

## Connecticut casinos expand as economy slows

MASHANTUCKET, Conn. (AP) – Two of the world's largest casinos are getting a lot bigger this week, betting that they can draw more visitors by becoming entertainment destinations even as the gaming industry suffers nationally because of high gas prices and the weak economy.

Foxwoods Resort Casino, run by the Mashantucket Pequot Indian tribe, will open its \$700 million MGM Grand this weekend. The 30-story, two-million-square-foot property includes a new casino, hotel, a 4,000-seat performing arts theater, restaurants run by celebrity chefs, luxury stores, the largest ballroom in the Northeast and new convention space to accommodate thousands.

Several celebrities, including Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta Jones, Josh Groban, John Mayer and Sean "Diddy" Combs, will participate in the grand opening ceremonies.

Mohegan Sun, run by the Mohegan tribe, held a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday for a 39-story hotel and House of Blues music hall, part of a \$925 million expansion.

The projects are part of a wave of investments by casino resorts trying to maintain and expand market share during tough times.

"I think they're expanding their reach," said Keith Foley, senior vice president with Moody's Investors Service. "There's a risk to doing that be-

cause a lot of markets are doing that. Ultimately you're going to see markets bumping into each other."

Still, Foley described the risk as necessary.

Foxwoods will more aggressively target the New York market by tripling its advertising, said Gillian Murphy, senior vice president. That will put it in competition with its main rival, Mohegan Sun, as well as Atlantic City, which has been pouring billions into its properties.

Foxwoods expects to add about 10,000 daily visitors to its current draw of 40,000 to 60,000 and boost revenue by about 20 percent, Murphy said.

Most of the new space at Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun is non-gaming entertainment de-

signed to attract visitors, a contrast to the traditional approach of using the casinos to get visitors to stay in the hotels and shops, said Clyde Barrow, who directs the University of Massachusetts New England Gaming Research Project.

"It's really a reversal of the original business model," Barrow said.

Foxwoods is billing the project as a distinct third casino in Connecticut that is designed to attract a younger set than its original casino with night clubs, concerts and high-end restaurants and shops. With the new performing arts theater, MGM Grand is attracting celebrities such as comedian Jerry Seinfeld

and singers Celine Dion, Groban and Mayer.

"It just has opened all kinds of separate offerings that complement our core gaming business at Foxwoods," Murphy said. "We've really broadened the market."

But the big moves, though in the works for years, come as Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun suffer declining revenue from slot machines due to growing competition from surrounding states and the weak economy. That has led to credit downgrades and plans to cut jobs.

Foxwoods reported Thursday a net slot win of \$58 million, a \$7.3 million decrease from April 2007.

## Full review sought of eagle decision

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – The lawyer for a Wyoming man who shot a bald eagle for his tribe's annual Sun Dance says he wants the full 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver to review last week's decision by a three-judge panel that his client should stand trial on a criminal charge. A federal judge in Wyoming in 2006 dismissed a misdemeanor charge against 23-year-old Winslow Friday. A three-judge panel of the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver last week overruled the Wyoming judge and said Friday must stand trial.

## Feds object to \$380 million Crow land bill

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) – The Bureau of Indian Affairs on Thursday objected to details of a proposed \$380 million loan program that would let the Crow tribe buy up and consolidate land on its Montana reservation.

The government loans would offer the Crow a chance to reclaim lands stripped from the tribe or sold to outsiders over the last 140 years. After all those years under federal oversight, Tribal Chairman Carl Venne said the Crow want to manage their homeland themselves.

"We as a tribe have given and given and given our lands. Now I want that to stop," Venne said. "We need to protect our homeland for our kids, our grandkids."

But Indian Affairs Director Jerold Gidner told a Senate panel in Washington that his agency is concerned about the size of the loans. He also said it was unclear who would determine land prices and whether the program could meet a September 2012 deadline outlined in a bill before Congress.

