

## NEWS OF NOTE

AUGUST 2013

### GAMING UPDATE

by: Steven Geller

**After a rather slow summer, gambling issues are starting to attract attention in Florida again. Here are a few recent highlights:**

Spectrum Gaming issued the first report on Gambling in Florida (feel free to e-mail me to request a copy of the summary that I prepared on their report). The next report is due at the beginning of October, 2013. Senator Garrett Richter, the Chairman of the Florida Senate Committee on Gaming, has announced that the Florida Senate will conduct at least four hearings around Florida to take public testimony on gambling issues. The hearings are tentatively scheduled to be held in Fort Lauderdale and Lakeland in late October and in Jacksonville and Pensacola in mid-November. Other hearings may occur, but are not yet scheduled. It is anticipated that the Florida House of Representatives will either hold its own set of hearings, or join with the Senate and hold joint hearings.

Senator Richter has also commented on the unclear statutes and regulations pertaining to Florida gambling, which has resulted in the Florida Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering (PMW) issuing many rulings which have resulted in lawsuits. Many people have argued that PMW has been too willing to issue permits, as was reflected in the Spectrum report. According to the Tampa Bay Times, Richter said "Staff is going through the existing statutes line-by-line to determine whether we want to eliminate the ambiguities."

Speaking of PMW, news reports indicate that Former Republican Party of Florida (RPOF) Chairman Jim Greer, (now serving an 18 month prison sentence after pleading guilty to several crimes relating to his Chairmanship, including theft from the RPOF) had been on the payroll of a Florida pari-mutuel while serving as Chairman of the RPOF, and had pressed for the resignation of the Director of PMW. According to News Service of Florida, Greer met with the new Secretary of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, of which PMW is one division, and asked the Secretary to terminate the employment of the Division Director of PMW. News Service of Florida states that "Critics, including [the] deputy secretary... , accused [the Director of PMW] of issuing the quarter horse permits 'like candy.'" Several days later, after inadvertently releasing some privileged documents, the PMW director resigned.

Earlier this week, Florida Gaming Corp., the parent company of Miami Jai-Alai, Fort Pierce Jai -Alai, and owner of other assets, disclosed in a stock filing that it has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. According to the Miami Herald, the terms of a pending sale to a New York company, Silver Entertainment, would essentially wipe out Florida Gaming, as the sale price, including debt, is scheduled to be \$115 million, but Florida Gaming would have to pay out to lenders and others approximately \$120 million at the time of closing.

Companies controlled by Donald Trump purchased the old Doral Resort in Miami last year, renaming it the Trump National Doral Miami. The Doral Resort is the home of the legendary "Blue Monster", and has long ties to professional golf. Trump spent a reported \$150 million to purchase the Resort, and is reported to have budgeted \$250 million more for a renovation. Trump has indicated a strong interest in bringing gambling to the Doral Resort if Florida establishes "destination resorts", and has recently hired one of the top lobbying firms in Tallahassee to represent his interests. According to the Tampa Bay Times, Trump said "If Miami doesn't do casinos, that would be a terrible mistake. Taxes would be able to be reduced substantially and Miami is the only place that Las Vegas is really concerned about -- in the United States... If [casino] gambling ever comes to Florida, Doral is the single, best location. We're on the airport... Every highway leads there. And I have 800 acres."

**If you have any questions regarding , you can contact Mr. Geller at 954.491.1120 or e-mail him at [steve.geller@gmlaw.com](mailto:steve.geller@gmlaw.com) or contact your personal Greenspoon Marder Attorney.**



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