

COLUMBUS, Ohio

Public officials have joined developers at a ceremonial groundbreaking for the fourth Ohio casino despite an ongoing legal dispute.

The Monday event in Columbus kicks off the 300,000-square-foot casino being developed by Wyomissing, Pa.,-based Penn National Gaming Inc. Earlier ceremonies marked the start of construction at sites in Toledo and Cincinnati, and in Cleveland an old department store is being renovated as the initial home of a casino.

Voters approved the four casinos in 2009.

Hollywood Casino Columbus is scheduled to open in late 2012. Officials expect 3,500 construction jobs and about 2,000 employees once opened. They first have to resolve a legal battle with the city that's holding up water and sewer service.

Penn National president, Tim Wilmott, says Monday's groundbreaking signals the start of a new era of economic development in Franklin County.

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