

## Slots revenues slip again at casinos

By Heather Allen  
New London Day

NEW LONDON, Conn. — The ongoing slump in slot revenues continued at both of the state’s tribally owned casinos in July.

Foxwoods Resort Casino had a 3.2 percent drop in revenues over the previous year, a \$2.4 million difference from July 2007. The drop was dramatic at Mohegan Sun, with the slots slipping 14.6 percent, down \$16.1 million from a year ago.

While both casinos have experienced consistent drops in slot revenues in the last several months, the double-digit drop at Mohegan Sun was made to seem more drastic by the casino’s “spectacular” numbers in the previous year. One billion dollars flowed through the slots at Mohegan Sun in July 2007, a mark that neither casino had reached before.

“The numbers are down,” said Mitchell Etess, president and chief executive officer at Mohegan Sun. “Comparing this against the last July, which was really spectacular for us ... this was expected.

”There’s no doubt that we’re seeing the impacts of people’s feelings on the economy,” Etess said.

With each slide of the numbers, the casinos have cited rising energy prices and diminished consumer confidence in the economy as the source of the less-than-stellar slot numbers.

”We continue to see softness in the market, which we believe is caused by the continued weakening in the economy, high gas prices and alternative choices for drive-in slot patrons in New York and Rhode Island,” said Barry Cregan, interim president at Foxwoods, in a prepared statement. Connecticut had fewer dollars flowing into its coffers in July as well.

Foxwoods, which is owned by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, contributed \$18.2 million to the state, which was down slightly over the previous year’s contribution of \$18.8 million.

Mohegan Sun, which is owned by the Mohegan Tribe, contributed \$18.9 million to the state, down from \$22.2 million in July 2007.

Both casinos reported virtually the same hold percentage, the amount kept by the casino. Mohegan Sun reported 8.49 percent, Foxwoods 8.5 percent. That figure is down from 8.8 percent for Mohegan Sun and up from 8.4 percent for Foxwoods.

The June and July declines followed a reprieve from falling revenue in May, when slots jumped 7.7 percent at Foxwoods and two-tenths of a percent at Mohegan Sun. That bump came after an eight-month decline.

The spike at Foxwoods in May was attributed to the opening of MGM Grand at Foxwoods, which opened mid-month.

June’s numbers came as a disappointment for Foxwoods and led Standard & Poor’s to put the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe on CreditWatch, which could lead to a downgrade in the tribe’s credit rating.

Cregan, in the statement issued Friday morning, said the casino is continuing to market MGM Grand at Foxwoods, creating “new options for new and reactivated customers who have not been to see us for a while.”

Cregan also said the casino is “reducing costs through attrition rather than layoffs.” The casino laid off around 100 Foxwoods employees in June. The Mashantucket Pequot tribe laid off or gave voluntary buyouts to 170 tribal government employees in an effort to cut \$40 million from the tribal government budget earlier in the year.

Mohegan Sun has eliminated jobs through attrition but has yet to lay off staff or offer buyouts. The casino is scheduled to open its expansion, the Casino of the Wind, on Aug. 29, just in time for Labor Day weekend.

## Small town mourns over 3 lost to war

By Michael Levenson and Brian R. Ballou  
The Boston Globe

MASHPEE, Mass. — About 600 people turned out at Mashpee’s Community Park Monday night for a candlelight vigil honoring the town’s three fallen members of the military.

Holding white candles shielded by clear plastic cups, the mourners listened to town administrators, local politicians, and close family friends offer words of condolence to the families of Marine Daniel A.C. McGuire, and soldiers Paul E. Conlon and Alicia Birchett.

The families listened to the emotional expressions as they sat in white folding chairs in front of a makeshift podium.

The scene included Boy Scouts, veterans groups, active-duty military in uniform, as well as many residents sporting Army T-shirts and Marine buzz cuts.

William Baron, Conlon’s uncle, said of the turnout, “It is just overwhelming.”

Baron, 38, turned and gazed out at the crowd of mourners ringing a flag at half-staff in the center of the park.

