

## **Gov. Pritzker and local dignitaries break ground on new Walker's Bluff Casino Resort**

Cartersville – Gov. Pritzker and State Sen. Dale Fowler joined Walker's Bluff Winery owner, Cynde Bunch and Elite Casino Resorts CEO, Dan Kehl in a ceremony to celebrate the beginning of construction on a new \$147 Million casino resort investment, located near the Walker's Bluff Winery in Cartersville, Illinois.

Local supporters and elected officials joined the festivities which included speeches from the governor and senator. Hard hats and shiny shovels were used by Elite Casino Resort board members and executives along with Gov. Pritzker, Sen. Fowler and Cynde Bunch to turn the first dirt on what will become a destination attraction for the area.

"I was proud to work with the General Assembly to expand gaming and bring jobs and economic opportunity to Southern Illinois. Walker's Bluff was already a popular attraction, bringing in tourists and business meetings from across the region. Now with the addition of hundreds of slot machines and game tables, and an on-site hotel, this expansion will bring in even more visitors to take advantage of the beauty and hospitality of Southern Illinois," said Governor JB Pritzker. "That also means more opportunity for working families across the region – creating 1,100 construction jobs and 330 permanent roles at the resort."

Cynde Bunch has been advocating for this economic boost for nearly a decade. Bunch said, "It's been an effort this community has embraced. We are so excited to get started. We plan to employ 1,000 people to build this beautiful resort complex that will be loaded with amenities"

Bunch said that more than 80% of the construction jobs will be filled by southern Illinois residents and the casino will look for local vendors and suppliers whenever possible. "It's just good business sense to buy local," said Bunch.

The Walker's Bluff Casino Resort will feature 650 slot machines and 14 table games and an energetic show lounge featuring local and regional acts. Amenities include a 116-room hotel with full-service salon and spa. There will be multiple food outlets including the Draft Day with ELITE Sportsbook and Ruthie's Steak & Seafood restaurant. Additionally, an event center will bring headline acts, corporate meetings, and social events to the property. Once open, the resort will employ nearly 400 people.

Elite Casino Resorts holds majority ownership in the casino resort and will operate and manage the casino resort. Cynde and Dave Bunch will hold a minority ownership in the casino resort.

Elite CEO, Dan Kehl added, "We specialize in bringing world-class properties to markets similar to this one. We are a family-run business, rooted in the values of our founders, Robert and Ruth Kehl of Dubuque Iowa. We are committed to providing first class guest service, great food and entertainment while treating our employees like our family."

Construction is expected to take 14 months with a grand opening planned for early 2023.

Elite Casino Resorts is an Iowa-based locally owned company that employs over 1,600 people across its three premier destination casino resorts in Iowa including Riverside Casino & Golf Resort®, located just south of Iowa City, IA; Rhythm City Casino Resort® located in the Quad Cities Davenport, IA area; and Grand Falls Casino & Golf Resort® located in Larchwood, IA just minutes from Sioux Falls, SD. Elite is also planning to build Grand Island Casino Resort in Grand Island, Nebraska in conjunction with the Fonner Park Horse Track located on the Nebraska State Fair Grounds. in Grand Island, Nebraska.