

Audit cites local governments for misuse of Indian casino funds - Bellingham Herald

Written by Administrator
Tuesday, 15 February 2011 22:15 -

Howle's audit concluded that the fund - set up to offset the effects of Indian casinos in California communities - improperly awarded a \$336,000 grant to public schools in Yolo County.

And it charged that law enforcement officials in Amador County couldn't substantiate the costs of policing the local Jackson Rancheria Casino and Hotel.

Amador

County Sheriff Martin Ryan protested the audit's findings that law enforcement costs weren't properly substantiated for grants totaling \$616,826 awarded to offset effects of the Jackson Rancheria,

The report said state auditors lacked "sufficient evidence" that crime statistics furnished by the Amador County Sheriff's Department "were casino-related or not."

In a stern response, Ryan wrote that his office "takes great pride in the fact that we closely track casino-related events that impact public safety." He said Amador authorities in 2008 responded to 413 incidents on casino grounds, where 46 arrests and 359 casino-related traffic stops were made. An additional 17 arrests were made off casino property.

Ryan said the audit's findings that the county couldn't account for its law enforcement costs "impugns the integrity of the professional men and women of the Amador County Sheriff's office."

In Yolo County, home of the Cache Creek Casino, the audit determined that a local tribal fund didn't have the authority to grant funds to the local Esparto Unified School District for computer education, student transportation, athletics and an academic decathlon competition. The audit said school districts are not eligible to receive grants from the Indian Gaming Distribution fund.

The report suggested that the Legislature consider amending laws governing the fund to allow tribes to sponsor a wider range of community programs, regardless of whether they were

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affected by the presence of a casino.

In a letter to the state auditor, Yolo County administrator Patrick Blacklock said the county would have no comment on the report but would refer its findings to the Yolo Indian Gaming Local Community Benefit Committee.

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