

Casino clears key hurdle in Virginia town just 70 miles from Triangle

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 06 January 2019 16:28 -

DANVILLE, Va. (WFMY) -- The city of Danville is one step closer to getting a casino resort with the potential to bring thousands of jobs and pump billions of dollars into the local economy.

City Council voted unanimously last week to pass a resolution that would allow a casino resort in Danville. First, it would head to the General Assembly in Richmond then voters would then have to approve the decision in a local referendum.

"We felt like we owed it to the people of Danville to give them the opportunity to decide if they want to support this," Vice-Mayor Lee Vogler said of the vote Thursday.

If the referendum passes, it could have a major impact on the town, which is about 70 miles from Durham.

"This is the most significant economic development opportunity in my lifetime. We're talking about nearly 7,000 jobs and over \$1 billion spending into our local economy over the next ten years," he said.

The average salary of the jobs would be \$46,000. The casino resort would also bring about \$20 million each year in tax revenue based on existing taxes.

Vice-Mayor Vogler says those figures came from a study done by Chmura Economics and Analytics.

Danville's economy has suffered in recent years and city council believes the casino could change things.

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"I don't think it's any secret that the first decade of the 21st-century was tough for Danville. We lost textiles and tobacco and then the national recession on top of that," Vogler said.

Bristol and Portsmouth, two other Virginia cities, are also looking to bring casino resorts to their area.

Right now, the casino resort proposal hinges on the approval of the General Assembly that meets in Richmond next week.

A decision could come down as late as the end of February.

If approved on the state level, Danville voters would have the final say.

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