

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 03 October 2019 13:02 -

The casino operator approved by the Danville City Council this week still has to obtain a state gaming license. But the mayor of Danville says once it's built, the casino will be an economic boon.

[The Danville City Council voted 12-0](#) on Tuesday to approve Haven Gaming LLC as the operating partner for the as yet unnamed casino, which is to be developed with Danville Casino Acquisitions LLC.

Haven Gaming is promising to build a casino complex on Lynch Road along the I-74 corridor on Danville's east end. Officials with the firm outlined plans at Tuesday's city council meeting for a family-friendly complex that would include a hotel and conference center, a spa, water features, recreation facilities and shopping. Those speaking for Haven Gaming included former State Rep. Lou Lang, a longtime gambling advocate who identified himself to the [Capitol Fax blog](#) as only an advisor to the firm.

Danville Mayor Rickey Williams Junior says that in addition to construction jobs, the casino is projected to create 400 to 600 permanent full-time jobs and an additional 400 or so part-time jobs.

In addition, Williams says local governments will benefit from tax revenue from the casino, which will also provide the city with four percent of its annual earnings.

"The revenue, obviously will be incredible," said Williams. "It will help us eliminate our debt, our general debt, but also help us tackle the huge fire and police pensions, deficits that we have."

The city of Danville's deal with Haven Gaming also includes upfront gifts from the casino --- followed by annual contributions --- to the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Danville Area, the Fischer Theatre, Danville's police and fire divisions and scholarships for students at Danville Area Community College.

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[The Danville Planning and Zoning Commission](#) will consider a request from Danville Casino Acquisitions to create a gaming entertainment district for the new casino at its meeting Thursday, October 3, at 5:15 P.M. at the Danville municipal building.

Another big step for the Danville casino project will come by October 28, the deadline for new casino programs to apply to the Illinois Gaming Board for gaming licenses.

It's not clear how long it will take the Gaming Board to act on the applications. But Mayor Williams says once Haven Gaming gets a license, an initial temporary casino could be open in Danville in nine months.

"So we are hoping and projecting that if things go well with the state board, which we believe they will, then by November, hopefully, of next year, we could be up and running," said Williams.

Officials with Haven Gaming says the building for the temporary casino would actually be a permanent structure, which would in time be expanded into a larger casino, augmented by other businesses and attractions.

A new state gambling act signed in law by Gov. JB Pritzker in June makes the Danville casino possible. The legislation came after three decades of efforts by local officials to get permission to open a Danville casino.

Those efforts go back to the time of Illinois' Riverboat Gambling Act of 1990, which led to the opening of riverboat casinos in the state. Since then, new types of gambling have expanded in the region. A Danville casino will face competition from legal video gaming now available at bars and storefront gambling parlors.

A Danville casino could also face competition from a new casino proposed in the western Indiana town of Terre Haute, if Vigo County voters approve the idea in a November referendum.

UPDATE: This story was revised to note that former St. Rep. Lou Lang is an advisor, not an executive or investor, with Haven Gaming LLC, according to Capitol Fax. - JM 10/3/19 12:39

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Read more <https://will.illinois.edu/news/story/danvilles-mayor-has-high-hopes-for-casino-plans>