

Wild Rose Casino

by John K. Kallman



Emmetsburg, IA. The Wild Rose casino was the 2nd of three casinos which opened in 2006 as a result of legislation authorizing an expansion of gambling in Iowa. The first was the Diamond Jo in Northwood (reviewed here earlier), and the last being Riverside, located in Riverside. While the Wild Rose shares many similarities with the Diamond Joe, there are also many differences as well. As with the Diamond Joe casino, this one also has three feet of water in the basement to comply with legislation requiring non-Indian and non-race track associated casinos to be located on the water (perhaps an excellent example of politics gone awry!). The number of slot machines and table games along with the mixture is nearly identical to that of Diamond Joe. However, the amount of space both wall to wall and floor to ceiling is much greater, giving a much more relaxed feeling to the entire place as opposed to close quarters of the Diamond Jo casino.

The entrance is located in the center of the complex which opens into a two floor high foyer. The casino is to the left and the hotel is to the right. The back wall is nothing but windows which has a view over looking a lake. A staircase leads upstairs for an even better view, along with access to the buffet and several smaller food shops including a pizza and Blue Bunny Ice cream parlor. The casino hotel was built at the same time as the casino where as with the Diamond Jo, this was added on after the fact.

Unlike the Diamond Jo, which is right across from the Minnesota border and just off the interstate next to the Iowa Welcome Center, the Wild Rose casino is located in one of those places that you would have to want to go to as opposed to being convenient to travel between here and there. In fact, the community of Emmetsburg lobbied to have this casino placed here as a way no doubt to attract both jobs and visitors. No doubt in the end it will be successful, but not with nearly the amount of stop in traffic that Diamond Jo will receive.

Of note, the slot cards were made in China, and perhaps so were the chips which have yet their mold classified. They did have a ‘high-roller’ area, but no players during my visit and lacked a poker room, but no doubt the former may be removed if this does not attract sufficient players which would provide ample room for the missing poker room which seems to be a main stay of an increasing number of casinos. If you are in the area, you may wish to stop in for a visit, but as mentioned before, this casino is somewhat off the beaten track in more ways than one.

