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For more information on Michigan's gaming industry, please visit www.michingangaming.com

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The MICHIGAN GAMING Newsletter



FIREKEEPERS CASINO CLEARS LAST HURDLE

On July 2, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi (Tribe), dismissing the last issue in a lawsuit filed by Citizens Exposing Truth About Casinos (CETAC). The lawsuit brought by CETAC claimed that the 79-acres of land on which the tribe's FireKeepers Casino would be built did not qualify as an initial reservation under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988.

In a press release issued by the Tribe, Tribal Chairperson Laura W. Spurr said the following:

"This is a great day for the Tribe and all our supporters in the Calhoun County region," said Spurr. "Today, justice was done for our members and their families. The perseverance and patience of the Huron Band people is a testament to the generations that came before us. We are one step closer to self-sufficiency — one step closer to providing housing, health care and educational opportunities for our tribal members. The casino will create an economic engine that will benefit the entire region."

The tribe plans to start construction this fall on the long anticipated, \$270 million casino project in Emmet Township near Battle Creek. The casino will be 226,000 square feet and house 2,500 gaming devices. During the building process, the project is expected to create more than 700 construction jobs, and another 2,500 jobs once the complex opens.

"We cannot wait to begin construction," said Spurr. "The building process alone will support more than 700 construction jobs. The community will see a significant positive impact almost immediately."

The Tribe has an agreement with Full House Resorts for the development and management of the casino. The agreement is subject to approval by the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC), which is expected soon according to the release issued by the Tribe.

"We are pleased that the integrity of the tribal gaming process has been upheld," said Andre M.Hilliou, Chief Executive Officer of Full House Resorts. "We look forward to continuing our work with the Huron Band to help make their casino project a success. Our goal is to offer an exciting and fun gaming experience."

METRO DETROIT STUDY REVEALS SPENDING AT HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE 2001

In January of this year, the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau (DMCVB) unveiled a new “brand identity” for the region representing the area’s history and attractions: “D. Cars, Culture, Gaming, Music, Sports.”

In a press release issued by the DMCVB, the president and CEO of the DMCVB, Larry Alexander, stated that the new brand was developed after more than a year of extensive research to positively shape tourist perceptions of the region over time. He noted, “the brand identity resulted from surveys of more than 1,300 visitors and focus groups in five cities that identified Detroit as – the American city where cool comes from.”

Six months after the DMCVB announced its new “brand”, the region has reason to celebrate as the bureau released the “2006 Detroit Metropolitan Area Tourism Market Profile” which stated the number of visitors to metro Detroit in 2006 edged up to its highest level since September 11, 2001.

According to a news release issued by the DMCVB, the report conducted by CIC Research, Inc., found that “metro Detroit’s tourism industry began to rebound in 2006 with 15.9 million visitors and \$4.8 billion in visitor spending. This represents a 2.6 percent increase in volume from 2004 (the last year the study was conducted) and an 8.6 percent increase in visitor spending.”

Following the report’s release this week, Mr. Alexander noted the following:

“The metro Detroit tourism industry has not completely recovered from September 11. Visitors and spending peaked in 2000, with 17.6 million visitors and \$5.1 billion in visitor spending. However, we are beginning a noteworthy rebound -- hopefully a trend that will continue with the new tourism product emerging in our region, such as the revitalized riverfront, new luxury hotels, distinctive cultural exhibits and the renovation, expansion and transformation of the Detroit Institute of Arts to be completed this fall.”

Persons interested in learning more about the DMCVB’s new brand and current developments are encouraged to visit www.visitdetroit.com.