

Sault tribe intends to build casino in Romulus - Detroit Free Press

Written by Administrator
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The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians will try to build a casino in Romulus, Chairman Darwin (Joe) McCoy said this week in the tribe's newspaper.

"The Romulus project does not cost us anything, and if the project is successful, will have a big return for our tribe,"

McCoy said in a column Monday. McCoy didn't return calls Tuesday seeking comment. The tribe is mailing a referendum to its members this week asking them to approve moving ahead with the deal. An explanation of the project said: "Outside developers would pay all up-front costs and in return, receive 14% of the gross revenues the first seven years of operation, after which the casino would belong solely to the tribe."

The tribe had owned Greektown Casino, before losing its stake in bankruptcy court. The tribe also operates five other Kewadin Casinos in the Upper Peninsula.

Last summer, the tribe purchased seven acres adjacent to the Pinnacle Race Course in Huron Township in western Wayne County. It's unclear if that's where this project would go. The effort is the latest attempt at off-reservation gaming in Michigan. Compared with Detroit's three casinos, Indian casinos pay minimal taxes.

In November, the Bay Mills Indian Community opened a small casino in Vanderbilt, near Gaylord, without seeking approval from state or federal gaming officials, both of whom have since called the project illegal.

Former Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox issued a cease-and-desist order to the tribe and then filed a federal lawsuit when the tribe kept operating it. That case is pending.

"We are concerned with off-reservation gaming affecting the viability and the integrity of Indian gaming across the country," said Ken Harrington, chairman of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, one of five tribes that formed a coalition to oppose the Bay Mills casino in Vanderbilt.

Contact John Wisely: 313-222-6825 or
jwisely@freepress.com

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