference committee organizers include veterans of the NOCasINO Maryland organization that claimed victory in Governor Robert Ehrlich's failed attempts to place thousands of slot machines in the state's race tracks to balance his hemorrhaging state budget.

Next door in Pennsylvania, NCALG members are catching their breath between legislative sessions. Pennsylvania's governor tried similar slot machine expansions and failed last year. Up the coast, New York, Rhode Island and Maine and Massachusetts all face continuing gambling expansion threats.

Meanwhile, the NCALG's executive director Tom Grey declares the nation is at a "tipping point" at which citizens have realized the disastrous consequences of the spread of legalized gambling. He asserts the industry made not one major expansion this past year.

This year's conference features a panel of attorneys from across the nation, pointing to cases NCALG is confident will snowball into a movement as citizens sue the industry that has damaged them, much as did tobacco

victims in the past decade. Legal battles over state vs. tribal rights point to a growing turmoil as more and more communities find themselves at odds with the high social costs and uncontrollable community issues raised by tribal casinos.

Also on tap to address the convention is Sue Abrams, a Seneca Tribe member who has stridently opposed Indian casinos in New York. Authors of several studies on the economic and social impact of gambling will present their works to the conference, including the landmark UNLV study which showed more than five percent of Las Vegas' adult population suffers from problem or pathological gambling issues. The state of Nevada provides no money for treatment of gambling addiction.

The conference convenes Friday September 26 with former National Gambling Impact Study Commission veteran and current "think tank" CEO Richard Leone as the keynote speaker.

Leone is President of the Century Foundation, formerly the Twentieth Century Fund, a public policy research foundation. His analytical and opinion pieces have appeared in *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *The Nation*. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the National Academy of Social Insurance.

The conference continues through Saturday at the Holiday Inn BWI Airport hotel in Baltimore. The conference is open to the public with the registration fees and agenda posted at [www.ncalg.org](http://www.ncalg.org).

## California race shows massive gambling influence

California's gubernatorial election speaks volumes about big gambling money and politics. The Viejas Indians have pumped \$2 million into Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante's campaign. Public interest advocates are warning Californians about the corrupting influence of big money. Tribal leaders say profits from their casinos have "helped them look out for their own interests for the first time in a century," according to the Mercury News. "For us, it's called leveling the playing field," Viejas Vice Chairman Bobby Barrett said Tuesday as he announced what is believed to be the largest contribution to a candidate in the state's history. "Do we have a right to participate? Like every other American and Californian, you bet we do."

<http://www.bayarea.com/mld/mercurynews/news/6719900.htm>

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A "notorious scammer and sometimes lawyer" involved in questionable Orlando-area financial deals for a decade was sentenced in a Wisconsin court Friday to five years in prison for his role in a felony gambling and money-laundering conspiracy.

The 56 year-old man was also hit with a financial judgment of more than \$3.8 million that includes a demand against a Winter Park, Fla., company he controls, Challenge Realty, and a personal fine.  
<http://www.centredaily.com/mld/centredaily/news/6610064.htm>

In Australia, a 36 year-old bank manager, father, husband and former football player pleaded guilty to stealing nearly \$19 million from his bank. He allegedly opened an online betting account early in 1998 using his work computer. None of the money has been recovered. The local paper reported the man disguised his habit by placing most of his big bets on Internet gambling sites.

Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese refugees have very high rates of gambling problems and spend large proportions of their income on the activity, according to a new study by the University of Connecticut Health Center and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Of the 96 southeast Asian participants in the study, approximately 59 percent said they were pathological gamblers, a psychiatric condition whose victims exhibit a high endurance for gambling and often wager unreasonable amounts of money.

The study says only about 2 percent of adults in North America are pathological gamblers, yet 95 percent of the southeast Asian subjects reported having gambled in the previous year, and 93 percent reported gambling in the previous two months.

[http://www.newbrainerherald.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=10057018&BRD=1641&PAG=461&dept\\_id=10110&rfi=6](http://www.newbrainerherald.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=10057018&BRD=1641&PAG=461&dept_id=10110&rfi=6)

The culture connection has not gone unnoticed across the nation as California Indian gambling houses go to great lengths to attract Asian customers. The Sacramento Bee quotes a casino official saying Asians make up 60 to 70 percent of table game customers and 20 to 25 percent of their slot players, despite the fact they comprise only 9 percent of the Sacramento population.

<http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/story/7287160p-8231825c.html>

# 'Opting out' takes new twists

One peculiar charade proffered by a gambling industry masquerading as concerned corporate citizens is the notion of "opting out." Casinos post toll-free numbers of gambling treatment programs and offer problem and addicted gamblers an opportunity to sign up for the chance to no longer be welcome at the casino.

Precious little effort is made at enforcement, except that violators are most often not allowed to collect winnings. Generally, victims can continue to lose unnoticed by casino security, but if they win they're thrown out without their money.

The hypocrisy is in the nature of addictions. Even gambling-funded treatment experts acknowledge pathological gamblers are not likely to seek treatment or remove themselves from casinos until they have "hit bottom." That invariably means their net worth has also bottomed out and they are no longer of use to the casinos.

The Mississippi Gaming Commission has one of the most outrageous suggestions to date. They propose to collect a state-wide list of gamblers who have voluntarily opted-out and make it a crime for them to enter a casino. They propose to charge such victims with criminal trespass and fine them \$1000 if they violate their voluntary option. It is not clear whether the gaming commission wants

problem gamblers to stay out of casinos, or whether they wish to discourage addicted gamblers from using the option program.

Perhaps nowhere has the plight of gambling's victims been more poignantly outlined than in a Cincinnati case where the wife of a recalcitrant gambler is suing a casino to force them to stop fleecing her husband.

Johnnie Brown and her husband, a retired General Electric engineer who had made up to \$100,000 a year, had a home, a car, phone, water, gas and electricity – all the things one would expect from the American dream. She had a right to feel safe and comfortable.

Then her life got sucked down the river courtesy of the Argosy riverboat casino. It's all gone. Her story, recounted by WCPO news in Cincinnati, is too typical. Her husband became addicted and has gambled away hundreds of thousands of dollars. "From day to day you don't know if you're going to have a place to live or if you're going to be homeless because this casino is basically taking everything I have," Brown told the news channel.

Johnnie Brown, with the help of attorney Robert Newman, is suing the casino, trying to force them to keep her husband out, as she tries to make ends meet making \$500 a month at a fast food restaurant.

Want to help? Your contribution to the  
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