

Grand Rapids Press

Sunday, April 29, 2007

Wrong on exclusivity

Michigan Gambling Opposition (MichGO) vice president Jim Stringham's letter ("Opposed to all casinos," Pulse, April 13) got it wrong. He started out claiming that MichGO is opposed to all casino expansion, including the one Peter Secchia wants in Grand Rapids.

However, after one sentence expressing "disappointment" with "Mr. Secchia's" casino flop, Stringham turned to his real focus: Railing against the Gun Lake casino.

Stringham used the "exclusivity clause" of the Gun Lake compact, interestingly to argue against the Tribe's proposed casino and not to reason against "Mr. Secchia's" casino. He definitely did not make a convincing case that MichGO really is opposed to all casinos.

Then Stringham got the facts wrong. He claimed that a violation of the compact's exclusivity clause would enable the Tribe to "stop the million dollar payments" to "local communities."

That is a flat-out inaccuracy. Local revenue sharing has nothing to do with exclusivity.

Those payments are projected to be over \$3 million to local governments annually, and they will continue throughout the term of the compact.

So when people hear complaints from the radicals in MichGO, consider the source. Local media have been warned about their inaccurate statements numerous times from the tribe, and even from Governor Granholm.

Throughout this process the tribe has been completely open and honest. Too bad the opponents can't say the same.

-- ED PIGEON, Tribal Council Member, Gun Lake Tribe/Dorr