

CASINOS CAN BE WINNERS FOR SOME

Rita Sealock has served thirteen years as one of five members of the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission to help monitor the growth of gaming in the state. As a resident of Council Bluffs, she represented South West Iowa on the Commission. Rita noted that during this period the three Casinos in Council Bluffs became established to the point they represent about one third of the gaming revenue in the state. Rita explained a report that showed the three casinos had a gross revenue of over \$34 million this past September. This is taxed at ½ percent each for the city, the county, the gambler treatment fund, and an endowment fund. The state of Iowa receives 26% tax revenue. It is hard, Rita noted, for governments to keep from relying on gaming revenue for routine services. Rita stated that there are about 4000 employees from Iowa and Nebraska working at the casinos. Furthermore, the casinos are required to purchase goods and services from local sources as much as possible. Locally, this benefits both Council Bluffs and Omaha businesses. The high hotel occupancy rates at the casinos in Council Bluffs indicates there are a lot of people traveling here from outside the region.