

The Last Gamble: Betting on the Future in Four Rocky Mountain Mining Towns



When gambling was initiated in Deadwood, South Dakota, in 1989 and in three Colorado towns two years later, most residents imagined that the new tourist attraction would bolster the tawdry main streets of these Old West mining towns. Instead, gaming limited employment options, threatened historic preservation, and transformed the tax structure as it became the dominant industry in these towns. From the onset of legalized gambling in the Rocky Mountains, authors Katherine Jensen and Audie Blevins collected economic data, interviewed officials and citizens, and perused countless historical sources. Their efforts have resulted in a unique account detailing the dramatic changes in communities that stake their economic and cultural futures solely on the gambling industry. *The Last Gamble: Betting on the Future in Four Rocky Mountain Mining Towns* explores changing economic realities in communities and promises to be a solid addition to the new social history of the West. Concentrating on sharply focused, regional case studies, the authors incorporate research from wider national and historical angles. The outcome is a critical perspective on social change and a thorough assessment of the impacts of gaming on civic groups and institutions. Jensen and Blevins offer readers clear insight into the dilemmas faced by the four communities, a clarity that is powerfully enhanced by their personal ties to the people and places. *The Last Gamble* is an intriguing work that will appeal to all readers with an interest in the modern American West and will prove especially valuable to policymakers, preservationists, historians, and sociologists.

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