

Plainridge Casino Counts Down to June 24

Written by Administrator
Monday, 11 May 2015 18:35 -

Massachusetts' first slots parlor races to finish construction, test and deploy 1,250 slot machines and virtual card tables (Published Monday, May 11, 2015)

Wednesday, June 24, is when owners plan to open Plainridge Park Casino, a 1,250-machine slots parlor next to the harness racing track long known as Plainridge Racecourse in Plainville, Mass.

On a media tour Monday, it was clear that a thousand tasks remain to be completed – from paving the parking lot to testing and wiring the 1,250 machines and finishing up a future Doug Flutie Sports Bar. The slots machines include dozens of virtual table games including poker, blackjack, Texas Hold 'em, and craps.

While it's Massachusetts' first foray into legalized casino gambling, Plainridge will have plenty of competition, including the Twin River Casino just 20 minutes away in Lincoln, R.I., with three times as many machines and full table games.

General Manager Lance George said he's confident they'll prove to be a competitive and appealing option. "I think what's going to surprise people is the quality and size of this facility," George said. "We'll end up with 1,500 game positions, several restaurant amenities, banquet

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and event space, as well as live racing 105 nights a year.”

Reaction From

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Plainridge owner Penn National Gaming is also putting \$4 million into revamping the Interstate 495/Route 1 interchange that brings traffic into the facility. About 250 construction workers are on site now, working 18 hours a day, and George said the casino plans to hire about 250 facility workers between now and June 23.

Plainville, a town of about 8,000 people, has been home to limited gambling – harness racing since 1999. What will big dollar slots mean for the Plainville? Townspeople are both optimistic and anxious.

“I think there's going to be more crime,” said town resident Barbara Harnden. She also fears that even with the revamped ramps and traffic signals at 495 and 1, getting around town will be a nightmare. “The area, the George Street area, it’s going to be devastating as far as traffic is concerned.”

But Greg Donato, who also lives in Plainville, said, “It’s going to be good, for the jobs for Plainville and the community. It's going to be good as far as the construction is going, a lot of jobs in that.”

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Pat Allgrove of neighboring North Attleborough said she thinks the casino will help with tax revenue for the town. "You may have some people coming in from out of town that may be a little bit rougher," Allgrove said, "but I don't think it's going to change Plainville or North Attleborough that much."

The state will collect a 49 percent tax on the casino's profits – also known as the money gamblers lose. The Massachusetts Gaming Commission estimates that will generate \$98 million a year. The commission is also gearing up to monitor and regulate the slot machines and make sure that, for example, they pay out the required 80 percent of dollars wagered in winnings.

Donato said he's not worried about the town's character changing from the arrival of Plainridge Park. "A casino's a casino. People who go there are the people who go there, and the people who don't are the people who don't," Donato said. "So if you don't like it, don't go."

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