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

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The _____ MICHIGAN GAMING _____ Newsletter



SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBE ANNOUNCES PLANS TO OPEN SECOND CASINO

On Wednesday, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe announced it plans to open a second casino on its Saganing reservation, located in Arenac County, about 30 miles north of Bay City.

The plans call for a 32,000-square-foot facility with approximately 700 slot machines and 40 electronic table games. The Tribe's Mt. Pleasant casino, Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort, currently has more than 4,000 slot machines and 600 electronic table games.

In a statement released Wednesday, Tribal Chief Fred Cantu Jr. said the project has been in the design stages for several years, and Tribal Spokesman Joseph Sowmick said the casino is likely to be open by the end of the year. In a press release issued by the Tribe, Chief Cantu said the following:

"The multi-purpose building project will offer a much needed boost to the state economy and provide employment for our Saganing Tribal members and the surrounding communities. The project has been in the design stages for several years and our government has welcomed the opportunity to share this mutually beneficial economic interest with the citizens of Michigan."

The project is initially expected to employ about 300 people. The Tribe's press release states that the project will be built on Tribal trust land and is considered on-reservation gaming. As such, the Tribe's 1993 Tribal State Gaming Compact provides the mechanisms for the project to move forward.

Next: Bill Seeks to Repeal Internet Gambling Ban

BILL SEEKS TO REPEAL INTERNET GAMBLING BAN

On Thursday, U.S. Rep. Barney Frank introduced legislation to repeal the Internet gambling ban approved by Congress last year. Frank's bill would require the Department of Treasury to license and regulate Internet gambling companies so Americans could legally bet online.

The bill would require the licensed companies to have certain protections in place against underage and compulsive gambling, money laundering and fraud. It would also require Internet gaming companies to pay unspecified, one-year license fees in order to pay for the regulation by the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. The licenses would be renewable on an annual basis.

The current "Internet Gambling Prohibition and Enforcement Act" was approved in July 2006, and prohibits the use of the Internet to transmit bets or wagers. It also contains provisions empowering the Department of Treasury and the Federal Reserve to develop enforcement rules and policies to ensure that money sources are cut off for illegal gambling businesses. It also prevents financial institutions from being sued for refusing to process financial transactions relating to Internet wagering, and authorizes state and federal law enforcement to seek injunctions against persons who "facilitate" Internet gambling.

Rep. Frank, a Massachusetts Democrat and chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, has called the ban "an intrusion on individual liberty."

The bill is to be taken up at a hearing in June. You can obtain a copy of the proposed legislation at www.house.gov/frank/netgambling0407.html.

NEW MICHIGAN TOURISM COALITION FORMS

Three of Michigan's leading travel and resort executives have formed a coalition in an effort to increase funding for the state's tourism promotion program.

Tourism Improving Michigan's Economy (TIME) is headed up by R.D. Musser III, president of Mackinac Island's Grand Hotel, Stephen Kircher, president of eastern operations for Boyne USA Resorts, and Larry Alexander, president and CEO of the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau.

According to its Web site, the group's goal is to increase funding to "\$30 million annually, without raising taxes, surcharges or fees."

Members of TIME include the Michigan Hotel, Motel & Resort Association, Michigan Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus, Michigan Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan, Michigan Restaurant Association, Michigan Retailers Association and many others.

For more information on TIME, visit their Web site at www.tisabouttime.org.