

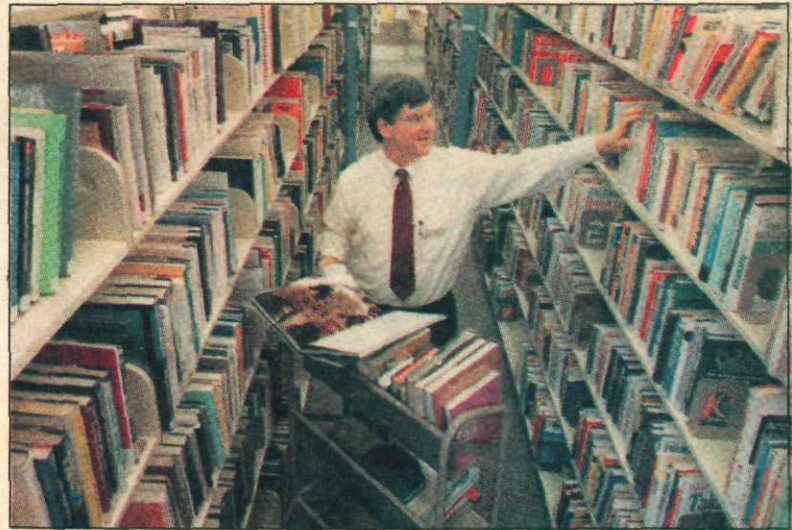
Gambling beneficiaries accept offer cautiously

BY TODD NATENBERG
Daily Herald Staff Writer

While Kane County governmental officials say West Dundee's decision to share potential gaming revenues from riverboat gambling is generous, they're not making any bets on receiving any money.

"It's positive that West Dundee, in the spirit of cooperation, was responsive to the other local agencies that would be impacted," said Bob Whitehouse, president of the Dundee Township Park District, which stands to receive \$135,000 if West Dundee's riverboat gambling plan is approved.

"Should it go through, it's interesting."



Library Director Paul Mechtenberg says the Dundee Township Library's portion of riverboat revenues could help update magazine, audio and video collections. Daily Herald Photo/Dave Tonge

West Dundee trustees agreed to share two-thirds of a projected \$9 million in annual municipal gaming revenues with 14 local governments, educational institutions and service agencies.

The West Dundee offer is con-

tingent on the Illinois State Gaming Board approving Las Vegas-based Mirage Resort's application for the state's final gaming license. Mirage has proposed a \$96 million entertain-

See **GAMBLING** on Page 4

GAMBLING: West Dundee offer aims to aid whole area

Continued from Page 1

ment complex that includes a three-deck paddle wheel riverboat for casino gambling on the Fox River.

"It's a very generous gesture on the part of the village of West Dundee to share the revenues," said Dundee Township Library Director Paul Mechtenberg, whose facility would stand to receive \$135,000 annually.

In an attempt to increase the village's chance at getting the final gaming license, West Dundee trustees earlier this week approved a measure that would reduce the village's annual take on riverboat gambling to an estimated \$3 million.

The other \$6 million would be divided in various proportions among the groups. Elgin Community College, Dundee Unit District 300, Elgin Area Unit District 46, and the nearby villages of Carpentersville, East Dundee, Gilberts and Sleepy Hollow would all receive money.

"Certainly, any monies that would come to education and District U-46 would be very helpful," said Lowell Antepen, west area superintendent for Elgin Area Unit District 46, which would receive an estimated \$360,000.

Dundee Unit District 300 officials said they needed more information before they could pass judgment on the proposal.

Fred Goering, assistant superintendent for business affairs, expressed concern the additional \$360,000 District 300 is expected to receive could hurt the district's financial standing elsewhere.

"Does this mean that a proportion of our amount of state aid would go down? Would this increase the assessed valuation and then state aid would go down?" Goering asked rhetorically.

Ironically, the City of Elgin, which is also vying for riverboat gambling, would net the biggest local profit from West Dundee's proposal, gaining 12 percent of the village's revenues, or \$1.08 million.

The University of Illinois' Urbana and Chicago campuses would receive \$1.1 million. The remainder would be divided up among the park district, library district, Dundee Township, and Dundee Township tourism and United Way and a yet unnamed Kane County-based educational, occupational or job training program that focuses on at-risk students.

By giving funds to other affected governmental agencies in the area, West Dundee officials hope to demonstrate to gaming board officials their desire to comply with the spirit of gaming laws that are in part designed to boost economic development in areas that need it.

"It was taking a look at the area, the entities within the area, and the agencies within the area and trying to ascertain what were going to be impacted and those with some needs in terms of the revenues," West Dundee Village Administrator Joseph A. Cavallaro said.

"Elgin obviously has a significant amount of impact and a significant amount of need."

But officials in Elgin failed to comment on West Dundee's latest proposal.

"Elgin is really only interested in pursuing its application," said City Manager Larry Rice. "Beyond that, I would have no reaction."

Exactly how the monies would be spent is still being discussed. Cavallaro said the village would set up individual meetings with each of the affected parties and work out inter-governmental agreements, outlining how the monies could be spent. He said the idea would be to focus the monies on economic development.

But some governmental agencies have their own ideas about what they would like to see the money spent on. Library officials suggested updating their video, audio and magazine collections, while District 46 said the money could go toward building repairs or textbooks.

Whitehouse said he would like to see parks developed in Dundee Township.