That bill, introduced last

year by Montana's Democratic U.S. Sens. Max Baucus and Jon Tester, would loan the Crow \$380 million to purchase non-tribal land and put it into federal trust. It would cost the government \$5 million a year to administer, and the loans would have to be paid back within 40 years.

Crow leaders said the voluntary property buyouts would make it easier to convert unused land to agriculture. Also, they said they could negotiate better lease terms on land already being used, generating more revenue for the tribe.

The tribe owns less than a quarter of the 2.2 million acre reservation along the Montana-Wyoming border.

Non-Indians own an estimated 700,000 acres and another million acres are owned by individuals within the tribe. Much of that land is highly fractionated, meaning individual parcels have dozens or in some cases hundreds of owners – complicating efforts to put the land to use.

Without the loans, Venne said 500,000 additional acres could be lost from the Crow as more land comes up for sale and is bought by outsiders.

However, Indian Affairs Director Gidner said his department had unresolved questions about how the program would work.

"It's not an objection to the purpose. It's not an objection to the mechanism. It's an objection to the details," Gidner said during testimony before the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. "It may be better to break (the loans) into phases so the liability of the government is not so large at one time."

Sen. Tester responded by saying the government risked squandering a chance to fix a major problem for the Crow. He said the loans would be cost-effective, given that the government is entangled in a multibillion dollar lawsuit over past violations of its Indian trust responsibilities.

"It's the right thing to do," Tester told Gidner. "I would be aggressively pursuing this."

Crow Vice Chairman Cedric Black Eagle said the tribe hopes to work through the government's objections in coming weeks so the bill can be put up for a vote.

## Calif. tribal chairman denounces deputies

LOS ANGELES (AP) – The tribal chairman at an American Indian reservation said Wednesday that the law enforcement shootings of three people in gunbattles in the last week had turned tribal lands into a police practice range.

A man and woman were killed late Monday in a shootout

with Riverside County sheriff's deputies on the Soboba Indian Reservation on the foothills of the San Jacinto Mountains, about 85 miles southeast of Los Angeles.

Two sons of a former tribal chairwoman have also been killed by deputies in recent years, including one who was shot May

8 after firing at deputies with an assault rifle.

Tribal Chairman Robert Salgado said Wednesday that deputies did not treat the tribe as a sovereign nation and withheld information from the tribe before and after the shootings.

## BARGAIN HUNTERS

### Jewelry & Loan

Best prices anywhere!

## 90-DAY LOANS

State Licensed Pawnbroker

Best rates, longest terms

\*Musical Instruments

\*Tools \*Home Electronics

\*Fantasy Swords \*Knives

\*Cameras \*Video Games

\*DVD's & CD's

We buy GOLD - Scrap - Dental; We buy SILVER

175 SE 5th St., Madras, OR 97741

475-3745

OPEN Wed.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## Raffle tickets available for 2008 Dodge pickup

Raffle drawing to be held Sunday, June 8 at White Swan Treaty Days Rodeo.

See Val Squiemphen or Rita Squiemphen to get tickets. Limited tickets for sale – Get them before they run out! Tickets are \$1 each. Call Rita Squiemphen at (541) 980-5397 or Val Squiemphen at (541) 980-2867.

## Title VII Budget Announcement

The Title VII Grant budget was presented to the Title VII Parent Committee in April. This is the budget for the Title VII Indian Education grant for the 2008-09 school year. If you would

like a copy of the budget or to make comment or ask a question please contact Josh Adams. Mr. Adams is the Title VII grant coordinator and he can be reached at 546-3104.

## Black Bear Diner Grrreat Family Food



Madras' Finest Family Dining

- All Products Prepared Fresh Daily
- Entrees Roasted Daily
- Featuring Hand Cut USDA Choice Steaks

BREAKFAST - LUNCH - DINNER

Served All Day

• Senior Menu • Children's Menu • Daily Specials

All Major Credit Cards Accepted

237 S.W. 4th Street, Madras • 475-6632 OPEN 6 am - 10 pm DAILY