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For more information on Michigan's gaming industry, please visit [www.michigangaming.com](http://www.michigangaming.com)

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# The \_\_\_\_\_ MICHIGAN GAMING \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter



## GUN LAKE TRIBE'S LAND TAKEN INTO TRUST

Today, the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians (Gun Lake Tribe) announced that the federal government has taken 147 acres of land into trust for a proposed \$200 million gaming facility to be built in Wayland Township, Michigan. According to *The Grand Rapids Press*, the decision may allow the Gun Lake Tribe to begin casino construction by as early as the end of the year.

Notably, on Monday, Judge Richard Leon of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia denied a request for stay by former Wayland Township Trustee David Patchak. The stay had been requested to stop the Department of the Interior from taking the 147 acres of land into trust.

Last Wednesday, the United States Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from Michigan Gambling Opposition (MichGo), whose lawsuit efforts have also hindered casino development efforts.

According to Robert VanVolkinburg, Wayland Township Supervisor, "[t]his is great news for area residents and business owners who have had to wait so many years. This tribal gaming project is going to create jobs and business opportunities for our community. Congratulations to the Tribe and the ten thousand-strong members of FOGLI. I am excited to work with the tribe for years to come."

The Gun Lake Tribe is currently awaiting passage of a resolution by the Michigan Senate approving the Class III Gaming Compact that the tribe has negotiated with Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm. If ratified, the Compact would allow the tribe to offer class III casino style games once all regulatory processes are met at the federal level.

Last year, the Gun Lake Tribe's plans for the facility included a \$200 million

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casino with an estimated 2,500 slots and 80 table games in Wayland Township, south of Grand Rapids in Western Michigan. The Gun Lake Tribe has a management agreement with Stations Casinos, an experienced Nevada casino operator. The casino is projected to employ over 1,800 people and create more than 3,100 indirect jobs.

Persons interested in monitoring this project can learn more by visiting <http://www.fogli.org/>.

## **ODAWA CASINO RESORT TO LAY OFF 80 WORKERS**

Last Monday, Odawa Casino Resort officials announced that the tribal casino will initiate its second round of layoffs within the past five months. Included are 80 full-time positions, 37 of which are voluntary layoff requests.

A combination of a harsh recession, fewer customers and rising operating costs are the reported reasons for the layoffs.

Previously, in August of 2008, the casino laid off 55 full-time and 45 part-time employees.

A press release issued by Odawa Casino Resort general manager, Sean Barnard stated, “[s]adly we’re not alone. We’re just one of the hundreds of companies who are making similar hard decisions. Reluctantly we have been forced to say goodbye to several team members who have supported the organization over the years – we can’t thank them enough for their hard work and loyalty.”

Severance packages have also been reported for the affected employees and will be based upon the number of years of service, extended benefits and outplacement services.

Odawa Casino Resort is owned and operated by the Little Bay Bands of Odawa Indians and is located in Petoskey, Michigan. The casino employs 550 people and is the second largest employer in the area.

## **“MEET IN THE D” BOOSTS SPENDING IN METRO DETROIT BY \$13.5 MILLION**

In May 2008, Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau (DMCVB) Chairman Christopher Ilitch announced a new initiative to drive economic development and encourage metro Detroit businesses to host their meetings and conventions in southeast Michigan. According to information gathered by the DMCVB, 20 companies have already reported holding meetings in Detroit rather than spending money out of state, representing \$13.5 million brought to the region.

‘Let’s Meet in the D!’, a two-year initiative, plans to actively recruit local companies to host conventions in the metro Detroit area in hopes to spur economic growth while revamping the area’s image. The DMCVB states that the ‘Let’s meet in the D!’ campaign is the first of its kind and plans on “keeping dollars in the local economy” while creating much-needed jobs for the region.

The original companies involved in the initiative include: Bank of America, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Crain Communications, Deloitte, Detroit Medical Center, ePrize, Ford Motor Co., General Motors, Ilitch Holdings, Michigan Economic Development Corp., Northwest Airlines, Strategic Staffing Solutions, and Verizon Wireless.

As the DMCVB points out, nearly sixty percent of the United States population is within a five-hour drive or short flight of the metro Detroit area, thus making the region highly marketable to surrounding states.

For more information on the DMCVB or for details about hosting a meeting in the metro Detroit area please visit to <http://visitdetroit.com> and click on “meetings” or contact DMCVB Director of Sales, Clara Conner-Penzabene directly at (313) 202-1938 and [cvsales@visitdetroit.com](mailto:cvsales@visitdetroit.com).

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## **BLUE CHIP CASINO OPENS EXPANSION**

Last Thursday, Blue Chip Casino, Hotel and Spa opened its \$130 million expansion project in Michigan City, located in Northwest Indiana.

The 22-story, 302-room hotel, ‘Spa Blu Tower’ was designed by Chicago architect Lucien Lagrange. Other new casino amenities include a spa, 20,000 square foot entertainment and special events center, and two Las Vegas inspired restaurant and nightclubs.

Another highlight of the expansion is the Stardust Event Center. The 20,000 square foot entertainment venue is capable of seating up to 1,200 people for live performances and can also be split into up to 10 breakout meeting rooms, which range from 850 to 2,750 square feet.

“Visitors to Las Vegas and Atlantic City have long enjoyed resorts with a host of amenities under one roof. For the first time, we’re bringing that model to the greater Chicago area, and we think it will be attractive to customers throughout the region,” said Keith Smith, President and Chief Executive Officer of Boyd Gaming.

The hotel expansion creates a total of 486 rooms at Blue Chip Casino.