

**Carl Heinrich—**

“I want to say all of the people of Greene County and Jefferson should be complimented for good planning, good marketing. The presentation on our visit was outstanding, informative....very professional. I want you to know that I personally was very impressed by that.

“As I’ve told you before, in terms of responses from the various persons involved in the area and surrounding casinos, I received a lot of letters, which I read and pondered.... I found them all very informative. A lot of them on the same theme, of course, but they were all original in terms of procedure in explaining a position. ... I found them to be very thought provoking. I found them to be very blunt people in cases on both sides, giving points of view, and being able to present and substantiate their reasons for why they were for or against. There was a gamut of reading all the way from having someplace to having weddings or having entertainment.

“From the point of view of the people who are here and the people who aren’t here who are involved in this, you ought to feel very pleased and proud of the way you approached it with professionalism .

“Now, as I told you, and in fact I visited with some of you personally, as I told you, I look at that aspect of it. Of course if that wasn’t there, if we didn’t have the enthusiasm and support and all, that would be one factor. I just told you what that meant.

“But in order to do my due diligence, I have to look at the data available, the studies, and again from the letters...I carefully reviewed it. I really did. I spent a lot of time giving it thought, trying to think of it in terms of what I think is correct. Of course it’s my opinion. Of course I’m being influenced by you folks and by others. That’s part of the job, but then eventually you have to make your own decision, and that time, of course, is right now.

“I don’t want to extend this out too long, but I just want you to understand that I did very carefully, as I know all the other commissioners did, too. I really think it’s important that we do need to take into consideration these data. I’m going to talk to you about what I found, and how it affects me in my decision. I looked at not only Greene County and Jefferson, but also the counties surrounding that are also involved and showed support for this sort of thing. So I’ve had to look at that and the surrounding areas where existing casinos are. We know where those are – Prairie Meadows, Emmetsburg, which is also involved here. I had to also look at the point of view of the state, because we are a state commission, and see what effect this would have on the state, positive, negative, or whatever the case might be. What I want to do is tell you what I found, what I think I found, and then give you my decision.

“One of the big questions, of course, and our chairman pointed out this is going to be discussed at our next meeting, is is there an unserved area, are there unserved areas in the state of Iowa? That’s the first question that comes up.

“Being in the location proposed would a significant new population be served, or will this basically dilute the existing casinos? Now we talked about that, with some of the folks I talked with directly. There will be some people, some new people served. I would agree with that. But will there be a significant number of new people served? I think in terms of the population and all, I don’t think it’s going to be any different. I think some of the studies pointed out also that some of these, be they significant or not significant - I don’t think it’s going to put any casinos out of business- will be coming from casinos that are already established. Prairie Meadows is the one we talked about.

"In my final analysis of this thing, I will see that almost all of the customers, whether new or established, will be coming from within the state. I think part of that is because of the location. You're not on any of the borders, so logically, that's where they'll come from. Certain operations, Prairie Meadows – and I'm not naming Emmetsburg because they're the ones that are going to be involved in this – will be impacted, somewhat negatively.

"We also have to take into consideration there's been a slight decline in casino business, not only in the whole state, but we don't know if any of the casinos have seen an increase. So you can kind of say that at this particular time, things are kind of stable, they're kind of flat, not thriving rapidly, not dropping rapidly. There's a slight decrease, but that's a fact, something you need to take into consideration.

"Iowa population is growing. There's a slight increase in population, but basically we don't see a big surge. I think there's an effort in the legislature and our governor and others to try and increase that, and bring new industry in, and making it a more viable state. That is a factor that affects situations like this, but at this point, you have to take what there is.

"There is a concern that – as you know it was pointed out at our meeting – that the non-profit USOs in the Emmetsburg area are concerned about a decrease from moving down there (referring to Jefferson) and how it would affect their operation. That's a factor. How much of that will happen, I don't know, but it's something you have to take into consideration.

"So, without a lot of new market opening up in a new area – there is some in the western part and I think I've talked with people about that – and also, and a lot of people don't know this or believe it, but casinos operate on a very narrow margin, believe it or not. So, their ability, if this market is decreased at all, it affects their ability for their present operation. I think I want to encourage existing casinos to continue to add to what's in the best interest of their operation.

"So, because of the negative impact, because of the minimal growth in the state, because of slight decline in casino revenue, because of the site of the proposal that is not real population intensive, the fact that it will harm some of the existing casinos' financial status, seeing no significant advantage either way for the state's point of view, I'm going to vote "Deny."

