

**News Release**

**(Donations Table Attached)**

**Backus American Legion Post #368**

**P.O. Box 3 Backus, Mn. 56435**

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**BACKUS LEGION CHARITABLE GAMBLING CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHARITIES AND GOVERNMENT TOTAL \$48,794 IN 2014, SAME AS PREVIOUS YEAR**

**BACKUS, MN. – Contributions to civic and community causes and taxes paid to the state and federal governments from the Backus American Legion Charitable Gaming Partnership totaled \$48,794 in 2014, the same level as the previous year.**

**Education, youth recreation, local food shelves, communities and organizations were the chief benefactors as well as Minnesota state government. The state was the largest single recipient of gaming profits, receiving \$23,362 in taxes and fees, an increase from \$19,364 the previous year. The total donations and taxes were nearly the same as the \$48,721 contributed to charities and government in 2013. Donations to other community and charitable causes in addition to the state and federal governments totaled \$22,737.**

**In addition to those expenditures the post spent \$895 in gaming revenues on state authorized maintenance of its hall which it makes available free of charge to governments, organizations and private parties and individuals for meetings and social events. The Legion also again in 2014 successfully completed its regulatory compliance review from the state Gambling Control Board as it has for several years.**

**“We’re very pleased last year that once again we were able to provide a high level of support for the many worthy programs in our area and we will strive to improve those contributions each year as revenues allow,” said Backus Legion Commander Bill Taylor. “We’re grateful to the public for supporting our charitable gaming program so that we can maintain our commitment to help support the needs of our area residents and communities.”**

**The Legion’s charitable gaming partnership includes the clubrooms at Hwy. 371 and 87 W. and Willard’s Saloon and Eatery in downtown Backus.**

**Highlights in 2014 included \$3,600 for nine \$400 individual scholarships to Pine-River Backus school seniors and another \$3,000 to Pine-River Backus family, child, community education and extra-curricular activities. Among additional education donations was an increase from \$300 to \$500 for the Central Lakes Rotary STRIVE program aimed at helping underperforming students succeed in school and improve their chances of successfully completing post-secondary education and training. The post also gave \$500 to the school district’s safe graduation party and another \$600 to a program to defray expenses for Cass County youth exhibiting at the Minnesota State Fair.**

**Area food shelves in Pine River and Hackensack received a \$1,500 increase to a total of \$4,500. And the Backus Corn Fest Committee received an \$800 increase to a \$2,000 a total grant for support of its annual community festival.**

**Youth recreation projects received \$1,375, including costs of maintaining the post’s ball fields for area youth sports teams and \$500 for the popular Hackensack area children’s fishing contest.**

**Since 1991 the Backus Legion’s charitable gambling program has donated \$733,991 to education, civic, community and veterans’ programs and paid another \$658,658 in state and federal taxes.**

Statewide in 2014, Allied Charities of Minnesota, reported in a year-end analysis some “ups and downs” in charitable gambling. Gross revenues increased from \$1.14 billion to \$1.2 billion, with prizes totaling \$995 million, a payout of 82.7 percent. Net revenues minus prizes were \$207 million, with 52.3 percent of that going to expenses--the main increase coming in taxes and fees that rose from \$39.6 million to \$47.1 million. Charitable giving increased from \$41.1 million to \$42.9 million. ACM notes that charitable gaming is one of the highest taxed businesses in the state.

For every 17.3 cents left from each dollar after payment of prizes, organizations paid another 9 cents in expenses and another 3.9 cents in taxes and fees, leaving 4.4 cents available for donations.

A major setback for the industry was Gov. Mark Dayton’s veto of a mostly non-controversial comprehensive charitable gaming improvement bill because an amendment restricting state lottery sales was attached to the measure. ACM hopes to avoid a similar development this year and pass the bill along with a tax relief measure.

(End)