

3.30.2010

From: **No Casino Gettysburg-- a non-profit, volunteer group dedicated to stopping a casino ½ mile from the Gettysburg National Military Park**

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## **ADAMS COUNTY RESIDENTS IMPLORE INVESTORS TO RECONSIDER DIVISIVE GETTYSBURG CASINO PROPOSAL**

*Letter asks David LeVan to display “civic responsibility” and set aside controversial proposal*

**(Gettysburg)** –Adams County citizens are imploring local business owner David LeVan to reconsider his plan to pursue Pennsylvania’s last remaining casino license and spare our community from the bitter divisions it suffered following his previous unsuccessful attempt to bring casino gambling to Gettysburg.

“In 2005 and 2006 this controversy literally pitted neighbor against neighbor, damaging friendships and causing deep, persistent rifts,” said No Casino Gettysburg spokeswoman Susan Star Paddock. “It was painful enough the first time and nobody wants to go through it again.”

According to Paddock, 140 Adams County residents have signed an open letter to Mr. LeVan, which No Casino Gettysburg began circulating privately last week. She noted that other county residents who have not yet seen the letter can add their names to the appeal by visiting the group’s website, [www.nocasinoggettysburg.org](http://www.nocasinoggettysburg.org). “We know from our local petition signatures that there are hundreds more county residents concerned about divisions in our community who will want to sign the letter.”

In the letter, the signatories acknowledge the numerous good works Mr. LeVan has performed in the Gettysburg region and call upon him to demonstrate the “same spirit of civic responsibility” by declining to further pursue his casino proposal with the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, due April 7.

In 2005 and 2006, controversy swirling around an attempt to open a casino near the intersection of Routes 15 and 30 tore at the fabric of the Gettysburg community. Furor was so intense that former Borough President Dick Peterson

told the *Gettysburg Times* it was the “most divisive” event of his tenure. Recalling that animosity, many citizens are unwilling to suffer it again, particularly when the new proposal is significantly closer to the boundaries of Gettysburg National Military Park and the most often visited portions of the battlefield.

Instead, his neighbors and fellow county residents are reaching out to Mr. LeVan, asking him to bear in mind the unique power he has over this situation, writing, “you are the only person in our community that can prevent this divisive debate.”

Specifically, the letter asks him to “please weigh the unintended consequences of reigniting this controversial issue, and the harm that will come to our community if you proceed with your proposal,” going on to state “you have it in your power to help us heal once and for all, to emerge as a stronger community.”

Mr. LeVan has done a number of good works for Gettysburg,” said Charles McElhose, local business owner and living historian. “However his current effort to bring a casino threatens to negate the value of those works because of the divisiveness it is creating in our community.”

Barbara Shultz, owner of Sentimental Journey Bed and breakfast, agreed, saying, “During these difficult times, we all want to see projects aimed at strengthening our local economy, but they can’t come at the expense of our existing businesses. My customers hate the idea, and also notice the dissension in town. There is still time for casino investors to do the right thing for Gettysburg and channel their efforts into other appropriate avenues.”

During the previous casino controversy tensions ran high and tempers flared frequently. Volunteers publicly opposed to the proposal received threats of violence against their families. Web site commentary has become increasingly hostile since the proposal was presented.

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