

# **NOGAMBLING** in Indiana

# Indiana Coalition Against Legalized Gambling NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008

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## AND THE FUN BEGINS

At the start of each Indiana State General Assembly, my mind is plagued by the question "How will the State of Indiana discover new ways to expand gambling revenues?"

Some would have us believe that the year 2008 saw just a slight expansion. This might be acceptable if we only considered the gambling revenues going to the state from new sources. We cannot forget that the pull-tabs represent the largest expansion of gambling since the beginning of the Hoosier Lottery. Now there are few communities that do not have some type of gambling besides the Lottery. We also need to remember Indiana will experience more revenue this year by way of the 4,000 slot machines that were approved by the 2007 General Assembly.

It always seems we find ourselves reacting to what the gambling interests propose to the General Assembly. **NO MORE! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! Now the fun begins!** We will no longer sit back and just react to new expansion ideas for gambling. Now is the time to take the offensive. Indiana belongs to the people and not just the gambling interests and politicians.

The North and South Indiana Conferences of The United Methodist Church have given the order to **MARCH**.

So, how are we going to accomplish the task set before us?

1. Under the direction of Bishop Mike Coyner, each of the 18 District Superintendents will appoint one person to coordinate the activities between the local congregation, the district and the state.
2. Each United Methodist congregation will begin with two actions.
  - \* The Official Board will become acquainted with the Resolution Against the Expansion of Legalized Gambling and adopt it as the stance of their congregation, and
  - \* An individual will be selected as the liaison between the congregation and the state organization of ICAIG (Indiana Coalition Against Legalized Gambling).
3. There will be rallies combining several Districts. Each congregation will have one or more representatives. Each rally will have a training session of what needs to happen and how to make sure of the follow through. Part of the function of the rallies will be to develop excitement and anticipation for each step to be taken leading up to Election Day on Nov. 4.
4. The individuals attending the rallies will recruit others in the congregation to pick up the challenge and will begin asking candidates for state offices to define their position on expansion of gambling in Indiana. They will state their opposition to gambling expansion to the candidates.
5. The candidates' position on gambling expansion will be made known to all in the district represented by the candidate. Be creative and state your opposition by writing letters to the various newspapers. Encourage our sisters and brothers in the United Methodist Church to vote according to this information. But do not stop there! Encourage your friends and neighbors of other faith groups to do the same. The battle does not stop when the election is over. We must

let our Senators, Representatives and Governor know when we support them as well as when we stand in opposition. They cannot represent us if they do not know where we stand. We have an obligation to let them know where we stand.

The FUN does begin as we enter the political system and enable our state officials to know where we stand.

## NORTH, SOUTH INDIANA CONFERENCES AGREE: 'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!'

In response to the continuing expansion of gambling in the State of Indiana, the Indiana Conferences of the United Methodist Church have affirmed that the people of the State of Indiana should have a say in any future gambling proposals.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Conferences of the United Methodist Church:

- \* Endorses public policy measures through a Public Question to end the expansion of legalized gambling in any and all forms by the Indiana General Assembly permitting the citizens to have their say;
- \* Calls for a permanent freeze on the expansion of legalized gambling in state sanctioned riverboat casinos, the State Lottery, in bars and private clubs, and slot machines at the state's two horse racing tracks;
- \* Opposes legislation which leases the Hoosier State Lottery, which will expand Lottery gambling in Indiana;
- \* Opposes legislation that will permit electronic gambling devices to be placed in bars, restaurants, private clubs and other businesses which hold a liquor license.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the undersigned faith organization will inform its members and the general public of its endorsement of this Resolution, and work to educate the Governor and the members of the General Assembly about the toll of gambling on Indiana families and the need for aggressive action to prevent and reduce gambling in the state, especially by families.

**NOTE:** The North Conference unanimously passed this resolution and the South Conference had only two votes in opposition.

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For national  
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## 'BAD BET'

By John D. Wolf  
*Guest Commentary*

The call came from Bloomington, Indiana. A reporter of the Indiana University Newspaper wanted to know what I thought about the addition in July of Gambling devices to bars where students hang out.

Authorized by the State Legislature as a "fairness issue" as illegal gambling machines were to be removed in veteran's halls and fraternal organizations. Now the expanse of gambling has placed Indiana second only to Nevada in its gambling addiction. When is "enough – enough"?

My response was that gambling and alcohol is a bad mix. The gambling industry provides alcohol liberally because they know that the brain's frontal lobes control judgment. When judgment is impaired by alcohol, control is lost.

