

Illinois' Gaming Bill – A JOBS BILL

The currently proposed Illinois Gaming Bill expands the gaming industry in Illinois by a fairly small percentage but provides for much more in the way of bolstering Illinois' economy and restoring long suffering agricultural, and cultural programs that will create an estimated 35,000 to 40,000 agribusiness employment opportunities.

The proposed gaming bill will provide for a large number of new jobs as well as revitalizing Illinois' downstate economy. Following is a summary of those anticipated jobs.

- \$12.5 million to Illinois' soil and water conservation districts. Since July 2009, Illinois' SWCDs have lost 121 employees, 17 of those since July 2011, all due to reductions in funding. There are currently 40 vacant positions. We expect 40 jobs to be filled, 25 jobs to be brought back to full time and another 10 - 15 jobs to be created.
- \$4.275 will be available to be used for incentive payments to landowners to install conservation practices. We expect that more than 170 full time jobs will be created,
- Filling vacant SWCD positions and employing up to 15 new service providers will help assure effective use of \$150 million in federal dollars annually rather than having some of it reallocated to other states. We expect that as many as 300 full-time jobs will be created.
- Each dollar spent on conservation will generate an additional \$.70 in sales of goods and services. The additional \$108 million generated by expending all of the conservation incentive dollars available to Illinois will generate an estimated 400 new jobs.
- \$5 million for the Illinois State Fair for promotional activities will bring national recognition from events such as the National High School Rodeo adding more than \$20 million annually to Illinois' economy.
- \$10 million for maintenance and upkeep of the State Fairgrounds will allow better utilization of buildings and facilities on the fairgrounds. We expect about 100 construction jobs to be created and an estimated \$5 to \$10 million to be added each year to the state's economy from better utilization of fairgrounds facilities.
- \$1.5 million for forestry practices in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Basin CREP areas. We expect that 15 primary and 25 – 30 secondary employment opportunities will be created.
- \$5 million for the Extension Service and 4-H activities. We expect that short term, about 12 - 17 jobs will be created and long term, thousands of qualified job applicants will be available to meet future demand for a wide variety of employment opportunities.
- \$5 million for state and county fairs. Most of this money will be used for premiums to encourage more exhibitors at the state and county fairs. We estimate that as many as 100 jobs will be created to assist with fair and exhibit development as well as jobs needed to maintain and improve facilities to accommodate increased participation in fair events.
- \$150,000 to the Cook County Forest Preserve District each year for five years to maintain a botanical Garden. We expect at least 2 full-time and as many as 10 part-time jobs will be created.
- \$3 million each year for five years to the Illinois Historic Sites Fund. We expect 4 or 5 full-time jobs and as many as 40 part-time jobs to be created.

- \$3 million to the Parks and Conservation Fund. We expect as many as 10 full-time jobs and 30 part-time jobs to be created.
- Allowing slot machines at Illinois' five horse racing tracks to increase purses offered to winning jockeys and owners will breathe life back into a failing horse industry in Illinois. Using other states that have allowed slot machines at horse race tracks as an example; we expect the horse racing industry to expand rapidly and to a great degree.

An increase in horse breeding will create greater need for large animal veterinarians.

Farmers will have a ready market for hay, oats and other food stocks used by horses and will include those less erosive crops in their cropping rotation

More people will be needed to tend to the animals, maintain their buildings and transport and handle their feed.

The potential for jobs generated by a thriving horse industry is estimated to be between 30,000 and 40,000.

In all, we expect between 32,250 and 43,100 full-time, and part-time jobs to be created from the \$45 million that will be generated by allowing the installation of slot machines at race tracks.

*In addition to the above, "a Chicago casino will generate 7,000 to 10,000 jobs at the facility and 15,000 to 20,000 construction jobs." The additional four casinos proposed in the gaming bill are each expected to generate a like number of employment opportunities.

*(Source, Representative Lou Lang, Chicago Tribune, Sept, 25, 2011.)