

Mescalero Apaches object to proposed Jemez casino - The Associated Press

Written by Administrator
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MESCALERO, N.M. — The Mescalero Apache Tribe and the Sunland Park racetrack said Wednesday that they're opposing Jemez Pueblo's proposal to build a casino and hotel near Anthony, which is nearly 300 miles from the northern New Mexico pueblo.

The Mescaleros and the

Sunland Park track issued a statement saying the Jemez casino could hurt their businesses in southern New Mexico. The Mescaleros also object that the casino is proposed within their ancestral homelands.

Jemez Pueblo Gov. Joshua Madalena said in a statement that the Mescaleros and the Sunland Park track are interfering with his tribe's economic development plans.

"As one of the poorest tribes in the state, we have never tried to tell other businesses or tribes what they can or cannot do, and we have supported other tribes that work to improve their standard of living," Madalena said.

Jemez is partnering with Santa Fe art dealer Gerald Peters on the casino project.

The casino was rejected in 2008 by President George W. Bush's administration because the proposed site was too far from Jemez, which is near Albuquerque. The Interior Department under President Barack Obama is reconsidering the plan.

Madalena said even if Jemez's plan is approved, the Sunland Park track will still have a monopoly on horse racing in the area and will remain an excellent investment for its owners.

He added that the Mescalero reservation is more than 100 miles from Jemez's proposed development, and that the area plays a major role in Jemez's culture, as it was on the pueblo

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people's migratory route in ancient times.

"Instead of fighting us, we ask the Mescaleros and Sunland Park Race Track and Casino join us in establishing a working relationship that will benefit us all," Madalena said.

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