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## Drop the lawsuit,' Tribe tells opposition

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The Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians, also known as the Gun Lake Tribe, want the Michigan Gambling Opposition (MichGO) and 23 is Enough to drop an anti-casino lawsuit, and stop funding opposition efforts against a proposed Gun Lake Casino in Bradley.

On June 13, 2005, MichGO filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of the Interior to delay the Bush Administration from taking land in trust for the construction of the proposed casino.

The casino site is northeast of U.S.-131 and 129th Avenue, at the site of the former Ampro Industries. The proposed casino would feature 2,500 slot machines, 75 game tables, three restaurants, and a central lounge.

The suit claims that the 193,000-square-foot casino would draw around 3 million cars to the site, and have a significant negative impact on the surrounding rural community. MichGO spokespersons have argued that the government failed to identify a proper exception under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) for gaming on tribal trust land acquired after 1988, when the IGRA took effect.

MichGO claims that the Bureau of Indian Affairs assumed that the Gun Lake Tribe had a state compact that would mitigate some effects of casino gambling, but there was, and still is, no compact.

MichGO also claims Congress passed the law to help prevent largely unregulated land rushes, pushed by casino developers eager to cash in on a revenue stream that other businesses have to incur.

"The Pokogan Band defeated an identical challenge from Tax Payers of Michigan Against Casinos (TOMAC), allowing construction of the tribally owned Four Winds Casino (in New Buffalo)," said Gun Lake Tribe Public Relations Director James Nye.

"It is wonderful to see our brothers and sisters to the south begin their economic and cultural recovery," said Tribal Chairman D. K. Sprague. Sprague said opposition groups are delaying the creation of good jobs, regional economic development, and the potential for millions of dollars in revenue sharing payments to local and State governments.

In 2003, the Gun Lake Tribe hired the Nevada-based Station Casinos to manage the proposed Gun Lake Casino. In January of that year, FORTUNE Magazine named Station Casinos one of the "100 Best Companies to Work for 2006."

The inevitability of the Gun Lake Casino was assured after the United States Court of Appeals in Washington upheld the trial court's ruling to dismiss a challenge to the Four Winds Casino, Nye said. Nye said that the challenge the Pokogan Band faced was identical to that of the Gun Lake Tribe.

Construction on Four Winds Casino began on June 3.

MichGO filed suit against the Department of the Interior to delay the opening of the Gun Lake Casino, a strategy that has been repeated by 23 is Enough in a number of news reports, Nye said.

"The lawsuit has delayed the casino for almost one year, costing the state and

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its residents millions of dollars," Nye said.

Jason M. Palmer, the Gun Lake Tribe's Director of Development said that "23 is Enough and MichGO have the audacity to gloat about delaying the Gun Lake Casino when what they are doing is keeping food off a lot of tables in West Michigan."


At the Four Winds groundbreaking, Governor Jennifer Granholm's representative and legal counsel on Indian Affairs, John Werner, said that the benefits of casinos are not limited to the Indian communities, and that the casinos bring a variety of spin-off economic development.

The proposed Gun Lake Casino will create 1,800 direct jobs, and over \$20 million annually in direct purchase of goods and services from West Michigan businesses, Nye said. There are already 11 Michigan tribes that have compacts with the state, Nye said.

IS GUN LAKE CASINO FAR BEHIND? Tribal Chairman John Miller of the Pokagon Band of Pottawatomi Indians, and Vice Chairman John Bush of the Gun Lake Tribe of Pottawatomi Indians at the Four Winds Casino groundbreaking.

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