

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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For more information, please contact Tony Ravosa,  
Silver Lane Partners, LLC  
(860) 918-4222; [ravosa@vincegroup.com](mailto:ravosa@vincegroup.com)

### **CT FASSTRAK EXPANSION TO EAST HARTFORD, POTENTIAL JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP WITH GOODWIN COLLEGE VIEWED AS KEY ELEMENTS IN BID FOR GAMING VENUE**

***Developer urges hiring preference for local residents; says  
facility in East Hartford presents  
“the single most transformational opportunity in the region  
when it comes to job creation and reducing urban  
unemployment”***

Citing recent unemployment statistics for East Hartford and Hartford as “the highest in Hartford County,” Silver Lane Partners, LLC (SLP) Managing Member Tony Ravosa said today that an entertainment and gaming venue proposed for East Hartford presents “the single most transformational opportunity in the region when it comes to job creation and reducing urban unemployment – far more so than a facility potentially located on I-91 north of Hartford.”

In making this claim, Ravosa cited the most recent *Labor Force Data for Connecticut Towns* (Local Area Unemployment Statistics) released by the CT Department of Labor for September 2015. Ravosa said, “While the statewide unemployment rate is currently 5.1%, the unemployment rate of East Hartford now stands at 6.5% – and Hartford (9.6%) eclipses that by a sizable margin.” Ravosa also pointed to the current unemployment rates of two communities north of Hartford frequently mentioned with East Hartford as competitors to land this development – namely, East Windsor (4.9%) and Windsor Locks (4.8%). He added, “In looking at these numbers, you

can determine very quickly where this project would have the greatest immediate regional impact.”

Ravosa has long advocated for the adoption of a hiring preference for qualified East Hartford residents as part of his proposed plan (within applicable state and Federal laws) – something he hopes MMCT Venture, LLC will strongly consider if they select East Hartford as host community. He added, “The good news is that we have a willing and readily accessible work force living right in East Hartford and the immediate surrounding area.”

Ravosa also cited the huge disparity in per capita income for each of these communities to further support his claim: Hartford (\$16,619), East Hartford (\$25,578), East Windsor (\$32,769), and Windsor Locks (\$35,933)\*. He noted that an economic impact analysis produced for SLP by PKF Consulting of Philadelphia – a highly respected national firm engaged in providing these kinds of evaluations – projects annual salary and benefits of \$56,900 for full-time employees of an entertainment and gaming facility built in East Hartford.

“The promise of job creation, expanding employment opportunities for East Hartford residents, and potential for significant new revenue to stabilize tax rates for both businesses and residents alike have been the cornerstone of each and every conversation that I’ve had with Mayor Leclerc from the very beginning and the gateway to her support of this project,” Ravosa said, adding “the Mayor is also deeply committed to fostering opportunities to expand home ownership in her community.”

Ravosa commended the Mayor and East Hartford Town Council for “creating the kind of pro-growth environment that is highly conducive to attracting new businesses to the community and essential for business retention.” He credits this environment, in part, for the 1.6% reduction in the town’s unemployment rate seen since last March. He added, “From my own experience working closely with town officials over the last year, I can unequivocally state that *‘East Hartford is open for business!’*”

Ravosa touted two key elements of his team’s proposed plan to redevelop the long-vacant Showcase Cinemas property in East Hartford into a venue to be owned and operated by MMCT Venture, LLC – the expansion of CTfastrak to East Hartford and the potential for an educational partnership

between the Tribes and Goodwin College designed to provide future employees with customer service training in hospitality, management and casino operations.



“While the town of East Hartford is already well-served by CT Transit, Greater Hartford’s regional “fixed route” public bus service, Governor Malloy’s recent announcement about CTfastrak’s eastward expansion to East Hartford and Manchester – for which the State Bond Commission approved \$7 million in funding in late September – is a huge boost for our proposed plan as it is anticipated that Silver Lane will be a major arterial component of this build out,” Ravosa said. He added, “This development will significantly enhance regional employee recruitment efforts up-and-down the line – from New Britain thru Hartford to Manchester.” Noting recent efforts in Boston to reallocate some private sector investment in transportation infrastructure to include elements of public transit, Ravosa also raised the possibility of a CTfastrak station being built in close proximity to the proposed gaming venue – perhaps through a public-private partnership – further accelerating the revitalization of the Silver Lane corridor.



Ravosa also released a recent letter sent to Mayor Marcia Leclerc by Goodwin College President Mark Scheinberg (see attached) offering the college’s support for the plan and readiness to “partner with the town to provide any education needs to support this potential new venue in East Hartford.” President Scheinberg’s letter also noted that Goodwin had previously provided customer service training for employees on behalf of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation as Foxwoods Resort Casino was in its early stages of operation.

Ravosa concluded by saying, “In the end, this is all about protecting Connecticut jobs and revenue, in addition to creating new employment opportunities for people looking for work. But, job creation alone isn’t

enough. We also have to provide job training and a convenient, efficient public transportation network to enable these folks to get to their place of employment. When it comes to these critical elements, no other town can match what East Hartford has to offer. East Hartford alone has the pieces in place to win the regional battle for jobs and revenue.”

*\*Most recent data available – Source: CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) website,  
Connecticut Income by Towns (2013)*