”It was supposed to be a gathering of family and then it turned into this. And we are so thankful for everyone who showed up.”

Baron said Senator Edward M. Kennedy had visited his home early Monday and spoke

privately with Paul’s mother, Maria, for about 15 minutes.

McGuire was a clean-cut church volunteer who loved acting in school musicals and dreamed of becoming a kindergarten teacher.

Conlon was a strong-willed artist who played classical piano, wrote poetry, wore spike-studded belts, and had his hair cut in a Mohawk.

Birchett, 29, a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, was an Army staff sergeant who was killed on Aug. 9, 2007, after she was pinned by a truck while changing its tire in Baghdad.

A dedicated mother of three boys, she died following her life’s calling, mourners said.

McGuire and Conlon, who died on consecutive days last week, joined the military fresh out of Mashpee High, two years apart.

Both shipped overseas, McGuire to Iraq, Conlon to Afghanistan. Their deaths plunged Mashpee, a close-knit Cape Cod community of 14,000, into mourning. The deaths also brought to light qualities the men shared, values that their friends recalled Monday as they consoled each other with hugs, phone calls, and photos and stories swapped over the Internet.

”Paul and Dan were pretty much one and the same,” said Kari Brissell, 18, who said she dated McGuire for nearly two years in high school and kept in touch with him via e-mail when he was serving in Iraq.

”They were both really strong about the military. They both did sports. They both made people laugh, and they were the people you wanted to be around. Everyone wanted to be around either one of them because they were lighthearted, fun people.”

Monday, Mashpee High School opened its doors to grieving students and planned the candlelight vigil in the town’s Veterans Garden, a simple memorial with an American flag planted in the middle of a pathway of bricks engraved with the names of service members killed in action.

”A lot of my friends are saying it’s unfair,” Brissell said. ”It isn’t fair to lose two great people like that in the same week.”

McGuire, 19, a private first class in the Marines, died Thursday when his patrol outside Fallujah came under small-arms fire, according to Sydney Chase, Mashpee’s veterans agent. Conlon, 21, an Army private first class, died Friday when his Humvee struck a roadside bomb in Afghanistan, his family said.

Two counselors at the high school said Monday that they knew both men well, having served as their advisers.

”There’s just a sense of disbelief among people here, that two men who were so young and full of life and from the same community could die in such a way,” said Pat Farrell, Conlon’s counselor.

”Both men were very unique, and well liked,” said McGuire’s counselor, Janet Kraskouskas, sitting in the school’s library. Both said they tried to persuade the men to attend college, but Conlon, who graduated in 2005, and McGuire, who graduated in 2007, were determined to join the military.

”I was trying to get him to think differently, I didn’t want to send a young man off to the war, someone who hasn’t lived life,” Kraskouskas said. ”He knew the risks, but he was living his dream by being in the service.”

Friends said McGuire felt a sense of duty.

”As far as back as I can remember he was talking about joining the Marines,” said Val McGinnis, a friend from Mashpee High. ”I don’t think it was something he would ever regret. He loved this country.”

Fallon Greer, 15, met McGuire last year, when she worked on the stage crew for a high school production of ”Annie” and McGuire played the role of Franklin D. Roosevelt. ”He told me he saw me as a younger sister, and I looked up to him,” she said.

This year, when McGuire was in Iraq, the two stayed in touch, exchanging e-mails and the occasional phone call.

”I always asked him how the situation was over there, and was it dangerous, and he said things were fine and the locals were pretty nice,” Greer

said. ”He said not to worry about him. Of course, I did anyway.”

The last time she spoke with McGuire was about a week ago, when he called from Fallujah, she said.

”He told me they were going to start moving around a little bit, and he wasn’t sure the next time he could call,” she said. ”And he just said, ’Don’t worry about me. I’m going to be fine. And I’ll give you a call as soon as I can.’”

Monday, Conlon’s friends filled a Facebook page with tributes, his poetry, and photos of him at his most carefree: lounging on a couch with friends, tossing a rock into the ocean at dusk, and dancing with reckless abandon, his T-shirt soaked in sweat and arms thrust out.