#### **Dolores Mertz –**

"First of all, I want to thank everyone involved with the Greene County project. I've had lots and lots of letters, both pro and con, and I read each and every one of them. I appreciated all the phone calls I had and the visits I've had from some of you people. You have shown your community you're dedicated servants to get something done, and that's really very impressive and I take that into strong consideration.

"We've had a lot of hard decisions, this commission, since I've been on it. I'm going to tell you I didn't have all this grey hair a year ago.... I can't thank you enough for the day we spent in Jefferson. It was very enlightening. You have a beautiful community and you have a lot of things going for you.

"And I understand when I listen to you. Rural Iowa is so different than urban, and sometimes urban people can't see that, but there are some good ones that can see that. You already know that.

"I always used to say when I was in the legislature that it's not Democrat vs Republican. It was urban vs. rural.....

"I think Wild Rose Entertainment, and I want to stress that word 'entertainment,' because I think if you would happen to get a casino in Greene County, that's what you would get. You would have entertainment, you would have a venue, you would have a hotel, and I think you'd have probably a better property than what was proposed to you with the original hotel, because you're partnering with a casino. It would give you a better, more advanced facility.

"And I know everyone's worried about competition, but you know, competition is sometimes good for you. I never liked it either, when I was running for office, but it brings you up, more alert, a better observer. It just makes you look and see things about yourself and what you can do with a facility. 'Can I upgrade this? Is it time I need to do this?' And Prairie Meadows has done that and I commend them on that because you are going to have a bigger and better facility than you already have, and I commend them for that.

"And if there's a casino that's going to maybe hurt you a little bit, maybe just a little bit, but it doesn't always last long. This economy is going to grow back, if the farmer has a good crop, if the beans and corn go up a little bit, you'll see a big difference. I believe that. I think a lot of the economy and the business of the casinos going down has a lot to do with \$4 corn. I'm a farmer, and when I think about casinos... somebody asked me once 'what's a big farm?' and I said 'I don't know. Somebody with one more acre than I've got. That's a big farm.'

"I know it's hard to put everything in perspective, and I just look at a lot of different things. But I looked at your site. I think it's an ideal site. It's an accessible site. And you know I look at the businesses, and I think it would be good for the extended businesses you already have. You'd offer them a venue to have conferences and meetings and it would benefit your community to have banquet facilities, wedding facilities, and that would bring money to your town, to your county, and to your region. Those dollars would be there and stay there, and that's growth. In my estimation, that's growth.

"So I think if you would think of a lot of things going for you, and the horse association, I know you're concerned that there would be a down side if Greene County got a casino to Prairie Meadows, but there's been nobody in the state of Iowa that's been more protective and concerned about horses than I've been and I'd never do anything to hurt you...but I think once Prairie Meadows has all their remodeling done, a big improvement in the clientele will go through there.

"I just really think that rural Iowa is missing something, and especially in central Iowa and northwest Iowa. Everything that we have goes to where the population is, and that's understandable. Still, sometimes can't rural Iowa a little piece of the action? I think so.

"I'm not going to belabor this thing. You know, my gut feeling tells me something, and it really hasn't been wrong too many times. I think this is a good thing. I think it's a fine thing to do. I think you have found the donut hole - by the way, your donut holes were delicious- so I also looked at the large vote you had: 75 percent of the vote. That's huge, the largest referendum that has passed in the state. I, as a commissioner, have to look at that because I think in my estimation, if you get a casino, it's going to be good for your community, the revenue will be good for the community, it will be good for the county, it will be good for the state. So therefore, I will be casting a Yes vote for Greene County."

**Kris Kramer –**

"I first want to thank Jefferson and Greene County for the warm welcome. I can see pride and enthusiasm that you have for it.

"I also like to see a community working together, and you can see it in all the positive things that are happening there. That is why this has been a very tough decision for all of us. I wrestled back and forth through this application. Here are just a few of my thoughts:

"From listening to the public comment, I got more of the impression that the community needed a banquet room, a meeting room, a hotel. I thought that gaming was not the first priority. For the new non-profits, there would be a positive impact, and for the existing non-profits, there would be a negative impact.

"I do want to say one thing: I received a lot of letters and a few of them stated they would respect my decision whatever it would be, and I want to thank you for that.

"For me, the deciding factor was the market studies. Both independent studies indicated there were no under-served areas in the state of Iowa. Union Gaming stated that the state's interests are better served by the existing operators investing in their current operations. This can be demonstrated by looking at the decreasing gaming revenues, not only across the county but also in the state of Iowa.

