



OCTOBER 1, 2017

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SPRINGFIELD

Roulette? Poker? Casino training set

Colleges, MGM partner to develop workforce program

By **JIM KINNEY**
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A casino job training program set up by Holyoke and Springfield Technical community colleges in association with MGM Springfield is expected to start offering classes in February to prospective dealers, pit bosses and croupiers.



JEFFREY P. HAYDEN

The Massachusetts Casino Career Training Institute's ambition is to run two cohorts of students through a 15-to 20-week program before the \$960 million MGM Springfield casino opens for business in September, said Jeffrey P. Hayden, executive director of the institute and the colleges' Training and Workforce Options program.

The colleges announced their agreement with MGM Springfield this week to the state Gaming Commission during its meeting in Springfield. That agreement still needs the approval of the Gaming Commission, and Hayden said he expects it to be forthcoming in the next month or so.

MGM has agreed to provide \$1.4 million of in-kind funding for the program. That funding will come in the

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Casino

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form of space, equipment and staff to teach courses, Hayden said. The classrooms are currently under construction on the ninth floor of MGM-owned 95 State St.

He anticipates equipment like roulette wheels and blackjack tables will be installed in October. Instructors will be hired in November. The colleges will start doing intake work getting students signed up in November and December.

In December and January, the Massachusetts Casino Career Training Institute will offer remedial classes, getting students up to speed with the language and mathematics skills they will need to take courses training them to be dealers, pit bosses overseeing the gambling floor, and croupiers collecting and paying bets.

Classes covering the basics of gambling operations, customer services, security, problem gambling and the specifics of Massachusetts casino laws will begin in February, Hayden said. That basic class will be followed by courses on specific games of chance and how to run them.

He estimates there will be about 1,000 applicants and the school will enroll 550 in the next year. Of those, 400 will likely graduate and be the casino gambling floor workers MGM says it needs.

This effort to train casino table game workers is separate from the community colleges' efforts to train culinary workers, security and surveillance workers for the casino, Hayden said.