

Community college, casino partnering on Blackjack Dealer Academy

Written by Administrator

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GRAND RAPIDS, MI - Grand Rapids Community College and Gun Lake Casino are partnering this fall to offer a Blackjack Dealer Academy to provide in-demand jobs.

A public information session on the new GRCC-Gunn Lake Casino Blakjack Academy Certification is scheduled for 6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at the college's Leslie E Tassell M-TEC, 622 Godfrey Ave. SW. The casino is based in Wayland.

Students who successfully complete the certification training will receive a guaranteed job after passing an audition and securing a gaming license, according to the casino's press release.



\$8.2M in Gun Lake Casino revenue shared with Michigan governments

Under the terms of a tribal-state gaming compact, the tribe shares a percentage of its electronic gaming revenue with the state and local governments twice each year.

Representatives from the casino reached out to the college to assist in bringing their current training program to Grand Rapids to be more convenient to participants learning how to become blackjack dealers, according to a press release.

Jose Flores, vice president and general manager at Gun Lake Casino, said they currently provide free on-site training for their dealers and this will continue alongside this new GRCC training option.

"We have partnered with GRCC to provide another training avenue to support our local communities with employment opportunities," said Flores, in a press release.

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“Table Games Dealers are one of the higher profile positions in the gaming industry and we are looking to support second and third shift business volumes with these additional dealers.”

Prospective students must be 21 and have a high school diploma or an equivalent to seek the certification. The casino is funding most of the training, so the certification class costs only \$25 for students, according to GRCC.

Wages vary, but the average is \$18 to \$22 per hour. This amount includes a base pay and tips. Team leaders receive healthcare, free shift meals and free uniforms, according to the casino.

The college is currently planning on two class options at M-TEC: 6 to 10 p.m. on Thursday and Friday for six weeks or 9 to 3 p.m. Friday and Saturday for five weeks. The classes will be taught by Gun Lake Casino’s table games trainer, Natalie Garcia, beginning in October.

The parties say this partnership is the first of its kind between a Michigan community college and tribal casino.

“Being relevant and responsive to our community means partnering with employers to create specialized training programs leading to jobs and keeping our region’s economy strong,” GRCC President Bill Pink said.

“We strive to be the place people look to for help, whether that’s the resident looking to gain new skills or the employer looking to fill openings. It’s a role we embrace.”

Gun Lake Casino employs more than a 1,000 workers. It features more than 2,000 slot machines, 42 table games, a high-limit room, a food court, a 225-seat cafe, and a 300-seat buffet restaurant.

[Gun Lake Casino leaders celebrate their new independence On Wednesday, tribal officials marked the end of its management contract with MPM Enterprises, a joint venture owned by an affiliate of Station Casinos, Inc. and a group of Mount Pleasant-based investors.](#)

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Flores said it was a natural fit for them to partner with the college. He said they have many GRCC alumni who are key contributors at Gun Lake Casino within their hospitality and security departments.

Currently, Gun Lake Casino, 1123 129th Ave., has more than 25 positions available and says it is providing an attractive deal to new members.

“This is our first opportunity to train people for careers in the gaming industry, and we are looking forward to growing this new partnership,” said Julie Parks, executive director of Workforce Training for GRCC, in a press release.

Read more <https://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/2019/09/community-college-casino-partnering-on-blackjack-dealer-academy.html>