



IndependenceFirst

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25TH ANNIVERSARY

September 8, 2005

Alderman Michael S. D'Amato, Chair
Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development Committee
City of Milwaukee
200 E. Wells Street, Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Alderman D'Amato,

On behalf of *IndependenceFirst*, Metro Milwaukee's primary nonprofit resource on access and independent living for people with disabilities located at 600 W. Virginia St. in Milwaukee (bordering on the Menomonee Valley), I am writing in support of the Potawatomi Bingo Casino's proposed expansion, within their property's existing footprint. The proposed \$240 million for the expansion will provide the valley with economic development via additional jobs and entertainment spending as a benefit to our community. But, another result of the expansion would likely be the additional resources funneled into our community's nonprofit sector, through the Forest County Potawatomi Foundation's community investments—providing much needed, and currently underfunded services for the community's most underprivileged populations.

IndependenceFirst has benefited over the years by being one of countless nonprofit organizations who have experienced the Forest County Potawatomi Foundation's generosity, and many of our community's individuals with disabilities have benefited through our programs and services in turn. We know firsthand that the Milwaukee area's nonprofit sector struggles to reach the necessary funding levels to fill gaps in service to Milwaukee's most needy people, and advocate for long-lasting change for these people's independence. The Forest County Potawatomi Foundation contributes a great deal to filling these gaps by reinvesting in our community's nonprofits. We know their commitment to the area would strengthen with this expansion.

The Potawatomi Bingo Casino is a valued resident of the Menomonee Valley whose expansion fits in with the planned development in our neighborhood. They have been a good neighbor and welcome people with disabilities to work and recreate in their facilities. We urge you to approve a zoning change to allow for this planned expansion to move forward for the benefit of our community. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lee A. Schulz
Executive Director
IndependenceFirst