

nation. The Park boasts 3,000 lakes and ponds, and 30,000 miles of rivers and streams that offer world-class fishing, canoeing and kayaking, and the most challenging whitewater rafting east of the Rockies.<sup>61</sup>

This year, the State will sponsor a national rafting and paddling competition called The Adirondack Challenge.

This new event will focus the world's attention on the unparalleled natural beauty and recreational opportunities of the Adirondacks to attract tourists to Upstate New York.

### ***Increase Upstate Tourism through Destination Resorts/Casino Gaming***

We can also revitalize the Upstate economy by increasing tourism through destination resorts and casinos. Some may say the State is not in the casino business, but nothing could be farther from the truth. The fact is that gaming already exists throughout New York State. Native Americans have five casinos, and there are nine racinos at the race tracks in New York State.<sup>62</sup> In fact, New York State now has more than 29,000 electronic gambling machines,<sup>63</sup> which is more

than Atlantic City<sup>64</sup> and more than any state in the Northeast or Mideast.<sup>65</sup>

New York has three gaming facilities with over 4,000 machines.<sup>66</sup> No casino in Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, or Nevada has over 4,000 machines.<sup>67</sup> We don't fully realize it, regulate it, or capitalize on it, but we have gaming.



***The fact is that gaming already exists throughout the state, but the state is unable to fully capitalize on it.***

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New York State is also surrounded by gambling. States and Canadian provinces<sup>68</sup> just across our borders have legalized casino gambling, and they are the beneficiaries of the tourism, revenue, and good jobs that could and should be in New York. In fact, there are 39 casinos in adjacent states and provinces, and this does not even include the three casinos that are likely coming to Massachusetts, 9,508 slot machines at 14 racetracks in Ontario, and 12,000 Video Lottery Terminals (VLT's) in 2,000 facilities in Quebec.

The State Legislature gave first passage to a Constitutional amendment, which calls for a maximum

of seven casinos in New York State.<sup>69</sup> This year, the Governor will propose a Phase One casino gaming plan to go along with the measure, which must again be resubmitted and approved by the Legislature in 2013 and will then be subject to ratification by the electorate.<sup>70</sup> Governor Cuomo proposes the following elements for the casino gaming plan:

- Begin by locating up to three casinos in Upstate New York.
- No casinos will be located in New York City—the plan is to bring downstate New Yorkers and other visitors to Upstate.
- The Gaming Commission will pick the best locations and the plan must have local government and community support.
- Any revenue raised under the plan will be split 90 percent for education and 10 percent for local property tax relief.

Casino gaming has significant potential to be a major economic engine for New York State. It is estimated that over \$1 billion of economic activity can be generated from casino gaming,<sup>71</sup> and passing a Constitutional amendment would allow New York to maximize and rationalize its opportunities. Limiting casino gambling to no more than seven facilities also

guarantees there will not be an excessive proliferation of casinos within New York State.