

# Pittsburgh casino bidders promise new jobs, but skeptics remain

Pittsburgh (AP) – The three groups vying for the Pittsburgh slot machine license promise the casino will create scores of new jobs, but some experts caution against putting much stock in the wildly varying estimates.

Three competitors – Cleveland developer Forest City Enterprises, Isle of Capri Casinos Inc., and Detroit businessman Don Barden's PITG Gaming – are in the running for the license.

Forest City projects its Harrah's casino could generate nearly 4,000 direct jobs; Isle of Capri estimates its proposed casino in the city's Hill District will create 979 jobs; and PITG Gaming says its North Shore casino will bring in 1,500 jobs. They also project several thousand spin-off jobs.

Some experts, however, remain skeptical.

„Those figures can be very, very bogus,“ professor Robert Goodman of Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass.

Goodman, who has studied the impact of casinos on local economies, told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that for every spin-off job a casino creates in a market such as Pittsburgh, another is lost as gamblers choose how they spend their money.

„There's no additional money coming in,“ Goodman said. „You're just playing with the same money.“

Sebastian Sinclair, president of Christiansen Capital Advisors, said his group's studies show that casinos do generate jobs.

The Innovation Group consultant Steve Rittvo, who did the Isle of Capri study, said his number was „based on what we perceive will be in place.“

Critics doubt the job numbers because, unlike casinos in, say, Atlantic City, N.J., Pittsburgh will not have table games.

„If these places say they're going to hire 2,300, 3,000 people, it might be through hotels, it might be through restaurants, but it won't be through gaming,“ said William N. Thompson, a professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

„If you have 3,000 machines, you probably can run it on 300 employees,“ Thompson said.