

A state economic development report is the next step in the process that could result in a casino being built — or not — in Sugar Creek.

The analysis is expected to be submitted to the Missouri Gaming Commission this month by staff members of the state's economic development department.

It presumably will address assertions made during last week's Sugar Creek public

hearing regarding the most effective location for any new Missouri casino. Applicants have submitted proposals for casinos in Sugar Creek and Cape Girardeau, as well as two in the St. Louis area.

Casino companies still are expected to make formal presentations to commission members. Four casino companies or groups that are seeking a Missouri gaming license will deliver presentations to the Missouri Gaming Commission on Oct. 20. The meeting, at the Doubletree Hotel in Jefferson City, will begin at 9 a.m.

Still another important date could be Nov. 2, Election Day.

In Cape Girardeau, voters will consider a ballot measure allowing them to approve or disapprove of gambling in their community. A majority of voters in opposition could render moot the approval, given last month by the Cape Girardeau City Council, of a \$125 million downtown casino.

A final decision on whether to award a state license could be made by late November, gaming commission chairman James Mathewson said during the Sugar Creek hearing.

Commission members, Mathewson said, did not anticipate meeting in December.

— That was new information, — said Salva.

Written by Administrator

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Sugar Creek officials, meanwhile, were preparing a written rebuttal of remarks made by opponents of a casino in the small Jackson County community.

At last week's hearing, a representative of Ameristar Casinos, Inc. cited an Ameristar analysis indicating that a Cape Girardeau casino would raise more money for the state. A Cape Girardeau casino could generate about four times more incremental tax revenue — revenue not already being captured by a Missouri casino — than the proposed Sugar Creek casino, according to the analysis.

Salva said Sugar Creek officials had other studies that included different descriptions of possible gaming revenues.

He also believes the public hearing went well.

“We were extremely pleased with the support we got,” he said.

Vincent Gauthier, Kansas City Port Authority executive director who spoke against a Sugar Creek casino, believed he made his own points.

The two casinos most significantly affected by a new Sugar Creek casino would be the Ameristar and Isle of Capri, which are significant contributors to the city of Kansas City's general revenue fund, Gauthier said.

“That is the big issue,” Gauthier said.

“You need to look at the saturation of the marketplace and understand whether these casinos can continue to make appropriate profits based on the investments that the commission already has charged them with making.

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☐ Hopefully, that message came across.☐

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