6 tribal casinos close, most remain open amid new Michigan COVID-19 restrictions

Written by Administrator
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Six tribal casinos in Michigan's Upper Peninsula are closed for the next three weeks, lining up with the state's latest restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus.

Eighteen tribal casinos are expected to remain stay open with COVID-19 precautions. Some announced restaurant closures, entertainment cancellations, gaming restrictions and updated procedures.

On Sunday, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services announced a "three-week pause" to get the surging virus under control. Among the restrictions was the closure of the three non-tribal casinos in Detroit.

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Tribal casinos are not required to adhere to state orders, but two tribes are voluntarily closing their gaming facilities. Bay Mills Resort and Casino in Brimley and all five Kewadin Casinos are closed for three weeks. There are 24 tribal casinos in Michigan.

The Bay Mills Indian Community closed its Bay Mills Resort and Casino at noon on Wednesday, according to a news release . It is set to reopen on Tuesday, Dec. 8, which is the same date the state's restrictions are scheduled to end. The tribe set aside CARES Act funding in case of another shutdown, and that will allow them to pay employees while the casino is closed, the release said.

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The Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians elected to close all five of its Kewadin Casinos at noon on Wednesday. Reopening is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 9. The closure includes Kewadin Casino Christmas, Kewadin Casino Sault Ste. Marie, Kewadin Casino Hessel, Kewadin Casino St. Ignace and Kewadin Casino Manistique.

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In contrast, the Hannahville Indian Community's Island Resort and Casino in Harris will remain open under pandemic protocols, according to an announcement via social media. However, the tribe voluntarily canceled entertainment, including live music and comedy, at Club Four One inside the casino until Dec. 10. The Firekeeper's Restaurant is temporarily closed while business-as-usual continues at its other eateries.

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians announced updated hours and services at the Little River Casino in Manistee. From Wednesday until at least Dec. 8, hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. During that time, occupancy will be restricted to 25% of capacity. The River Rock Sportsbook & Grill restaurant will be closed for dining (sports betting is still available). The Rapids Bistro is offering carry-out only. To encourage social distancing, all table games are closed and every other slot machine is turned off.

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians reduced hours at Turtle Creek and Leelanau Sands   casinos.
Meanwhile, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
said it plans to keep Soaring Eagle Casino Resort open and continue with its established protocols
that "have a track record of success."

Visit the Michigan Gaming Control Board website for a complete list of tribal casinos in Michigan.

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