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**WEB EXTRA**

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## State casino tourism bill dies

*Peranich: \$800M may be in jeopardy*

By MICHAEL NEWSOM  
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**JACKSON** — Negotiations over a bill that would have given casinos incentives to invest in non-gambling tourism developments foundered Thursday and the bill died.

But legislators said they hope Gov. Haley Barbour will include the issue in a special session. It appears Barbour will call a special session to resolve Medicaid deficits in the budget lawmakers passed this week, and also issues involving the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. Neither will likely be handled before Saturday, which is when the regular 2008 session is to end.

House Bill 1196, sponsored by Rep. Diane Peranich, D-Pass Christian, passed the House on Thursday by a 79-40 vote, but anti-casino factions in the Senate could not be appeased, and the incentives bill died on the calendar. She said some have estimated the bonuses offered through the measure would promptly bring about \$800 million in new investment from casino companies.

The bill covered theme parks, water parks, cultural or historical centers, motor speedways or other large non-gambling tourist attractions. It would allow a casino to recoup up to 30 percent of the project's value over a 10-year period, by giving it access to a percentage of the sales tax the project generates.

"This infusion of capital is needed to jump-start the economy in this state," Peranich said.

The bill also would potentially help stave off some losses by

*Please see Legislature, A-9*

"The first thing is we've got to put an exciting product on the field. We've got to win football games. That's what generates excitement."

Larry Fedora  
Southern Miss football coach

## 90 MINUTES WITH THE COACH

*Sun Herald interviews Larry Fedora*



TIM ISBELL/SUN HERALD

Southern Miss football coach Larry Fedora wants to build on the winning tradition started by Jeff Bower and take the program to the next level of success.

By JIM MASHEK  
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Larry Fedora challenged Southern Miss fans to fill M.M. Roberts Stadium for last weekend's spring football game. It didn't happen, but the first-year Southern Miss coach was not deterred.

"We had 11,000-something, and the atmosphere was awesome," Fedora said in Thursday morning's meeting with the Sun Herald. "That's what we'll be shooting for next year. Eventually, there's going to be a point where

you can't get a seat at a spring game. That's what's gonna happen."

Fedora touched on a variety of subjects in his 90-minute interview at the newspaper, including his early influences growing up in Bryan, Texas, and his desire to become a football coach while still in high school.

"Even though I had a very stable home life," Fedora said, "those coaches still had a major impact on my life."

Fedora, 45, succeeds longtime coach Jeff Bower, who won four

Conference USA championships and compiled a 119-83-1 record.

"We met the day that I took the job," Fedora said. "We sat down in his office and visited. Jeff welcomed me and he told me he wanted the best for Southern Miss, that it was his university. He wants us to be successful. Exactly what you'd expect from him."

"I want to continue with his legacy and take this thing to the next level."

*Please see Coach, A-8*

## Gaming Commission to take up South Beach



JAMES EDWARD BATES/SUN HERALD

Mississippi Gaming Commission Chairman Jerry St. Pé and Grand Casino Biloxi General Manager Karen Sock speak during Thursday's meeting at Hard Rock Casino in Biloxi.

*Site approval expected to be on June agenda*

By MARY PEREZ  
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**BILOXI** — Mayor A.J. Holloway welcomed the Mississippi Gaming Commission to Biloxi and the Hard Rock Casino on Thursday and said he hopes they will look favorably on the Gold Coast Casino.

Now known as the South Beach Resort and Casino, the project was rezoned waterfront by the Biloxi City Council. The commission will determine if the property on the north side of U.S. 90 on the Biloxi Strip is a suitable casino site.

Chairman Jerry St. Pé responded to Holloway's remarks by saying the city can count on the commission to be "aggressive visionary partners." He said the commission would look at the South Beach project "objectively, fairly and thoroughly."

**WEB EXTRA**

For more photos from the Gaming Commission meeting, visit [sunherald.com](http://sunherald.com)

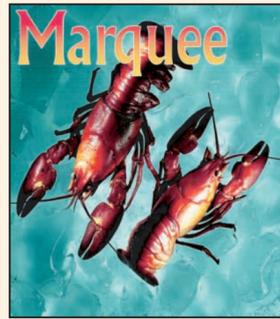
Officials from South Beach met recently with commission Executive Director Larry Gregory, who expects the site approval could be on the commission agenda in June.

"Within 60 days we'll know one way or another" if South Beach Casino will be approved, he said. "We've been keeping up with it," and he said despite whether city officials or local people speak for or against a casino project, "we look at each individual casino on its own merit."

The commission traditionally schedules one of its monthly meetings each year on the Coast. Also at Thursday's meeting, the commission approved the application of Penn National Gaming, the parent

*Please see Gaming, A-8*

**MARQUEE**



Check out the Coast Coliseum Crawfish Festival and all the entertainment options along the Coast.

**@HOME**



### Like walking back in time

Entering this house is like visiting an old German home

**LOCAL**

### Carrigee wants county work



Embattled ex-building official wants Hancock to name him a 'third party' inspector, **A-8**

**SPORTS**



Former Alcorn State star, Baltimore quarterback Steve McNair announces his retirement Thursday, **C-1**

**SOUND OFF OF THE DAY**

"I recently heard several people say, 'I am not gonna vote in this next election.' Can I remind you people there are people serving in our military all over the world today putting their lives on the line and a lot of them losing them to earn you that right to vote. I know. I wore a uniform for six years to earn that right and to give you the right. If you don't vote, I don't want to hear you complain for the next four years."

More Sound Offs, **A-2**

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Storms possible  
**78° 55°**  
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