

Thursday Edition



ONLY THE SKY COVERS YOU BETTER  
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## City Responds To Slot Machine Buzz

BY TRACI KRATZER

City officials are working to dispel statements going around the community that slot machines are proposed for Santa Anita Park.

City officials state that incorrect slot machine information is being distributed to the community by Arcadia First and others opposed to the proposed development at the racetrack.

One comment in particular that the city commented about was the machine called the Horse Wizard. The Horse Wizard is a machine that acts and looks similar to a slot machine. The way the machine works is a person using the machine is betting on a real horse race that is taking place somewhere in the country, which the city says makes the action pari-mutuel wagering and puts the machines under the jurisdictions of the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB). State law gives the CHRB jurisdiction over all horse racing operations at California racetracks.

"The rumors being spread about these machines are misleading and intended to cause an emotional response from Arcadians," said Arcadia Mayor Roger Chandler. "These machines are already in operation at Santa Anita. They are not slot machines and of utmost importance is the fact that the City of Arcadia does not have jurisdiction over their use."

City officials also mentioned a statement from Arcadia First that pertained to a proposed California law to expand racetrack gambling which they said the city supported. However, City Manager Bill Kelly said that in addition to the bill dying in Legislature this last summer and the legislation not including the Horse Wizard but machines that would offer the opportunity to bet on historical horse races, the city did not support the bill.

"Santa Anita is by its nature a place where gambling takes place," said council member Mickey Segal "The notion that these machines are bringing to Arcadia a new type of gambling center is untrue, inflammatory and irresponsible."

In response to the city press release, Arcadia First sent out its own release with a number of quotes from representatives of the racetrack and the City of Arcadia in which they say prove that their statements about the slot machines are true.

One such statement that Arcadia First references comes from Frank Stronach, Chairman of the Board, The Chairman's Message in the 2004 annual report of Magna Entertainment Corporation (MEQ). It states, "I have always maintained that slots are not the answer to growing the horse racing and wagering business. However, I do believe that the addition of slot machines and VLTs (Video Lottery Terminals) at racetracks will give our industry—and MEC racetracks — the ability to compete on a more even playing field with other forms of gaming entertainment."

Arcadia resident Phyllis Nemeth, who is a member of Arcadia First, said, "It's very clear the owners of Santa Anita want gaming devices in Arcadia. The Horse Wizard and its live racing content is just the beginning. Next comes betting on videos of historic races, as proposed in their recent legislation, which can take place continuously. From there it is a simple leap to real slots."