For students whose brains are still developing and who carry credit cards, the danger is compounded. ID's are supposed to provide some protection. My student reporter at I.U. knows how easily this is violated.

Tom Grey, spokesperson for the Nation Coalition Against Legalized Gambling, says, "Indiana is at the crisis intervention point. Our government is addicted. We seem to be trying to become number one – at present we are behind Nevada".

This summer 2,000 slot machines are open for play at each racetrack in Anderson and Shelbyville. At the same time our economy is in a downward spiral. Casinos in Northwest Indiana prepare to open costly expansions. During the months from September through April Indiana Casinos reported admissions and revenue down over 5 percent. French Lick is having problems. Newsweek.Com asks, "Has Las Vegas luck run out?"

Competition brings another unwelcome intruder – the sex trade. Nevada has always known this partnership. To the Lake Michigan tourist community of New Buffalo, MI a so-called "Gentlemen's Club" will join The Four Seasons Casino. Mayor Ramberg says, "This is a real negative offshoot of the casino."

In June the North and South Conferences of the United Methodist Church voted almost unanimously to try and stop expansion of gambling in Indiana so people can have a statewide voice in it.

Candidates for state office will all be asked to break the strangle hold gambling has on Indiana Government. Economist Morton Marcus and Warren Buffett have warned of government dependency on gambling. William Safire calls gambling "The New Evil Empire – inherently immoral." Sure sounds like a bad bet!

*John D. Wolf serves as a retired United Methodist pastor living in Valparaiso, Ind. He helped found both the Indiana and National Coalitions Against Legalized Gambling.*



Wolf

## STATE CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL GAMBLING FALLS SHORT

A nearly yearlong state crackdown on illegal gambling devices has yielded only a handful of the thousands of illicit poker and slot machines some lawmakers predicted the effort would uncover.

After 11 months and \$2.5 million spent, Indiana's new illegal gambling czar says his 15 investigators have seized 760 machines – or less than half the number that went online earlier last month, when Hoosier Park in Anderson opened its state-sanctioned, trackside casino.

When the crackdown was ordered last year, Republican leaders in the General Assembly promised the effort to haul the devices out of taverns, truck stops and other sites would more than offset the 4,000 new slot machines lawmakers authorized for the state's two horse tracks.

A day after lawmakers adjourned in April 2007, Gov. Mitch Daniels, said the crackdown would target "the illegal and very exploitative machines, which number at least 12,000 in Indiana today... Armed with these new tools, they will take out far more machines than are allowed in."

Legislators needed money last year to bankroll homeowner rebates intended to soften a looming property tax hike, and the state's two horse tracks agreed to provide \$500 million for their "racino" licenses. It's doubtful lawmakers can deliver on a pledge of a net reduction in gaming yet this year. – AP

## INDIANA CASINO ATTENDANCE, TAX REVENUE TUMBLES

Tax revenue generated by Indiana's casinos dipped nearly \$3 million in June compared to the same period a year ago, despite the addition of new gambling centers in Anderson and Shelbyville.

Indiana casinos generated about \$78.6 million in tax revenue for the state last month, a drop from \$81.5 million last June, according to figures released today by the Indiana Gaming Commission.

The two new casinos contributed \$6.5 million toward that total. Those casinos opened in June, bringing the state's total to 13. Overall casino attendance also showed a decline, dropping to nearly 2.1 million from about 2.3 million last year.

The state's two new "racinos" – Hoosier Park Racing and Casino in Anderson and Indiana Live Casino at Indiana Downs in Shelbyville – began offering slot machines in June.

Hoosier Park brought in more than \$3.9 million in taxes, surpassing French Lick Resort Casino's \$2,568,231. Indiana Live generated \$2,567,287 in taxes for the month. – *Indianapolis Star*

NOTE: The Indiana Coalition Against Legalized Gambling has told the General Assembly in the past that legalized gambling is bad public policy and not a dependable source of revenue. First and foremost, legalized gambling endorsed by the state ruins families who have a member who becomes addicted to gambling. According to newspaper reports, the two new Indiana racinos are expected to draw 3 million gamblers a year. National averages on gambling addiction of 2 to 4 percent means that at least 60,000 problem gamblers can be expected to visit these two new gambling venues Let your State Senator and State Representative know you are opposed to any expansion of legalized gambling in Indiana.

**NO GAMBLING**

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