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Matt Jones to Moderate Fact Finding Forum on Casino Gambling

SARATOGA SPRINGS – The Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce and the Saratoga Convention and Tourism Bureau are teaming up to co-host a “Fact Finding Roundtable Presentation” moderated by Matt Jones, of the Jones Firm, December 16, 2013, at 7:00 p.m., at the Saratoga Springs City Center.

This “Fact-Finding Roundtable Presentation” will feature a panel of experts who will be asked to publicly address the following:

- The schedule and how New York State is likely to evaluate Casino operator proposals.
- How the law’s requirements for partnerships between the Casinos and local entertainment facilities might be implemented and enforced.
- The economic impact of Casinos in a community like Saratoga Springs in terms of jobs, increased payroll, construction activities, purchasing from local vendors, etc.
- The impact the siting of a Casino in Saratoga Springs might have on crime, poverty, and problem gambling in Saratoga County.
- How a Casino in Saratoga Springs might impact the economic well-being of the downtown and the continued success of locally owned restaurant and retail stores.
- How a Casino in Saratoga Springs might impact Thoroughbred and Harness Horse racing.
- What would happen to the current Saratoga Casino and Raceway if they don’t obtain a license and a competitor opens a full-gaming casino elsewhere in the Capital Region.
- How much money will be paid to the City and Saratoga County if a casino is sited in Saratoga Springs versus somewhere else in the Capital Region or elsewhere in New York State.

The Chamber and Convention Bureau have already setup an online survey that local residents and businesses can take in advance of this event to help guide the topics to be covered by the presenters. The survey can be accessed on their websites at www.saratoga.org and www.discoversaratoga.org as well as on their respective Facebook pages. A Twitter hash tag has been setup at #saratogacasinoforum

to also allow people to tweet questions in advance. The results of the survey as of December 6th and copies of the tweets will be provided to all of the panelists before the forum.

Matt Jones opened his law practice in Saratoga Springs in 1980. He is a 1972 graduate of the Saratoga Springs High School and a 1976 graduate of the University of Vermont. He graduated from the University of Houston school of Law in 1978. He was the President of the Saratoga Springs Board of Education from 1990-1991; the President of the Saratoga County YMCA from 1998-2000; and was a Charter Member and Vice Chair of the Saratoga Springs City Center Authority. He is currently the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce. He has also been a member of the Saratoga Springs Lion's Club for 35 years.

"Matt Jones has this community's best interest at heart," said Todd Shimkus, President of the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce. "We're thrilled he has agreed to moderate this important public forum in a way that will help all of us who love Saratoga Springs to better understand this complex issue."

"We're asking a diverse group of experts to present the facts as best they can on the opportunities and challenges we must consider as New York State moves forward to site full gaming Casinos in our state and region," said Todd Garofano, President of the Saratoga Convention and Tourism Bureau. "Our goal here is to share as much information as we can to ensure everyone is making an informed decision."

The Chamber and the Convention Bureau are working to finalize the list of expert panelists who are uniquely qualified to discuss each of the topic areas. The Saratoga Casino and Raceway as well as officials from the Upstate Theaters for a Fair Game, the New York Thoroughbred Breeders Association and local business owners have already agreed to participate. The City's elected officials, the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, and the area's legislative delegation are all invited to attend.