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June 8, 2011

Dear Buffalo News Editor:

According to the article appearing in the Buffalo News on June 2, Batavia Downs reported a jump in revenues from \$20.5 million in 2005 to nearly \$38 million the past fiscal year. They have attributed this increase to the installation of electronic slot machines. Also stated in this article is that Batavia Downs Casino is contemplating expanding and adding 150 more slots. The conundrum question is how to do this without impacting society adversely.

This week alone the Buffalo News reported that a priest admitted stealing nearly \$25,000 from his parish because of problem gambling. Also reported was that a New York City police detective, two firefighters and a funeral arranger were among the 15 people arrested for running an illegal gambling ring. Some pathological gamblers turn to crimes such as embezzlement or writing bad checks as their gambling losses swell. An eerie similarity to a story reported yesterday where a Batavia woman was arrested and sentenced for embezzling \$85,000 from her employer because she wrote fraudulent checks for herself.

To realize any significant progress in prevention and treatment of problem gambling, a reasonable strategy must be devised that involves all stakeholders. The Gaming Industry, government organizations, researchers, counselors, treatment and prevention centers, and the public-at-large must act in a socially responsible manner. The University of Buffalo's Research Institute on Addictions discovered that having a gambling addiction is more prevalent than alcohol problems. As evident by your news stories, the segment of our population who gamble and become afflicted with problems themselves do in fact cause social and economic problems for others.

The pool of money available to help those adversely impact by problem gambling has shrunk. This raises the concerns that prevention and treatment of the problem will suffer and society will be adversely impacted even further. It is important to educate and raise awareness of problem gambling, and to make more, not less, resources and information readily available.

Sincerely,

James Maney  
Executive Director