



Wild Rose Casino, Resort marks first anniversary with success

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— By Jason Nevel
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CLINTON — It's difficult for Tim Bollmann, Wild Rose Casino and Resort general manager, to come up with downsides for undocking the old riverboat and building a landbased casino. Whether its higher ceilings with better ventilation, more parking spaces or more room to host performers and business groups, the transition from the Mississippi Belle II to Wild Rose has been smooth for Bollmann and the staff at the 1-year old casino.

"If you have to have a downside, you don't have a view of the river," Bollman said, who has been the general manager since 2007. Today marks the one-year anniversary for Wild Rose and, according to Bollman, things couldn't have gone any better.

The casino, which has different owners than the riverboat did, has seen its profits and number of people entering the casino increase the past year. Revenues have jumped nearly \$11 million, according to the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission Riverboat Revenue Report from 2008 to 2009.

"It's our first year and we're learning as we go but really the whole game has changed with the economy," Bollman said. According to the same report, Iowa casino revenues have dropped this year from last by about \$100 million.

One of the ways Wild Rose has overcome some of the economic challenges is to offer more incentives for people to come other than pulling down a lever or placing a bet on red.

Unlike the former Mississippi Belle II, the Wild Rose Casino has a 60-room hotel, two restaurants and a 9,000-square-foot ballroom.

Food served at the riverboat used to be cooked in a separate building four miles away and shipped to the boat. Now, Wild Rose has its own kitchen. "If people want to do the dinner and a movie type atmosphere they can do that here, which is something that Clinton has never had," he said.

Because the casino sits on an open lot off Mill Creek Drive, Bollman said there is a possibility for the casino to expand. But for now he said they're just hoping year two goes as well as year one.