

1 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Mr. Eddy Favre?

2 MR. FAVRE: Thank you. Madam Chairwoman, commission
3 members, I'm Eddy Favre, mayor of Bay St. Louis. As community
4 leaders, we all want the same thing.

5 We want to carefully provide development of projects
6 that avoid unnecessary disruption of traditional community
7 patterns and we want to provide a safe environment which
8 emphasizes a profound regard for our community life and the
9 values expressed in that life.

10 The Bay St. Louis gaming story is one of success.
11 With the arrival of casino magic, we have had monies available to
12 move into the fast track of preparation for the new millennium.
13 This track supports our decade-old mission of progress with
14 preservation and protection.

15 Our daily lifestyle has benefited greatly from the
16 revenues generated by gaming. Highlights of our accomplishments
17 include the following:

18 City property taxes were reduced by 85 percent,
19 providing a direct benefit of this new industry for all our
20 residents, even those choosing never to cross the threshold of
21 casino magic.

22 Sales tax revenues have increased by 100 percent
23 since the opening of casino magic in 1992. A renewed atmosphere
24 for new business development and existing business expansion has
25 evolved.

26 Over 1500 direct and indirect job opportunities, most
27 with income and benefits never before available, has been added
28 to what was a depressed job market in the 1980s. A 100 percent

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1 increase in police and fire service has eliminated the fears and
2 concerns normally associated with legalized gambling.

3 Bay St. Louis has invested over \$11 million in a
4 major capital improvements program. Our new senior complex was
5 built to meet the needs of our older population. We have
6 expanded and redeveloped our entire recreation program and
7 facilities, including construction of a new sports complex to
8 meet the needs of our younger population.

9 Over \$6 million in drainage improvements solved many
10 long-standing flooding problems throughout the city. The
11 creation of a new tourism bureau has brought new visitors to our
12 celebrated arts community and our revitalized historic old
13 downtown area. Not bad for a small city of 10,000 people with a
14 total pre-gaming operating budget of only \$4 million.

15 We can't have a shipyard the size of Ingalls to
16 support our future, nor can we have a state port located in the
17 Bay of St. Louis, but we can have a casino that rides the
18 currents of the bay. We do and it's worked magic in our city.

19 Local gaming has neither destroyed the relaxed, small
20 town charm of Bay St. Louis, nor has it interfered with our
21 environmental landscape. Bay St. Louis may be an exception to
22 the gaming city scenario but that's to be expected from a city
23 that considers itself a place apart.

24 Thank you for your kind attention and I, too, would
25 like to extend a personal invitation to each of you to come see
26 firsthand the Bay St. Louis part of the Mississippi miracle.

27 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you very much. Is Mayor
28 Ainsworth available? Is he here? Okay.

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