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**EBRO GREYHOUND PARK**

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# PRESS RELEASE

NOVEMBER 22, 2011

## **EBRO GREYHOUND PARK TO BUILD \$300 MILLION CONTEMPORARY RESORT, CREATE 1,500 NEW JOBS WITH VOTER APPROVAL OF SLOT MACHINES**

Ebro Greyhound Park will expand into a \$300 million contemporary resort hotel and entertainment center, creating 1,500 or more new jobs and generating millions of dollars in direct new revenues to Washington County and its schools and municipalities, should voters approve the use of slot machines at the pari-mutuel facility in a referendum scheduled to be held January 31, 2012.

"This isn't about adding slot machines to our existing poker room and creating a handful of jobs," said Mark Hess, Associate Manager of Ebro Greyhound Park. "With the support of Washington County voters, we'll create a showplace that will attract vacationers to south Washington County, create 1,500 new jobs and generate sorely needed revenues for our communities and schools."

The plans for the \$300 million resort hotel were unveiled this week by owners of the Ebro racetrack, who asked county commissioners to put the slot machines proposal before Washington County voters. The resort and entertainment center will feature a 500 room hotel, an amphitheater, multiple restaurants and dining options, retail shops, family activity center, meeting rooms and conference facilities.

"With the world's most beautiful beaches and an international airport little more than a 15 minute drive from Ebro, the southern portion of Washington County is in a unique position to attract a sizable share of the 12 million vacationers visiting the area each year," said Chuck Pohlmann, project manager for Ebro Greyhound Park.

In addition, Pohlmann said the expansive Ebro resort would attract visitors who now frequent out of state gaming facilities.

"Washington County would reap tremendous benefits from the tourism dollars we are now missing out on," said Pohlmann. "Tourism dollars are like seeds to grow our local economy."

Pohlmann said the surge in spending and new jobs will be felt countywide. Under the terms of a legally binding agreement with Ebro Greyhound Park, the county, its municipalities and

local schools will receive a direct share of the gaming revenues, estimated to be \$2 million or more annually in the immediate future and more as the economy grows. The revenue is in addition to the taxes the county and state receives from racing and card games at Ebro, which is currently about \$300,000 per year.

In addition to permanent, good-paying jobs—many full-time positions averaging approximately \$30,000 per year—Hess said the massive building project will create a large number of new temporary construction jobs. Construction on the first phase of the three to five year long, \$300 million project will begin in 2012. Hess said an emphasis will be put on hiring Washington County workers.

"A 'yes' vote means more jobs and more opportunities for Washington County residents," said Hess.

With funding for essential government services at risk and county leaders exploring new local taxes, this is a tremendous opportunity for voters to take charge and ease the burden on Washington County taxpayers, added Pohlmann. The new revenues can fund schools, police and emergency medical services, pave dirt roads or any number of other local needs.

"Allowing slot machines at Ebro Greyhound Park, where gaming already exists, is a winner for jobs and a windfall for Washington County," said Pohlmann.

The Washington County Board of County Commissioners unanimously agreed to the referendum during its regular meeting on November 21. Although the referendum will be conducted with balloting for the Republican Presidential Preference Primary, voters do not have to be Republican in order to vote in the referendum. All registered voters, regardless of party affiliation, are eligible to vote on whether slot machines will be allowed at Ebro.

No taxpayer money will be spent for the referendum. Instead, at its request, Ebro Greyhound Park is paying all costs associated with the referendum balloting.

First opened in 1955, Ebro Greyhound Park, located on State Road 79 just north of SR 20, is Washington County's only gaming facility and one of its largest private employers. With voter approval on January 31, it would be the only facility in Washington County permitted for slot machines.