

Since gamblers first stepped up to the shiny new slot machines at Rivers Casino, Illinois' most profitable gambling palace has pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into state and local coffers.

But the Des Plaines casino, opened in July 2011 by Chicago-based Midwest Gaming and Entertainment, is gambling with some of its early good will as it attempts to shave millions off its property tax bills through repeated assessment appeals.

"When they pitched the casino to the city, they promised that they would be a good neighbor and good to the community," said Walter Underwood, 58, a Des Plaines resident and officer in the area's service industry union. "How is that being good to Des Plaines by appealing taxes and paying less to us and to the county?"

The appeals, which trimmed nearly \$2.9 million from the casino's 2012 tax bill, have raised a few eyebrows in the city recently and prompted one school district to seek a review of the casino's assessment, a possible first step toward a formal challenge.

But other local government officials are less interested in challenging the casino, noting every business has a right to try to lower its tax bill, and gambling is already taxed more than most. Others say a casino has a greater civic responsibility than most.

The case also underscores the complexity of putting a value on unique properties like casinos.

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## Casino tax appeal: Rivers Casino tax appeal less than appealing for some

Written by Administrator

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