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Sioux City Journal

Founded in 1864

Friday, November 20, 2026 • A Lee Enterprises, Incorporated Newspaper — Majority shareholder, David Hoffmann, Hoffmann Media Group • siouxcityjournal.com

Regulators see upgraded Hard Rock

IRGC holds first meeting at Sioux City casino since 2023

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SIOUX CITY — State regulators got a first-hand look Thursday at some of the most recent upgrades at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sioux City.

The Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission held its monthly meeting at the downtown Sioux City casino for the first time since October 2023.

The public meeting took place in Encore Hall, a 2,850-square-foot meeting, banquet, and event space the casino unveiled in July 2025. The space, which formerly housed the casino's buffet, incorporates large load-bearing wood pillars original to the century-old Battery Building.

"It is a very unique setup for our meetings," IRGC chairman Amy Burkhart of Burlington said. "This room is different than other places we have had meetings. It's a great additional amenity for the facility."

The five commissioners and their staff arrived in Sioux City on Wednesday and dined that evening at Main + Abbey, a gastropub in the Battery Building. The visitors then spent the night at Hard Rock's 54-room boutique hotel, which features exposed brick and pillars from the historic Battery, a former warehouse.

Burkhart noted her room was recently renovated.

"They're decorated very nicely, and they're also very comfortable and accommodating," she said. "I had a great night's sleep last night, and I was talking to the staff here about that this morning, and they said that's because the beds are actually a trademarked Hard Rock bed that's called Sleep Like a Rock. And I did — I slept like a rock."

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Iowa Racing and Gaming Commissioner Amy Burkhart visits with Missouri River Historical Development President Dave Bernstein after the commission held its monthly meeting Thursday, Nov. 19 at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sioux City.

DAVE DREESZEN, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL, CLASS A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP
WOODBURY CENTRAL 35, WEST SIOUX 13

GOLDEN 'CATS



RYAN TIMMERMAN PHOTOS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Members of the Woodbury Central football team hold the Class A state championship trophy after beating West Sioux in the title game, 35-13, at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls on Thursday, Nov. 19. Pictured from left: Calan Lloyd (52), Camron Zellmer (middle) and Sam Dominick (3).

Woodbury Central wins Class A state title, beats West Sioux

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CEDAR FALLS, Iowa — For the first time since 1980, the Woodbury Central football team is a state champion.

"We did it," said senior wide receiver/defensive back Jayden Lloyd. "This is what we wanted since Day 1 of this season."

The No. 1-ranked Wildcats took down No. 2 West Sioux in the Class A state championship by a 35-13 final score at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls on Thursday. It's the second state football championship all-time for Woodbury Central.

"I just wanted to look at our fans and our coaches because that's what got us here," said Lloyd about the game going final. "It felt we had the whole town here behind us. It was so surreal. We had one goal in mind all season and we took it one week at a time to get here.

"It feels like my career went full circle. We got here when I was a freshman and we lost, but now we got back my senior year and I get to go out by winning it all."

A four-year starter, Lloyd's career at Woodbury Central ends with 166 receptions for 2,795 yards and 28 touchdowns.

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Woodbury Central's Jayden Lloyd raises his arms in celebration after scoring on a 72-yard touchdown pass against West Sioux in the Class A state championship game at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls on Thursday, Nov. 19.

Co-op sues ex-CEO over misuse of funds

Landus alleges millions were misappropriated

CLARK KAUFFMAN
Iowa Capital Dispatch

An agricultural cooperative representing more than 5,500 farmers in Iowa and surrounding states is suing the organization's former top executives, in part for allegedly routing $280,000 to the mistress of the group's former CEO.

The lawsuit also claims the farmers' co-op paid for "a small army of full-time personal assistants to fluff (the CEO's) pillows, tuck his heated blanket into his bed, and lay out his slippers and robe."

Landus Cooperative, an agricultural cooperative owned by Midwestern farmers, is suing Matthew Carstens, who served as the group's president and chief executive officer from 2020 to 2025, and his wife, Shanda, in Polk County District Court.

The co-op operates over 50 grain and agronomy locations across Iowa, including in the western Iowa towns of Early, Emmetsburg, Farnhamville, Lake City, Manilla, Ida Grove, Odebolt, Newell, Ralston, Rockwell City, Somers, Ulmer and Yetter.

Also named as defendants are Landus' former executive vice president and general counsel, Stephen Nielsen, and Landus' former board chairman, Matthew Chambers.

The lawsuit accuses Matthew Carstens of breaching his fiduciary duties to Landus and unlawfully enriching himself and his family at Landus' expense. It alleges Nielsen and Chambers helped Carstens carry out his scheme and, in the process, deceived the organization's board of directors.

The defendants are alleged to have intentionally kept the full board of directors from understanding "key facts about Mr. Carstens' compensation and benefits," while Carstens and Nielsen directed employees to steer unauthorized payments and benefits to the Carstens.

In addition, Carstens and Nielsen are alleged to have hired full-time employees "to serve the Carstens family in their personal matters," and of hiring "as a Landus consultant the woman with whom Mr. Carstens was having an affair, paying her $280,000 without evidence of anything more than de minimis services rendered to Landus."

During his time as president and CEO, Carstens' base salary allegedly surged from $625,000 to more than $4.4 million per year — an amount that was supplemented with hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonuses.

According to the lawsuit, employment agreements drafted by Nielsen committed Landus to paying $10 million for a house the Carstens used in Florida, plus $3.5 million to build his primary residence in Grimes, Iowa. Those agreements were never shown to, nor approved by, the full board, the lawsuit alleges.

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