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



## **BIA PUBLISHES NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FEIS FOR LITTLE RIVER BAND'S MUSKEGON COUNTY CASINO PROJECT**

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) formally published a Notice of Availability of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on Friday, October 23, for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians' Fee-to-Trust and Muskegon County Casino Project in Fruitport Township.

"This is an incredible step forward in our process to build the Muskegon County Casino Project," said Larry Romanelli, Ogema of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. "This project is about job creation for our community and I want to thank everyone – our steadfast community, our federal and state leaders, labor unions, and Tribal members for their support for this project."

The BIA considered the Little River Band's proposed casino project and other alternative economic development projects in the FEIS, but concluded that the Little River Band's proposed casino project is the preferred alternative of the federal government. A public comment period will be opened in the near future, after which the federal government will issue its final decision on the application. The proposal will then move to the State of Michigan for concurrence of Governor Whitmer and legislative action.

The Muskegon County Casino Project anticipates bringing 3,000 jobs to the region, including 1,500 high paying full-time jobs, and 1,500 construction and ancillary jobs. The Little River Band is funding the project internally and it is expected to generate \$15 million in tax revenue for the State of Michigan and millions for local governments.

The Little River Band has been working on the project for more than 10 years, and first filed with the BIA an application to place 60 acres of land in trust for a

\$180 million casino and economic development project in February 2015. The BIA published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in November 2018, followed by a public hearing and comment period.

Muskegon County is home to the Tribe's largest population base and is one of the Little River Band's service areas where the Tribe has maintained government offices.

"The Tribe plans to develop a casino on our traditional land in Muskegon County so we can serve our largest population of tribal citizens in our service area," said Tribal Council Speaker Ron Pete. "A casino in Muskegon County will enable the Tribe to provide jobs, housing, health care, education and other services to our elders and youth. It will also provide a very positive economic impact for the Muskegon community."

The proposed project would include:

- Approximately 69,000 square feet of gaming floor space
- 1,700 slot machines
- 35 table games
- 220-room hotel
- Event and meeting room space
- Dining and entertainment options

As part of the Environmental Impact Statement, the BIA reviewed potential environmental impacts of the casino project, including land use, geology and soils, water resources, agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, traffic, air quality, noise, public health/environmental hazards, hazardous material and waste, public services, and socio-economics. A public comment period will close 30 days from the date the EPA publishes its Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.

For more information on the Muskegon County Casino Project, click [here](#). The Notice of Availability can be found in the Federal Register [here](#).

## **NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING HOSTS 34<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) is holding its 34<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Gambling Addiction & Responsible Gaming virtually this November and December. The Conference brings together local, national, and international experts in responsible gambling and problem gambling to help educate the industry on new methods of prevention, treatment, and responsible gaming.

The Conference will feature several tracks, including Treatment, Recovery, Prevention, Community, Military & Veterans, Tribal, Sports, and Responsible Gaming & Regulation. Through these tracks, the Conference will explore the expansion of online gambling during the pandemic, the impact of cashless wagering systems, and how to protect consumers and their families to help mitigate harm.

This year's Conference will have two different programs: the Main Conference and the Master Classes. The Main Conference will be held November 5-6 and 12-13, from 12-4 PM with optional networking from 4-5 PM. Recordings will be available after the Main Conference for about 30 days after the event. Up to 16 CEUs will be available through the Main Conference, and the program will cover a wide range of information in the various tracks. This year's keynote speaker will be Lori Ruggle, PhD, the 2019 recipient of the NCPG Lifetime Award for Direct Service.

The Master Classes will be held December 2, 3, and 9, from 1-3 PM. Up to 6 CEUs will be available through the Master Classes, however, seats will be limited to allow for more direct interaction. Featured speakers include Heather Chapman, PhD on December 2, Julie Hynes, Dan Trolaro, Jody Bechtold, ICGC-II, BACC, and Cam Adair on December 3, and Mark Potter, Dan Spencer, and Paul Buck on December 9.

"We've heard from many of you about how

important our National Conference is, offering as it does a unique opportunity for people from all facets of the behavioral health fields and gambling industry to meet, collaborate on solving problems, and learn from each other,” said Keith Whyte, Executive Director of NCPG. “We believe that holding the ‘split’ conference in this way will optimize learning and networking opportunities for our attendees.”

Registration will be separate for the Main Conference and the Master Classes. Those interested in the Conference can find more information [here](#) and may register using this [form](#). Questions should be directed to [ncpg@ncpgambling.org](mailto:ncpg@ncpgambling.org).

## **G2E VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE OCTOBER 27-28**

Global Gaming Expo (G2E) will be held on October 27-28, 2020, through a novel virtual experience in place of the expo typically held in Las Vegas. A kickoff session was held on October 14, featuring discussions with casino leaders on reopening and navigating the COVID-19 world. The virtual experience on October 27-28 will feature keynotes, education sessions, pre-planned meetings, and networking events.

October 27’s Keynote Presentation, “Public Policy and a Pandemic: A Conversation with Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV),” will feature Senator Catherine Cortez Masto and will be moderated by Bill Miller, President and CEO of the American Gaming Association. Mr. Miller will deliver the State of Industry address at the beginning of the presentation.

The Keynote Presentation on October 28, “Navigating a Global Workforce Through 2020: A Fireside Chat with MGM’s Jyoti Chopra,” will feature Jyoti Chopra, Senior Vice President and Chief People, Inclusion, and Sustainability Officer for MGM Resorts International, and will be moderated by Katherine Sayre, a gambling reporter for The Wall Street Journal.

After the Keynote Presentations, there will be

educational sessions on various topics, including:

- COVID-19 and responsible reopening
- Gaming leadership
- iGaming
- Payments and modernization
- Sports betting
- Tribal gaming
- Women in gaming

The full event schedule can be found [here](#). Those interested in registering for G2E can do so [here](#).