

Casino land purchased

Saskatchewan's sixth native run casino is a step closer to reality after the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC) announced the purchase of the property for the Swift Current Casino and Performing Arts Centre.

In a news release on Tuesday the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) announced the casino property was purchased in March by Keseechiwan Holdings Ltd.

"We anticipate all the legal requirements necessary for this project to go forward will be in order soon; so, the construction phase can begin," said FHQTC Tribal Representative Dean Bellegarde. "We are very excited to be part of the Swift Current business community and look forward to developing new partnerships and positive relations.

The Tribal Council will oversee the negotiation of four separate agreements before the Federal Government will consider the land for reserve creation.

The Nekaneet First Nation will host the site of the new development and they intend to have the land designated as urban reserve property.

"As the host First Nation, We will have the authority to enact bylaws affecting the land, including a bylaw that addresses smoking in public buildings," stated Nekaneet First Nation Chief Alice Pahtayken. "We are committed to working cooperatively with the City in exploring all potential avenues available to address these and other issues to ensure that the project is a success for all parties involved."

SIGA President Ed Bellegarde said the land purchase is a significant step towards the start of construction.

"The \$22.7 million project has the potential for approximately 300 full and part time jobs. The Casino will offer 200 slots and nine live games, while the Performing Arts Centre will include 700 theatre seats, banquet seating for 500 and a state of the art sound system," Ed Bellegarde said.

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) submitted a formal request to license the casino in 2004 after receiving the proposal from the FHQTC to build a casino in Swift Current.

The city of Swift Current voted on October 22, 2003 during a plebiscite to approve a casino/performing arts centre.

*Press Release Date:
The Southwest Booster
June 4, 2005*