

Diamond Jo Casino Worth County Iowa

by John K. Kallman



If location, location, location is the mantra of the real estate agent, it must be doubly so for a casino owner. With the last vestiges of winter slowly melting into the slowly greening country side, the siren song of the road beckon me once again to the never ending pursuit of something new to add to my collection. There is something about the smell of newly issued chips to get the blood racing in any collector. Thus, with a full tank of gas and only a vague idea of where I was going, it was off to see what was over the next hill.

For anyone who has tried to find one of the many Indian casinos located across the mid-west, they only know too well of what an adventure it can be to find these often out of the way, poorly marked, back-road establishments can be to find. After exiting the ring-road that encircles the twin cities of Minneapolis / St Paul, there was a steady stream of billboards reassuring me that the direction I was headed was the correct one.

As with most states, Wisconsin has a 'Welcome Center' as the first exit when traveling IH-35 south from Minnesota. And along side the right

away is an old style water tower with an arrow pointing down along with the words CASINO as displayed on the chips from this casino. Easy to find? Almost hard NOT to! There, along the interstate, right after the Welcome center, behind a Burger King and trucker friendly gas station sits the newly opened Diamond Jo casino.

While small compared to many casinos – just slightly over 500 slots, two craps tables, one roulette table and 10 card tables, construction continues on this newest addition to the Iowa countryside. From the corn motif door handles on the outside entry way to the pictures of barnyard animals hanging in the restaurant, the casino is done in a rural motif. This theme extends to the cocktail waitresses who are attired as the farmer's daughter in one too many traveling salesmen jokes: cowboy boots, short-shorts and halter tops! There is a lot to like to this casino beyond it being easy to find!

Being located just 100 short miles of the Twin Cities, right off the inter-

state, no doubt its location was decided in part to be a drawl to many Minnesotans. In addition to its easy access, it has at least three things that one will be hard to find in the tribal casinos located on the opposite side of the border: craps and roulette, both of which are currently not permitted. With a bar conveniently located within the casino, liquor is easily available, something also missing from many Minnesota casinos, and with half naked, young, attractive waitress to bring it to you, no doubt this will find more than one trucker taking an extend break after filling the tanks on there rig. Perhaps the only thing missing, other than tokens as the slot machines are all Ticket In – Ticket – Out, is the lack of a hotel. But the backhoes and construction crews were still quite evident so this may be the very next structure rising out of the Iowa countryside.

There is a water wheel along the front side of the casino, and the staff reports that the casino itself rest on six inches of water, qualifying it as a 'riverboat' casino (this begs the question as to what happens in the winter when the water freezes if this now becomes an 'ice-hose' casino?). There is a rather small gift shop that backs along the card club so





that the staff there can serve both sides. Three different card levels are in use with the red card being the lowest level. This is the first casino that I have ever been to that gladly

gave an example of each level card! A Starbucks and Burger King round out the amenities as do a Poker Room. Presently, the poker room is using the roulette chips for tournament play. Neither limited edition chips nor grand opening chips are presently available but seldom seen 50c chips were evident of the black jack and roulette tables. The roulette chips come in seven colors with 12 white inserts and are all marked 'A' despite the fact that there is no table 'B'.

With ill gotten goods in hand, I headed back out onto the interstate, and other than some traffic jams due to rush hour and construction, made my way home no worse than wear. Plans are already under way for future adventures as I head out onto the road in search of the next casino as I wind my way to the club's convention, this year venturing through Oklahoma.