

Written by Administrator
Tuesday, 28 December 2010 19:17 -

COLUMBUS, Ohio --

With 2010 coming to a close, annexation discussions between the city of [Columbus">Columbus and \[casino developer Penn National\]\(#\) continue to show no signs of progress.](http://www2.nbc4i.com/topics/types/city/tags/columbus/ "Topic -</p></div><div data-bbox=")

Groundbreaking on the Hollywood Casino [Columbus](#) is scheduled for early 2011, with an opening date sometime in late 2012. But the casino must secure water and sewer service and to do so through [Columbus](#), the city expects the casino to agree to annexation.

Without annexation, the city will not provide city water and sewer service.

"They need to annex into the city of [Columbus](#), and the ball is very much in their court," said [Dan Williamson](#), spokesperson for Mayor [Michael Coleman](#). "The City of [Columbus](#) has kept its commitments to [Penn National](#). [Penn National](#) needs to keep its commitment that it made to the voters of [Columbus](#) and [Central Ohio](#) who passed this issue in May of 2010."

The commitment [Williamson](#) refers to is Penn National's pledge to annex into [Columbus](#), however, the developer has stopped short of promising annexation in media interviews. Instead, [Pen](#) [n National](#) [spokesperson](#) [Bob Tenenbaum](#) has continued to note that the company expects to annex into [Columbus](#).

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"Something is going to get worked out one way or the other. And this thing will be on schedule," [Tenenbaum](#) said.

[Penn National](#) believes it is owed financial incentives from the city for agreeing to relocate the casino out of Downtown's [Arena District](#) in favor of the West Side location in [Franklin Township](#).

[Tenenbaum](#) said the \$400-million-project investment will create thousands of jobs and deserves to be treated like other economic development projects would be in [Columbus](#).

[Coleman](#) has promised to help the company secure state clean-up funds for environmental work on the former [Delphi plant site](#) on Georgesville Road, but [Coleman](#) has not offered financial incentives that would boost casino profits.

A prolonged rift between the city and developer could push back the scheduled groundbreaking.

"We would be disappointed if by April there's not shovels in the ground because that's 2,000 jobs we're talking about," said [Chris Haydocy](#), whose [car dealership](#) sits next to the [future casino site](#).

"There currently are four major developments that could be announced in the first quarter of 2011, but it's all based on [Penn National](#) getting shovels in the ground."

Construction is underway at the Hollywood Casino [Toledo](#), where [Tenenbaum](#) said cooperation with local leaders has helped the casino project stay ahead of schedule for an early 2012 opening date.

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