



Gaming board approves railport investment

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— CLINTON — About 90 percent of the funds needed to build a rail line into an industrial park are squared away after gaming board officials approved a \$1.8 million investment Wednesday.

According to Clinton Regional Development Corp. President Steve Ames, about \$9.8 million of the estimated \$10.8 million price tag for rail construction is funded. The CRDC, which is heading the \$20-plus million project, has also received money from the city of Clinton for property purchases.

The Clinton County Community Development Association, which distributes revenue from Wild Rose Casino throughout the county, voted 5-2 Wednesday. Board members Matt Stammeyer and Alice Schnepel opposed lending the money.

Schnepel said her gut feeling told her something about the project was not being answered, but she wasn't sure what it was. "I hope it works, but I think there is something wrong here," she said. Stammeyer said every time the board commits money to long-term projects, it limits its ability to give money to other worthy organizations. The \$1.8 million grant, which will be paid out over nine years, fulfills a \$2 million pledge the board made in May.

In July, the board committed just \$200,000 of that total because several board members were concerned there wasn't enough money on hand. There was little debate from board members Wednesday about lending the rest of the money.

The industrial park, which will be built just south of the Clinton Municipal Airport, will include main line access to the Union Pacific Railroad and access to barge shipping along the Mississippi River. Construction is expected to begin this spring.