

Hard Rock Casino to be built in Sioux City

Written by Administrator
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COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa (AP) -- Sioux City Entertainment will build a Hard Rock Casino in northwest Iowa's Sioux City after the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission awarded a gambling license Thursday to the group.

The commission chose from four proposals for land-based casinos in Sioux City after hearing proposals, meeting with developers and touring the proposed sites last month for casinos to replace the Argosy Sioux City riverboat casino. State regulators decided in 2011 to replace the Argosy with a land-based casino.

Penn National Gaming Co., which currently runs the Argosy, submitted two proposals for a casino -- one just outside of Sioux City and one in downtown Sioux City that would have required the demolition of several buildings. Ho-Chunk Inc. also put in a bid to build the proposed Warrior Casino & Hotel, a \$122 million project slated for the Davidson Building and Warrior Hotel.

But Sioux City Entertainment's bid for the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino for \$118.5 million was selected. It will be at the site of the historic Battery Building in downtown Sioux City.

"Obviously, we're very happy with the decision," said Bill Warner, president of Sioux City Entertainment and founder of the group's Las Vegas parent company, Warner Gaming. "We had no idea how it was going to go until they announced it."

The vote was not unanimous. Commissioners Greg Seyfer and Delores Mertz voted against awarding the license to the Hard Rock site, with Mertz earlier declaring the Ho Chunk proposal as her pick and Seyfer preferring Penn National's downtown proposal. All five commissioners expressed difficulty in coming to a decision.

"I have never lost so much sleep," Mertz said. "It has been really a wrenching decision."

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The winning Hard Rock proposal will see a casino with 800 slot machines and more than 200 gambling tables, Warner said. It will also sport an 800-seat venue for entertainment acts and concerts, several restaurants, a 60-room hotel and a "backyard" park setting around a small lake that can hold 3,000 people.

Construction is set to begin in July and is set to be complete by July 2014.

If the casino is not up-and-running by March 31, 2015, a fine of nearly \$54,000 a day will be assessed against the casino's developers until it opens.

Read more <http://news.yahoo.com/hard-rock-casino-built-sioux-181120120.html>