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Tribe plans casino, RV park here

TWENTYNINE PALMS — A casino and RV park on 160 acres owned by the Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians appear to be in the future for Twentynine Palms.

The federally-recognized tribe, which operates Spotlight 29 casino in Indio, is set to unveil plans for the first phase of a multimillion-dollar economic development project to be built on the reservation south of Baseline Road and east of Adobe Road. That unveiling, as first reported on thedeserttrail.com, will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 13, on the corner of Adobe Road and Baseline Road.

Phase one, according to information provided by the Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians, will include a 60,000-square-foot casino, a 100-space KOA RV campground and miles of dedicated hiking trails.

Subsequent developments will include a 100-room national brand resort hotel, 1,000-seat outdoor amphitheater, retail center, executive championship golf course and residential properties.

NYWY Casino will be named after the ancient Chemehuevi Indian word for "The People."

It will feature 350 slot machines and table games, including blackjack and Texas Hold'em, along with a bingo hall, restaurant and bar and an all-you-can-eat buffet.

Twentynine Palms City Manager Michael Tree said Wednesday the city will not have a hand in approving tribal plans for the project.

"The tribal land is a sovereign nation," Tree said. "There will be no permitting process through the city department."

He said he thought the development will be good for the city.

"I see it as being positive," he said. "There will be a positive impact on our other hotels and motels and inns. I imagine (casino visitors) will want to stop and shop and enjoy the downtown area as well."

City officials, he said, have met with tribal leaders and discussed issues such as the impact the development will have on law enforcement, fire department, roads and other city services.

Tribal leaders, he added, have indicated a desire to work to mitigate those impacts.

"We are working closely with the city in creating a facility that will have a real warm and friendly hometown feel," Tribal Chairman Darrell Mike said.

"Local residents can meet their friends, grab a bite to eat, enjoy great entertainment and drive home in just a few short minutes," he said.

"We are at the beginning stages and will work with the community to design and build something that will truly benefit the residents of the region while keeping monies local to boost the local economy," Mike said.

Tribal leaders said the casino will generate hundreds of new jobs with dozens needed for the construction phase.

Hiring preference will be extended to residents of Twentynine Palms and the Hi-Desert, they said.

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