”I just can’t believe horrible things can happen to such an amazing person,” one friend wrote. ”I’ll always remember, you as the goofball in class who made everyone laugh.”

Brissell said that after weeping for days, she has tried to joke with friends that ”God needed a bodyguard or two.”

”I know that Dan would want us to be happy for him,” she said. ”He died doing exactly what he wanted to do. I know he’s watching over us; he’s watching over Mashpee. Paul is probably watching over Mashpee, too. People are just trying to remember them and remember they’re in a better place.”

## Wenatchis have fishing rights at Leavenworth

Wenatchee World

LEAVENWORTH, Wash. — The Wenatchi Band of the Colville Tribes has fishing rights to the Wenatshapam fishery, which includes Icicle Creek and the Leavenworth Fish Hatchery, a federal judge ruled this week.

District Court Judge Garr King decided Tuesday the Wenatchi band of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation has equal rights with the Yakama tribe, which opposed the Colville Wenatchi’s right to fish the Leavenworth fishery, a news release from the Colville tribes states.

The Yakamas have tried for decades to keep the Colvilles’ Wenatchi Indians from fishing in the area, and the issue went to federal court in 2003 when Wenatchis began fishing in Icicle Creek.

”We knew without a doubt that the Wenatchi band of the Colvilles had never lost these rights, and the court’s decision makes this clear,” said Colville Tribal Chairwoman Jeanne Jerred in a prepared statement. ”Judge Garr’s decision should bring this long-standing dispute to an end. ... And end an extremely contentious issue,” her statement said.

## Buffalo management



Associated Press

Mike Faith, who manages the Standing Rock buffalo herd, looks out over the reservation’s 7,000-acre buffalo range and game preserve July 21, on the Standing Rock Reservation near Fort Yates, N.D. Faith says the tribe has a long-term goal of expanding the current herd from 260 head to 1,000. To accommodate 1,000 buffalo, the tribe would need about 20,000 acres.

## Profits will provide programs for members

By Justin A. Hinkley  
Battle Creek Enquirer

FULTON, Mich. — For the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi, FireKeepers Casino is a chance to better care for its tribal members.

Earlier this month, about 75 tribal members were at Pine Creek Reservation for a meeting with Kellogg Community College and Michigan Works representatives to learn about classes or training they can take to qualify for one of 1,500 jobs at the casino, according to the Tribal Council.

Tribal member Bill

Osborn, 47, of Marshall has been working since May on FireKeepers construction, donning a custom fire-embazoned FireKeepers hard hat. Osborn said he’d gone five months without work before the casino came along.

”I thank the Creator for the jobs,” Osborn said. ”I think the opportunities in the future are going to be immense.”

Twelve tribal members are working construction, the council said. There are about 850 Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi members, with about 400 living in southwest Michigan. About 35 members live on the reser-

vation.

Nearly half of the tribal members of working age are unemployed or underemployed, according to the tribe.

”More will come here if there are jobs available,” said council Secretary RoAnn BeeBe-Mohr.

”We’ve always said that we are going to bring jobs,” said council Chairwoman Laura Spurr. ”We’re going to do that.”

Danielle Jacobs, 36, lives on the reservation. She’s been working for about two weeks as a field technician at the casino site. She said she’s happy to be working and see

other tribal members gaining experience but said she’s most optimistic about the impact the casino revenue will have on the tribe.

”I’d like to see more social programs,” Jacobs said. ”I’d like to see help for our elders, giving help to our members with employment opportunities and job training.”

The casino, with \$100 million in annual revenue, is set to make the tribe more self-sufficient, Spurr said.

After the state and local governments’ share of casino revenue is deducted, the tribe will have \$90 million in new income every year. Over the

next seven years, that money will be used to pay back \$340 million in bonds issued for casino startup.

The council said that, after the bonds are repaid, revenue not reinvested in the casino will go toward other long-term investments and increasing tribal programs such as health care, senior programs, education and a tribal public safety department.

”We have to envision the future of our tribe for the next seven generations,” BeeBe-Mohr said. ”We’re responsible for that.”