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By ED RUNYAN

VINDICATOR STAFF

YOUNGSTOWN

Plans unveiled Saturday to build a \$300 million racetrack, resort and casino at an undisclosed Mahoning Valley location may sound as if it has many obstacles to overcome, but one of its developers vowed Sunday that “it’s going to happen.”

Rick Lertzman, a principal in the Mahoning Valley Development Group, said

the Mahoning Valley Downs and Resort will be built on 200 acres and have a thoroughbred racetrack, hotel, golf course, shopping, dining and entertainment. More details — including its location in the Valley — will be announced at a Tuesday morning press conference, he said.

The resort also will have a casino, even though Ohio law doesn’t allow slot machines in the Mahoning Valley, Lertzman said.

“This will go forward with or without video lottery terminals (VLT’s),” Lertzman said of the terminology used in Ohio that means slot machines.

Furthermore, a casino will be part of the project because the state will eventually legalize slots at racetracks, Lertzman said.

They are already legal in West Virginia, Indiana and Pennsylvania, so as a “financial matter,” it’s only a matter of time before Ohio makes them legal as well, he said.

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A resort will be successful here, Lertzman said, because there are 800,000 to 1 million people in Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania and many more people travel through the region on highways.

Read the full story with additional comments from public officials in the Mahoning Valley on Monday in The Vindicator and on Vindy.com.

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