



Colonial Downs Launches Efforts in Emporia

Emporia, VA – February 24, 2021 – City leaders and officials fully support the potential opening of “Rosie’s Gaming Emporium,” an off-track horse race betting and restaurant venue. Historical Horse Racing (HHR) machines were approved as a form of gaming in the Commonwealth by the Virginia General Assembly in 2018. Virginia law requires localities that have not already approved pari-mutuel wagering must have a voter referendum before a pari-mutuel facility can locate in their community. The Colonial Downs Group has begun the process of placing a referendum on the ballot this November to allow pari-mutuel wagering in Emporia in accordance with the state code of Virginia.

The \$20 million gaming investment venture, owned and eventually operated by the Colonial Downs Group, will create approximately 100 new jobs with an average compensation package of \$47,000. Rosie’s is a company that not only brings jobs and revenue to the locality but also invests in the community.

“City staff has been in discussion with Rosie’s for the past twelve months. This is an excellent development not only for the City of Emporia but the entire Southside Virginia.” stated City Manager, William E. Johnson, III. There are apparent benefits for Emporia, “Tax revenue, jobs, and entertainment for our citizens and visitors.”

Aaron Gomes, Chief Operating Officer, Colonial Downs Group: “We could not be more excited by this opportunity to bring a first-rate entertainment and gaming experience of Rosie’s to Emporia. In the months ahead we look forward to sharing our positive story of job creation, economic development, tax revenue generation, and, equally importantly, fun, with the residents of Emporia. From Vinton to Hampton, we have helped spur economic growth that has lifted up communities all across Virginia. We would be honored to do the same in Emporia.”

Lisa Speller, Vice President of Community Affairs and Government Relations (and an Emporia native), Colonial Downs Group: “Emporia will always be home. Working for a company like Colonial Downs, a company based right here in Virginia, with values focused on building strong communities, is empowering, and uplifting. I want to see Emporia have good jobs and the tax revenue it needs to grow and thrive. That’s what will happen if voters here say, “yes,” to this referendum, and “yes” to hosting a Rosie’s Gaming Emporium. I can’t wait to get this campaign underway. This is a wonderful moment for a city that means everything to me.”

If city voters approve the referendum, Emporia will be the newest location for the Colonial Downs Group, joining other locations in New Kent, Richmond, Vinton, Dumfries, and Hampton.