## Casino, race track sought for Range - Duluth News Tribune

Written by Administrator Thursday, 24 February 2011 00:16 -

ST. PAUL — A group wanting to bring racing and a casino to the Iron Range has been given four years to buy property in Hibbing, assuming it can convince the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board that the idea is workable.

The board voted Wednesday

night to grant an option on 615 acres, mostly reclaimed mining land, in Hibbing.

But the effort is far from a sure bet.

The race track project, known as the Iron Range Racing Complex, would develop a motorsport and horse racing track. Supporters say the only way it would be successful is if it gains legislative approval to include a casino.

"It's a long shot," Rep. Tom Rukavina, DFL-Virginia, said after the meeting.

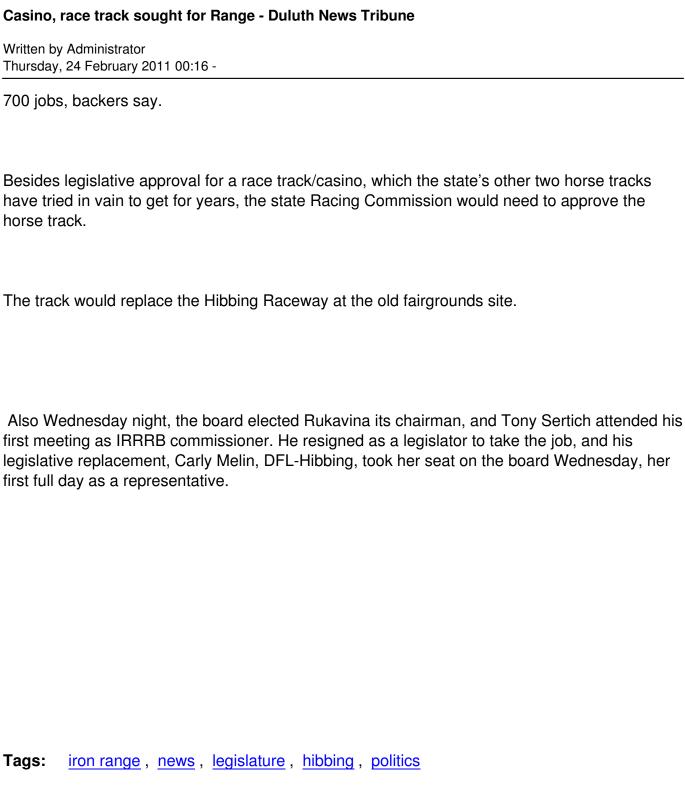
Consultant John Fedo, a former Duluth mayor and Hibbing city administrator, said a bill should be introduced in the Legislature soon to allow a race track/casino.

Fedo said the state could reap up to \$60 million a year from the Hibbing track.

Rukavina said that with a large state budget deficit, this may be the time lawmakers approve a gambling option to bring in more money.

Fedo agreed. "We're not sure, but we think the timing may be right," he said.

The concept is to build a track that hosts snowmobile races in the winter and horse and motorized races in the summer. It would cost up to \$45 million to build and would produce up to



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