

NEWS

- Business
- Campus
- Capitol
- Celebrations
- Columnists
- E-Technology
- Local News
- National/World
- Opinions
- Obituaries
- Photo Store
- Schools
- Travel
- Xtras
- Corrections

SPORTS

- Lugnuts
- Outdoors
- MSU Sports
- Prep Sports

LIFESTYLES

- Faith & Values
- Family
- Food & Drink
- Greater Lansing Woman
- Health & Fitness
- Home & Garden
- Worship Directory

ENTERTAINMENT

- Arts
- Boredom Busters
- Comics
- Dining
- Escapes
- Events
- Movies
- TV Listings
- Music
- People

COMMUNITIES

- Bath
- Charlotte
- Delta-Waverly
- DeWitt
- East Lansing
- Eaton Rapids
- Grand Ledge
- Haslett
- Holt
- Lansing
- Mason

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Published March 22, 2006 [From the Lansing State Journal]

Casino bid: Business, not morality, driving opposition to Gun Lake plans

A Lansing State Journal editorial

Looking at the Gun Lake Tribe's plan for a casino south of Grand Rapids, there's no apparent reason to oppose the project.

Then again, the LSJ isn't a potential business competitor to such a venture.

And, all rhetoric aside, the dispute over the Gun Lake bid is just that - business. Those already profiting from casinos are lobbying and donating to politicians to keep out a competitor.

Advertisement That's hardly in Michigan's interest. Political leaders, from Gov. Jennifer Granholm to 8th District Congressman Mike Rogers to members of the Michigan Legislature, should be looking for ways to speed this project.

Yet, the opposite is happening. Rogers wants Gun Lake's bid stopped via a casino moratorium. Granholm has sat on a compact with the Gun Lake that was OK'd by the Legislature in 2002. And Gun Lake opponents are waging a rear-guard action in federal court.

This makes no sense, if you are not a casino competitor.

Like it or not, Michigan has embraced gambling. It has a state lottery. It authorized casinos in Detroit. And other Michigan Indian tribes have their own casinos scattered across the state.

Is Rogers or Granholm, for example, going to argue that this gambling is hurting Michigan?

Like it or not, federally recognized Indian tribes, such as the Gun Lake, are sovereign nations. Tribes really don't have to have a signed state compact to engage in gambling.

During an interview with the LSJ editorial board Tuesday, Gun Lake officials said they were going to build a casino, with or without a compact. Their preference, though, is to work with the state, which in turn would mean gambling fees for state coffers.

Is Granholm or Rogers going to argue it's better for Michigan to reject a Gun Lake compact and the revenue that comes with it?

Gambling is a business. Michigan needs business. And, if for whatever reason, the folks over in west Michigan don't want the Gun Lake, we'd be happy to see the tribe consider Lansing as a casino site.

The old Ottawa Power Station still needs a tenant.



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