

**Dr. Joycelyn Elders** - former U.S. Surgeon General 1993-1994

**Dr. Louis Sullivan** - former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services 1989-1993

**Friday, April 7, 1995**  
**7:00 p.m. Rudder Auditorium**  
 Free tickets available at the MSC Box Office (845-1234)

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# Louisiana riverboat casinos lobby against local option bill

Some riverboat owners fear the loss of their businesses.

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana's riverboat casinos are mounting an extensive lobbying campaign to quash bills that would let voters decide whether to allow such gambling enterprises in their communities.

The casino operators are encouraging their workers, vendors and patrons to write or call their legislators, while a statewide television and radio ad campaign is touting riverboat casinos as "good for Louisiana."

In the legislative session that begins Monday, Legislators will consider a raft of bills that could

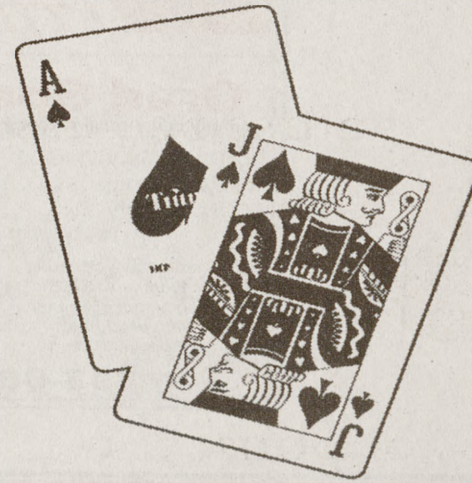
road from the state capitol complex, said riverboat casino employees are worried about their jobs.

Like other riverboat casinos around the state, Casino Rouge is encouraging employees to write to their legislators, Halicki said. The company mails the letters out after copying them for its files, she said. Casino Rouge also encourages patrons and vendors to write.

Riverboats have created more than 15,000 new jobs for the state and pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into government coffers, she said.

"It would just seem ludicrous for elected officials who voted for this to decide now to turn their backs on all those new jobs and all that new tax revenue," Halicki said.

In a letter to its suppliers and vendors, the



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 Casino Rouge marketing manager

torpedo riverboat casinos, video poker and the New Orleans land casino. The measures include local option bills that would put gambling issues to a public vote.

State Sen. Randy Ewing, D-Quitman, said he expects local option bills to be approved this year — especially since the public's mood appears to have soured on gambling and because legislators are up for re-election.

Several different public opinion polls in recent months have indicated that voters would get rid of riverboat casinos and video poker if given a chance.

"The winds of change are blowing," Ewing said. "Politicians don't like to walk into the wind. They like to walk with it and the wind's blowing in the direction of local option."

Casino Rouge Marketing Manager Carole Halicki, whose firm's gambling boat docks across the

Bossier City-based Horseshoe Casino riverboat warned that local option elections could be the death knell for some Louisiana casino boats and devastating to the Louisiana economy.

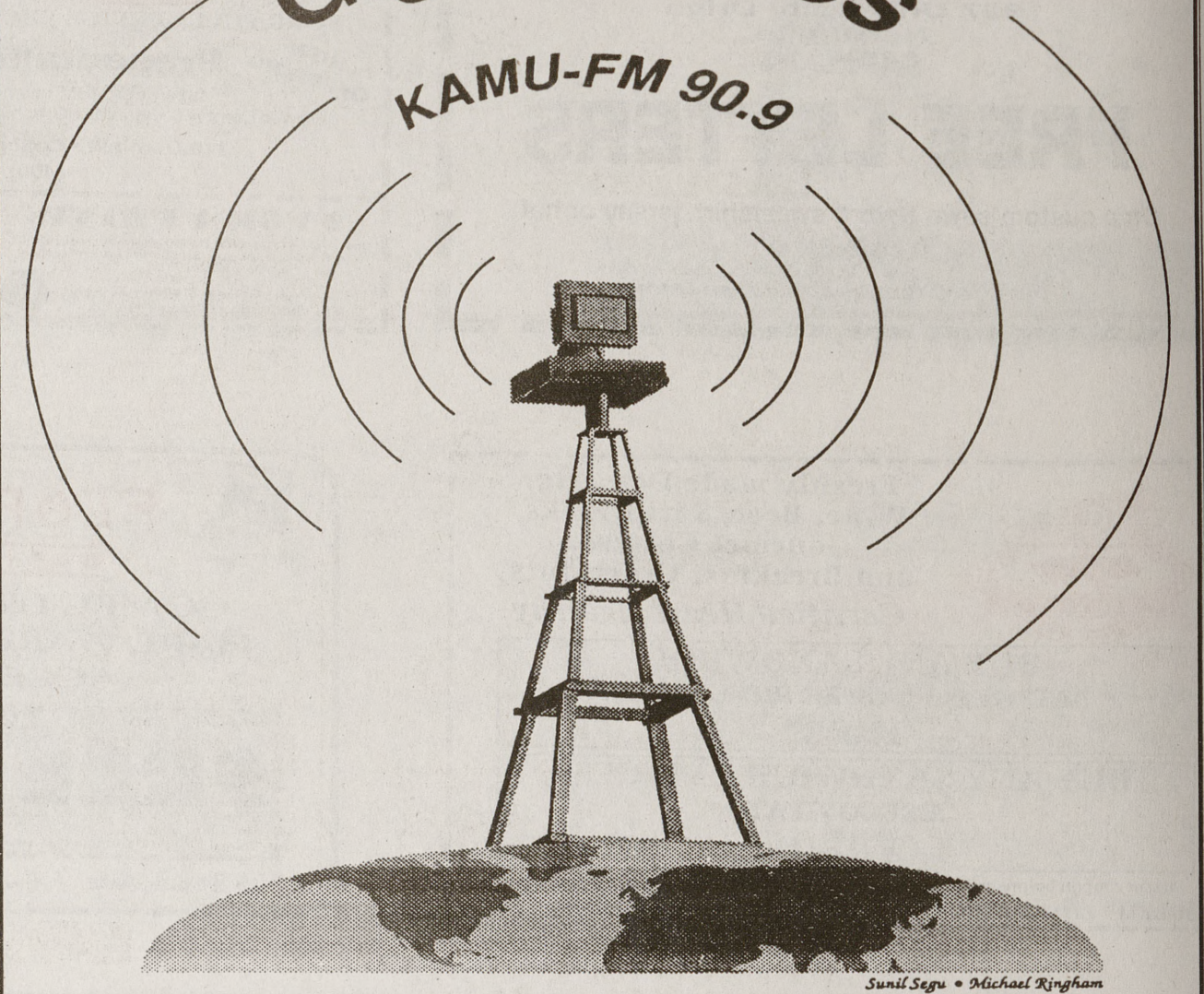
"To insure that we both enjoy a long and prosperous relationship, we are asking that you write or call your state representative and senator to indicate to them the positive benefits that riverboats bring to the Louisiana economy," the Horseshoe's George Nattin wrote.

Halicki and Julie Fusilier, executive director of the Riverboat Casino Association of Louisiana, contend that the 1991 riverboat gambling law gave voters an opportunity to keep riverboat casinos out.

The 1991 law allowed communities to "opt out" if 25 percent of the voters signed petitions saying they did not want riverboat gambling. That provision expired in 1992, long before the first casino boat opened.

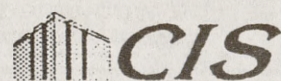
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