

Gun Lake Casino prepared to welcome public - WZZM

Written by Administrator

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WAYLAND TOWNSHIP, Mich. (WZZM)- Blackjack, slots, craps, restaurants, bars and entertainment; the new Gun Lake Casino has everything any other casino offers.

But the employees say they hope to stand out by making visitors feel more welcome and comfortable than their competitors.

"If I know your name I'm going to greet you by name," says casino marketing

manager Carter Pavey. "I'm going to get to know you. What you like to drink, when you like to eat. Our goal is to make them feel warm and comfortable when they walk in the door."

The casino has 28 table games, 1,461 slot machines and 2,500 parking spaces. Reporters and long time supporters were invited to tour the facility and play the games Wednesday.

"I'm having a ball," said slot player Deb Wilson of Belmont. "I'm just so happy they built this place. [I'm] thrilled to death."

The casino has over 700 employees. They are called "team members." Kimberly Brehmer of Otsego was unemployed when she was hired as a casino rewards supervisor.

"It was a sense of relief," she says. "Knowing there are so many people who are unemployed. I have a great job."

The casino was opposed for years by those morally opposed to gambling and others concerned about competition with entertainment venues in Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo.

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"All we are doing is fighting for the right to take care of our people," says Tribal Gaming Authority CEO John Shagonaby. "They delayed us for many years. We are here now. We are done."

There is still one last lawsuit pending that could potentially shut down the casino. A former Wayland Township trustee says the federal government violated the law when they gave the Potawatomi tribe the land for the casino.

Tribal leaders call the lawsuit "frivolous" and of "no concern."

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