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Local Share Accounts: Where Do the Funds Come From?

By State Rep. Bud Cook (R-Washington/Fayette)

In an editorial released last week titled “Local Share Accounts: What Are They and Why Should You Care?”, I detailed how Act 71 of 2004 (Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act) allowed a small portion of the revenue brought in by casino gaming to be placed into Local Share Accounts (LSA). That money is to be distributed fairly to local entities to assist projects that would improve the community that receives the funds.

Funding for LSA in Washington County comes solely from slot machines and table games. The money from both sources is distributed the same and is all put in the same “pot.” This is money you use to gamble that is then used for community betterment projects. However, the projects this money is used on are not always chosen fairly.

Some funds are distributed by the state Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) directly to each municipality within the counties eligible to receive grants. Distributions to a municipality in accordance with this shall be deposited into a special fund established by the municipality. The governing body of that municipality has the right to draw upon the special fund for any lawful purpose, provided that the municipality identifies the fund as the source of the expenditure. Annual reports must be submitted to the DCED.

Any funds not distributed by the above method, are deposited into a restricted receipts account established in the DCED to be used exclusively for grants to the county, to economic development authorities or redevelopment authorities within the county for grants for economic development projects, infrastructure projects, job training, community improvement projects, other projects in the best interest of the public, and necessary and reasonably administrative costs. This is how LSA grants are awarded in Washington County.

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Editor’s Note: This is part two of a three-part editorial about LSA grants. In the next piece, you can expect to read about the Washington County grant application and selection process.