

1 Thank you very much.

2 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you.

3 Bill -- is it Mattle?

4 MR. MATTLE: Mattle.

5 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Mattle.

6 MR. MATTLE: That's correct.

7 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Welcome.

8 MR. MATTLE: Thank you.

9 My name is Bill Mattle, and it's a  
10 pleasure to be able to speak with you this evening.

11 First and foremost, let me say that I am  
12 a resident of Atlantic City and a resident very much  
13 by choice. I relocated to the area approximately five  
14 years ago, and at that time I really had my pick of  
15 nice communities to live in, but I chose to make my  
16 home in the redeveloped northeast inlet, and at the  
17 time I was looking around, you could just sense that  
18 something very exciting was taking place. It was  
19 palpable. A community was being rebuilt. A  
20 neighborhood was being reborn, and I very much wanted  
21 to be a part of it and am very glad that I did so.

22 I know that you had an opportunity today

1 to tour through Atlantic City, and I just wish that  
2 you could have been here this fall when I gathered  
3 with my friends and neighbors and we held our second  
4 annual Oktoberfest.

5 I'm proudly living today in a neighborhood  
6 that is as diverse culturally and racially as any. I  
7 am enjoying a strong sense of community that I have  
8 not experienced since I was a small child.

9 While I could certainly address the  
10 remainder of my remarks to the great experiences that  
11 I've had in my chosen home here, I'd like to direct  
12 those comments more to the point from my perspective  
13 as the Executive Director of the South Jersey AIDS  
14 Alliance, which is one of the nation's oldest AIDS  
15 service organizations and the largest in southeastern  
16 New Jersey.

17 I'm often asked as I travel around the  
18 Northeast or as I speak to my counterparts in other  
19 areas of the state, you know, "How is the problem in  
20 Atlantic City?" with somehow the understanding being  
21 that certainly all social problems must be that much  
22 worse because you live in a gaming town.

1           And in fact, I'm able to tell them that  
2   our experience has been just the opposite. Certainly  
3   Atlantic City has not been spared the ravages of AIDS.  
4   Parents who have buried their children, children who  
5   have lost their parents, whole communities and whole  
6   families that have been devastated by the untimely  
7   deaths of too many individuals, and Atlantic City has  
8   not been an exception.

9           We do not, however, face a problem that is  
10  in any way inordinate or unique to this area. We are  
11  facing the same challenges that every other urban  
12  community throughout the Northeast, throughout the  
13  State of New Jersey, and throughout this country is  
14  facing.

15           Where we do differ and differ greatly is  
16  in our ability to meet that need. The casinos have  
17  been a strong and powerful ally in helping us to do  
18  that and not just in dollars, although there have been  
19  hundreds of thousands of those. They've supported us  
20  in many different ways, with fundraisers, by allowing  
21  their employees to get involved, delivering food to  
22  the homeless, taking up toy drives, pouring out

1 immeasurable technical assistance to help us build our  
2 organization.

3           In short, the casino industry knows that  
4 good communities just don't happen. They need to be  
5 built, and I'm proud to live in a town where the  
6 industry not only has taken up that challenge, but has  
7 supported its employees in doing the same, and at the  
8 end of the day, that's the kind of community that I'm  
9 very proud to go home and say that I fall asleep in.

10           Thank you very much.

11           CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you.

12           Joan Verplank.

13           MR. LEONARD: Yes, Madame Chairwoman. My  
14 name is Jim Leonard. I'm Vice President of Government  
15 Relations for the State Chamber. Unfortunately Joan  
16 was unable to be here this evening. So I'm going to  
17 be filling in in her place.

18           CHAIRMAN JAMES: Welcome.

19           MR. LEONARD: I thank you all for the  
20 opportunity to be here today, this evening.

21           I appear before you on behalf of our board  
22 of directors and the over 1,300 members of the State