

Jackpot! Casino Employee Embraces Group Travel Gig

It wasn't luck that brought Mike Kase success as an employee at Hoosier Park Racing & Casino in Anderson. Instead, it was old-fashioned hard work and a commitment to collaboration with peers.

Kase's long history with Hoosier Park began in the mid-1990s "when they stuck a shovel in the ground to start the racetrack."

Today, his passion for the travel industry is helping a national travel organization break ground of its own. Earlier this summer, Group Leaders of America (GLAMER) named Kase its first chapter director. Starting this fall, he began representing the Indianapolis chapter.

"The opportunities over the last 12 to 15 years (at Hoosier Park), and especially the last three years with the casino (established in 2008), have put me in a position of knowing everyone's nuances. Every group leader has a different need.

"I think that's the opportunity that strikes us with GLAMER – being able to learn or glean more from a pool of several hundred Central Indiana group leaders, and to help guide and direct them with any of their challenges."

Kase doesn't hesitate when asked to identify Indiana's strengths in the travel market.

"It's – number one – the cross section of attractions," he declares, citing a variety of sporting and cultural destinations.

The challenge is "how can we look at a group coming to Indiana staying in Indiana? Everybody thinks, 'Oh my gosh,



In his new role with GLAMER, Mike Kase will help attract visitors to a variety of tourist attractions (photo courtesy of Conner Prairie).

let's put a group together and run off to St. Louis or Nashville or Chicago' – and thusly, those dollars leave Indiana.

"When you talk about enhancement, that's an area we all need to jump on the bus, so to speak, to work toward."

Resources: Mike Kase, Hoosier Park Racing & Casino, at www.hoosierpark.com
Group Leaders of America at www.glamer.com

Hoosier Exports to China Hit Billion Dollar Milestone

Going, going, gone – to China. Indiana moved \$1.09 billion in goods and services to China in 2010, according to the United States-China Business Council. The top five exports were machinery (except electrical), chemicals, computers and electronics, transportation equipment and primary metal manufacturing.

Hoosier commodities sent to China (the state's seventh-largest export market) jumped 554% between 2000 and 2010. Indiana's exports to all other countries increased at a much smaller pace: 81%. During that same timeframe, national growth in terms of exports to China soared by 468% (from 16.2 billion to 91.9 billion).

Twenty-four states send \$1 billion-plus each year to China, which is America's third largest export market, behind Canada and Mexico, respectively.

Resource: United States-China Business Council at www.uschina.org

Shorts written by Symone C. Skrzycki

IPO Boom Bottoms Out

What a difference a year makes. Initial public offerings (IPOs), which skyrocketed to \$264 billion globally in 2010, are now struggling to get off the ground.

"It's pretty easy to explain (why) because the IPOs that have gone out this year have lost 15.7% of their value on average," notes Jim Strain, co-chair of the business and finance practice group at law firm Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, which has offices in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Arizona.

"On the global scene, it's not a heck of a lot better. The global market has dropped off significantly, particularly in the third quarter."

Strain attributes the plunge to market volatility caused by the slow pace of economic recovery in the United States as well as the European debt crisis.

"Investment bankers, companies and investors hate uncertainty in the market. If you don't have people buying your stock, you're not going to be in a position where you can go out with a public offering," he points out.

When BizVoice® spoke with Strain in early October, the IPO global total thus far in 2011 was \$118.6 billion.

Resource: Jim Strain, Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, at www.taftlaw.com

Are 'Smart' Tags Going Too Far? Security Concerns Grow

Would you tell a stranger you were going out of town or recount your day's activities? Of course not. But people often reveal personal information on social networking platforms – unwittingly jeopardizing their safety.

Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) tags – which can track location-based behaviors such as consumer spending and online shopping habits – are creating similar security concerns in the business world.

Many retailers are embracing the technology. Unlike traditional bar coding, direct proximity to the merchandise isn't required for scanning and recording data. Its ability to perform at long ranges (up to 300 feet) enhances efficiency.

Other businesses are embedding RFID technology on

their web sites and offering discounts for individuals who click on those applications. But the question is: What happens to the information users provide – and who else has access to it?

Privacy researcher Lorraine Kisselburgh, an assistant professor of communications at Purdue University, cautions that convenience and discounts come at a price: the loss of "locational privacy."

She emphasizes that there are serious concerns about privacy violations (including identity theft) from direct tracking of human location behaviors and consumer spending tracking.

Resource: Lorraine Kisselburgh, Purdue University, at www.purdue.edu

Financial Stress Affects More Women Than Men

It's a battle of the sexes when it comes to money-related worries, confidence and knowledge.

Men, a recent report suggests, have the advantage.

The *Gender Gap in Financial Literacy 2011*, a survey conducted by California-based education company Financial Finesse, reveals significant differences among American male and female workers.

One category with large disparities involves stress. While women and men both claim to face financial stress (90% and 83%, respectively), the former experiences higher levels. Findings show that overwhelming financial stress impacts 9% of women – three times more than men. Part of the female anxiety, the report contends, may be attributed to their role (in many cases) as primary caregivers in the home, as well as the fact that they earn less than men and live longer.

How do women and men fare in terms of investing? Although participation in workplace retirement plans is similar (more than 90% for both), just 25% of women are confident in their investment allocations versus 42% of men. In addition, 64% of females say they possess general knowledge of stocks, bonds and mutual funds, compared with 84% of males.

Here's the good news: The overall financial literacy gap between men and women has narrowed since Financial Finesse released its 2010 study. Time will tell whether that change is the start of a long-term trend.

Resource: Financial Finesse at www.financialfinesse.com

Paperless Courtrooms Coming to Indiana?

A recent story about a New York courthouse's commitment to electronic filing described benefits such as greater efficiency, convenience and less paper waste.

BizVoice® asks, "Is e-filing a realistic option for Indiana?"

"I would say absolutely yes," declares Mary DePrez, director and counsel for trial court technology at the Indiana Supreme Court. "I think it's a smart way to do business."

But it can't happen just yet.

"Before you can get to e-filing, something needs to be in place," asserts

Kathryn Dolan, public information officer for the state Supreme Court. "And that something is one court case management system for the state." Currently, Indiana's 400 trial courts operate under 22 different systems.

High-tech software called Odyssey is helping the state move toward a uniform system. The program connects courts to one another and allows them to share electronic information with law enforcement and other state agencies. In addition, it provides free online public access to approximately seven million records.

The first 10 deployments took place in late 2007 as part of a pilot project. Today, 104 trial courts in 35 counties have adopted the new technology.

DePrez cites efficiency and convenience as two of Odyssey's biggest advantages: "I think it's going to save a tremendous amount of data entry hours for multiple agencies, courts and people."

She anticipates statewide implementation, depending on funding, is at least six years away.

Resources: Mary DePrez and Kathryn Dolan, Indiana Supreme Court, at www.courts.in.gov

