

**Kenosha** — Menominee tribal leaders said Saturday they hope to talk with Gov. Scott Walker as soon as next week to discuss how their proposed off-reservation casino in Kenosha on the site of the shuttered Dairyland Greyhound Park would bring much-needed development for them and for the area.

"What's good for southeast Wisconsin is good for our tribe," said Lisa Waukau, tribal vice chairwoman.

Waukau and Gary Besaw, tribal legislator, held a news conference at the Dairyland park on Saturday — the day after the U.S. Interior Department [approved](#) the project. Flanked by Kenosha-area politicians and state legislators, they discussed their more-than-a-decade-long efforts to open the casino, and said the only real opposition is coming from the Forest County Potawatomi tribe, which operates a casino in Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley.

"We were friends with the Potawatomi for many years. They've let money get between us," Waukau said.

Many believe the Wisconsin casino market is saturated, said Ken Walsh, a Potawatomi lobbyist. Gaming revenue is down nearly 5% over the past four years in the state, according to Casino City's Indian Gaming Industry Report. Also, economic experts for Milwaukee and Milwaukee County estimate the proposed Kenosha casino would cause a loss of 3,000 direct and indirect jobs, Walsh said.

### Effect on jobs

Proponents of the Kenosha casino say it would create 3,356 permanent jobs and 1,400 construction jobs.

"Getting the jobs might outweigh the Potawatomi's arguments, which are onion-skin thin," said Jim Kreuser, Kenosha's county executive.

## Menominee tribe, Kenosha officials to lobby Scott Walker on casino

Written by Administrator

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The Menominee have had a land option agreement on Dairyland park since 2004, Waukau said. The project has strong support locally from politicians and others.

"I've never met anybody who didn't want it," said David Weise, a Racine resident who heads maintenance at Dairyland Greyhound park. "I come to work every day wondering, 'Are we going to hear something? What's the holdup?'"

With the federal decision made, the Menominee still must secure the governor's approval in order to open the Kenosha casino.

### Walker mum

Walker has not said whether he would approve the \$800 million Menominee project or two other off-reservation proposals that are still pending before the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In a statement Friday, his office reiterated the criteria Walker set for approving an off-reservation casino — which would give the Potawatomi, along with any other Wisconsin tribe, effective veto power over the proposed casino. The criteria require that the new gambling venue must result in "no new net gaming" in the state; that it have community support; and that there be a "consensus" in support of it among Wisconsin's 11 tribes.

The Menominee, whose status was restored in 1973 by former President Richard Nixon after being terminated as a sovereign nation in 1960, are one of the state's poorest tribes, Waukau said.

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