

## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### **MichGO anti-casino ad false, misleading; waste of time, money**

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**By John Shagonaby**

A political advertisement titled "Who's the Real Thief?" ran July 13 in the Kalamazoo Gazette from the anti-Gun Lake Casino group Michigan Gambling Opposition (MichGO), containing numerous false and misleading statements. From start to finish, MichGO used the ad to continue its orchestrated campaign of misinformation, which is being bankrolled by the so-called leaders of the Grand Rapids business community, 23 is Enough.

The recent ad is not worth the paper it was printed on. To begin, there are no billionaires involved in promoting the Gun Lake Casino; the same cannot be said for the organized opposition group. Our Las Vegas-based management partner, Station Casinos, is recognized as one of the best corporations in the industry, a position that is substantiated by its stock performance and the high regard and trust the company has earned on Wall Street. The company did not, as the ad claims, have its gaming license revoked in the state of Missouri.

Station Casinos also has the respect of its employees. The last two years it has earned the highly regarded designation of FORTUNE Magazine's "Top 100 Companies to Work For." No other gaming company has ever made the list. Station Casinos is a company that we can all be proud to have as part of our community.

To assume that Gazette readers are going to buy the "Fact" statements within the ad is a testament that MichGO continues to underestimate the intelligence of those who live in West Michigan.

It is not a "Fact" that the casino is going to result in a net-loss of jobs. How is such a preposterous notion even possible? Opponents paid the Anderson Economic Group to build a computer simulator that produced data to support anti-casino efforts. It is not an "independent" study, as the ad stated, nor has the study ever been peer-reviewed; a standard practice in academic communities to ensure the methodologies used and results are credible. Moreover, the Taylor Study, conducted by a Harvard Fellow, critiqued the findings of Anderson and found them to be inaccurate.

It is not a "Fact" that the casino is going to hurt college students. In citing this ridiculous claim MichGO pointed to opposition correspondence to the governor. So, it's now fact because they say so?

Other universities have benefited from positive, forward-looking relationships with Indian tribes. Central Michigan University and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe signed a proclamation to "publicly acknowledge and strengthen a relationship that is beneficial not only to each other but to the entire mid-Michigan region." The tribe and the university signed another proclamation to strengthen their relationship "for the enhancement of each other's goals and visions and for the greater good of all residents of the region, state and nation." The Gun Lake Tribe is hopeful this type of positive relationship can be forged with West Michigan universities, as they have been in other parts of the state.

Contrary to the misleading statements in MichGO's ad, the casino is not going to create sprawl. We take great pride in being good neighbors and support local government's choice to zone local land in accordance with desired use. Our casino site is located just off the freeway, which will provide convenient access.

The bottom line is that MichGO wasted a whole lot of time and money on this ad. The more than 10,000 West Michigan residents who support the casino through membership in the Friends of the Gun Lake Indians and the approximately 60 percent of statewide supporters will see through their falsehoods because they support the casino; feel the tribe should have a compact; and believe the casino will have a positive economic impact on West Michigan.

However, this is not a political issue to be determined by polls, politicians or advertisements. We are a sovereign government with authority derived from treaties, the U.S. Constitution and the Supreme Court to

govern civil regulatory affairs on Indian lands. Michigan does not criminally prohibit gaming; that's why the Gun Lake Casino is inevitable.

John Shagonaby is the Gun Lake Tribal Council treasurer.

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