



CITY OF ALTON

East Third Street  
Alton, IL 62002

May 15, 1998

*Donald E. Sandidge*  
Mayor

Nancy Mohr Kennedy, Executive Director  
National Gambling Impact Study Commission  
800 North Capital Street, N. W.  
Suite 450  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Kennedy:

The City of Alton, Illinois was a dying river city community. Stores were closing, some industries were downsizing and others were closing and moving out. The city has done a complete turn around and is again a growing, viable community. This change is due primarily to the arrival of the Alton Belle Casino in 1991. From September 1991 through March 1998, the Alton Belle has generated \$34,347,489 of revenue for the City of Alton through the wagering and admission taxes.

The critics of riverboat gambling projected higher crime rates, prostitution and organized crime. None of this has occurred in Alton. The area around the Alton Belle Casino is almost crime free. Prostitution has not occurred, and as the former Chief of Police of our city, I am proud to announce that in 1997, Alton had a reduction in crime.

As the fourth largest employer of the city, the 1997 annual payroll of the Alton Belle Casino was \$20,844,934, with 93.6% of the employees residing in the State of Illinois.

As a direct result of gaming revenues generated by the Alton Belle Casino, \$5,000,000 was spent on street improvements, \$4,500,000 in capital expenditures, \$2,000,000 for a new marina and \$2,000,000 in riverfront improvements. In addition, the city now has an operating reserve fund of \$3,500,000, a reserve fund of \$4,000,000 for the construction of a new police station and \$2,500,000 was spent to build a new, state-of-the-art firehouse. At the present time we are using \$744,000 in our General Fund to meet our obligations.

The State's Attorney for Madison County, Bill Haine, noted that the downtown area is one of the safest areas of the county due to the increase of police officers that the Alton Belle Casino has brought to Alton. Mr. Haine also states, "there has been absolutely no crime problem occurring in Madison County which has resulted from the operation of the Alton Belle Casino on the Alton, Illinois riverfront."

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Donald E. Dugan, Chief of the Alton Fire Department, states, "the Alton Belle Casino emergency medical technicians have been responsible for saving lives and treating many medical emergencies. They have consistently shown a willingness and desire to go above and beyond the necessary requirements to ensure the safety and comfort of their patrons. The Alton Belle Casino has provided boats, equipment and staff to assist the Alton Fire Department with emergencies that have occurred on the Mississippi River and are unrelated to the Alton Belle Casino."

The Alton Belle Casino committed itself to helping establish the Alton Marina as part of the Riverfront District Master Plan. Currently, the Marina is open and used by many local residents in addition to residents from towns other than Alton. The Alton Belle Casino has contributed \$165,000 to engineering, feasibility and environmental studies. Another aspect of the Riverfront District Master Plan has been the contribution of over \$1,500,000 in riverside improvements. These funds have been spent on improved parking, a decorative promenade and landscaped areas.

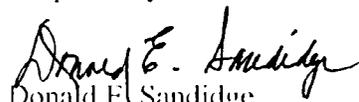
The Alton Belle Casino has also committed to relocating certain railroad tracks. The relocation will add additional parking and create an improved environment for the visitors to the Alton Belle. Currently, the Alton Belle is moving in the direction of this commitment and expects to have the project finished in 1998.

Doug Arnold, President, Greater Alton/Twin Rivers Convention & Visitors Bureau, notes "The casino plays a significant role in the success of our hospitality industry and has done so for more than five years. We are grateful to have the Alton Belle Casino as the top attraction in our service area. The casino draws tens of thousands of leisure and business travelers to Alton which contributes to revenues in dozens of collateral hospitality businesses throughout the community."

The Alton Belle Casino has also contributed over \$1,000,000 to local charitable organizations since its inception in 1991.

In conclusion, the City of Alton is extremely satisfied with the results of having the Alton Belle Casino in our community. It is a major asset that would be difficult to replace. We are using the proceeds from the Belle to improve our infrastructure and general appearance. The Alton Belle Casino has been a good neighbor and we look forward to many more years of partnership.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald E. Sandidge  
Mayor

Attachments