

Wild Rose Casino opens its doors

Clinton – Area residents eagerly awaiting a glimpse inside Iowa's first true land-based casino finally got their chance as the Wild Rose Casino & Resort opened its doors to customers Friday for the first time.

According to Wild Rose Marketing Manager Maureen Roushar, attendance for the "soft opening" was much larger than anticipated.

"This is really exciting," Roushar said of the packed house. "Everybody came out to check us out. This is a much bigger turn-out than I ever imagined."

Roushar said the decision to conduct a soft open with no set time was made because two outlets of the casino, the Coaches Corner Sports Bar & Grill and the Oakwood Grand Ballroom, are still under construction.

The casino itself, featuring 600 slot machines and 14 table games, as well as the 60-room Wild Rose Hotel are fully operational. The Wild Rose will open Saturday at 8 a.m., and guests will have the opportunity to visit the Sawmill Buffet for breakfast from 8 to 10 a.m., and for lunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dinner will be served from 4 to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and from 4 until 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

The casino will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 4 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Roushar says the finishing touches will be completed soon, and a three-day grand opening event is planned for July 18, 19 and 20, which will feature a ribbon-cutting ceremony, a performance by Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers, and a half-price champagne brunch.

The Wild Rose employs upwards of 350 people, and community leaders are hoping the casino's location on the west end of town will lure visitors to the area and provide a benefit to the entire city through increased sales and property tax dollars and hotel/motel tax revenue. More than 67 percent of the casino's patrons come from Illinois, and eight percent are from Wisconsin.