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Joliet rolls dice: More video gambling on the way to city

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Another storefront gambling parlor is on its way to Joliet.

The Joliet City Council on Monday approved a liquor license for Bonny's, which will go into the North Ridge Plaza on Larkin Avenue.

Bonny's will feature beer, wine, some food and video gambling in a format aimed at attracting women willing to gamble some of their money while out shopping.

Like three other storefront gambling parlors approved last month, Bonny's will be in a strip mall anchored by a supermarket. Like the others -- Betty's Bistro and Penny's Place -- Bonny's has a name likely to sound comfortable to soccer moms and other potential female customers, said one gambling opponent.

"They're usually named after women because that's whom they target," said Anita Bedell, executive director of Illinois Church Action on Alcohol and Addiction Problems.

Bedell said the same kind of storefront gambling parlors have been licensed in cities and towns across Illinois since video gambling was made legal. In Springfield, she said, 11 have been licensed and two more are pending.

Joliet expects to see more applicants, too.

Mayor Thomas Giarrante, also the liquor commissioner, said he would not allow storefront gambling parlors in strip centers that have bars with video gambling already.

"We're not going to be inundated with them," Giarrante said. "We're going to be particular about whose operating them and where they're going."

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