

## Ricketts allows casino gaming regulations

Written by Administrator  
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LINCOLN, Neb. (KOLN) - Allowing games of chance was on the ballot in 2020, and now Governor Ricketts has signed off on the regulations to open casino gambling in Nebraska.

Lance Morgan with Ho-Chunk Inc. has been preparing for this moment since before the election victory 18 months ago. Morgan says they're more than ready to go.

"Adding casino gambling to this whole initiative, what it will do is authorize the tracks to get a whole lot of money, and that will not only create jobs on the gaming side of the equation, but will also create economic activity in rural Nebraska," Morgan said.

Ho-Chunk has been working for about five years to bring slot machines, table games, sports betting and more to their latest venture, War Horse Casino, in Lincoln.

"Getting the regulations in place and really getting ready to really start and making it a real thing and a real economic contributor is super exciting for us," Morgan says.

The Racing and Gaming Commission is expected to finalize the vote on June 2, with application by June 6.

Ho-Chunk is ready to apply and get their license, but in the meantime, they're going to get their interim license.

"Our plan is to have an interim gaming facility within the next several months, but what we're going to build is going to take a lot of time, and we're probably 18 to 20 months away from having the full blown facility open," Morgan says.

Although that will be three-to-four years after the initial vote, the Racing and Gaming Commission says things have moved pretty fast.

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“In the meantime, there were minimal in control standards developed, a number of policies and procedures, applications that will be needed for gaming,” Tom Sage, Racing and Gaming Commission Executive Director said. They authorized gaming operators and all personnel working at the casinos, that’s all been developed and in place.”

Ho-Chunk expects the licensing and fees to be around \$5 million and to start construction this fall.

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