

Lay offs at Wind Creek

The Bethlehem Gadfly Wind Creek Casino September 25, 2020

 *Latest post in a series about Wind Creek Casino* 

This bad news gives occasion to wonder about how the City is doing. The Mayor has not reported on the budget recently at City Council. Budget season is approaching. The budget meetings began November 12 last year. One can imagine the City departments are well into formulating budgets by this point. And one can assume some tightening, some tough decisions. Singing the Pandemic blues.

selections from Andrew Scott, “Wind Creek Bethlehem lays off about 450 people due to coronavirus impact.” Morning Call, September 24, 2020.

Wind Creek Bethlehem is laying off 20% of its staff — about 450 people — because of the coronavirus pandemic’s impact on business, a casino official said Thursday.

The casino notified furloughed employees they will not be asked to return to work, and eliminated some jobs, spokeswoman Julia Corwin said.

Corwin said “significantly lower business volumes” prompted the casino’s decision.

She said she couldn’t get into further specifics on employee or revenue loss counts.

“We closed Emeril’s Fish House permanently today,” Corwin said, referring to the restaurant connected to celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse.

“As far as what’s still available, we continue to follow the Wind Creek standard, which outlines our commitment to our guests’ safety,” she said. “We find that our guests are still enjoying their favorite slot and table games, dining at our restaurants and staying at our hotel.”

Wind Creek Bethlehem temporarily **closed March 15**, four days before **confirming one of its employees tested positive for the coronavirus**. Two more employees tested positive by March 27.

The casino paid its roughly 2,400 employees through the end of May but furloughed 2,095 of them June 1, as the downturn entered its third month.

When it **reopened June 29**, more than three months later, statewide safety measures dictated casinos operate at no more than 50% normal occupancy. Wind Creek Bethlehem had less than 50% occupancy, with just 1,200 of its 3,045 slots operating and limitations on the number of players at its tables.

The casino called back about 1,400 of its employees at the time. It planned to recall more as it increased its capacity.

In August, its first full month since reopening, Wind Creek logged gambling revenue of \$28 million in July, **the lowest full month of gambling revenue recorded in nine years**.

“We believe that our reduction in workforce will in the long term positively affect our future success,” Corwin said. “We continue to move forward in our process to expand our current footprint at Wind Creek Bethlehem.”