"I feel what I have to do is right for the state of Iowa. I believe that this time is not the time for any more casinos. Therefore, I will not be supporting this application."

**Rich Arnold –**

"First of all, I want to say thank you to everyone from Greene County. It's been a pleasure working with you on the site. The parties both in support and opposition were very respectful giving their opinion and the application that was sent into the commission.

"I spent many hour reading the numerous letters and emails sent to me. In addition, the Commission visited the site, listened to the DCI background with the application, and spent a full day hearing comment from you people who were in Greene County. It was a great day except for five hours of sitting. I didn't even know the Bell Tower existed, but now when I go across 30 I can say, 'Hey, I've been up there.' It was quite a sight.

"But this has been a very, very difficult decision. The application has received great community support and will create a number of following businesses. It offers amenities much needed in the community and would bring a \$40 million investment into a rural Iowa community.

"The impact on existing Iowa licensed casinos not owned by Wild Rose was demonstrated by independent studies and appear to me to be in the minimal range, from 3 to 8 percent. I believe the positive factors of this application, specifically the significant impact to the region outweigh the amount of impact on any one market projected to be low. For these reasons I will be supporting granting a license and voting Yes."

**Jeff Lamberti –**

"I want to thank everybody that participated in this process. I think everybody put on their best on both sides of this issue. Everyone was respectful.

“As you can tell these are very difficult decisions, and this was probably one of the most difficult that I’ve had in my time on the Commission, and I think you can tell from the others. We go back forth. There have been lots of sleepless nights including last night.

“I’ll try to sort through all of this process. As we go through this process, we’ve always tried to be open and fair about how we proceed, and I hope that everybody feels like they had an adequate opportunity to present their case. We try very hard to be accessible, to gather as much information prior to making a decision as we can, and I hope people feel like we treated them with respect and we gave them all that opportunity.

“We all studied the criteria set forth in Code and in our administrative rules, but we’re also all entitled to judge those criteria and how much weight we put on those, which ones really make a difference for us in making our final decision. That’s what’s unique about the system we have in Iowa. There are no magic guidelines that tell us when we should issue a license and when we should deny, and that makes it very difficult on us as individual commissioners. But we all do that. We all study and we all listen. We weigh this against those criteria with really with just one idea in mind, and that is to arrive at the best decision we can, one that we can support, one that we feel good about, one that we believe is in the best interest of the state of Iowa, which is in fact who we represent, which is all of the people.”

“When we do that we also take into account where the market is, the historical action of previous commissioners that have established the system that we that have in Iowa. We take all of that into account. Certainly as we look at this project, a lot of the criteria, whether it’s a quality project, whether it has support from the community, whether it’s adequately funded, those are questions that were never really in doubt.

“Then we get down to the really hard questions, which are the ones you heard affecting commissioners on both sides. What’s the overall impact on the state of Iowa of a proposed facility in Greene County? What’s the impact on our existing facilities? How have we judged that in the past? Certainly, looking at the overall market, what’s going on in the market, and we’ve obviously heard comments about the market overall being down, and quite frankly, our desire to continue and to maintain a stable gaming environment in the state of Iowa. That’s been critical in decisions of this commission as well as commissions in the past.

“Quite frankly, for a lot of times as I looked through this and considered it I could go back and forth day by day in trying to arrive at my decision. Quite frankly, as Dolores mentioned, a lot of it comes down to your gut, to what you believe at the end to be the right decision for the state of Iowa.”

“As I weighed that, I do see a positive economic benefit of a casino in Greene County. I certainly see an impact on some other facilities that by historical standards are within the parameters where a license has been granted in the past.

“As I’m sure most of you know, I’m from Polk County. I guess that affects me a couple of different ways in terms of making a decision. We’ve had lots of advantages in Polk County, and we have lots of advantages that are going to come in the future. We’ve got significant population growth amongst all of our suburbs. We’ve got some things that are in the works that are pretty historic by Iowa standards.

Quite frankly we have advantages that other parts of the state don't have, and quite frankly, I think we're going to be just fine.

"I also, being from Polk County, I have an interest in making sure that the rural folks get a part of this as well. That does have an impact on my decision as well.

"I'm not going to carry this out any longer, other than to say it's been a very, very difficult decision. I feel confident that the decision we're going to make is the right decision, although I respect anybody's decision on this, because it is that close of a question. I'm not sure that there's necessarily a right or wrong call on this. We're all going to go with what we believe. We'll make our decision and we'll move on.

"Considering all those criteria that have been presented before us, I will be voting yes."