

Wilmot casino in Tyre gets key endorsement

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An artist's rendering of the proposed \$350 million Wilmot Casino and Resort planned for Tyre, Seneca County. (Photo: Provided by Wilmorite)

Story Highlights

- Rochester developer Thomas Wilmot wants to build the Wilmot Casino and Resort project in Tyre, off Thruway exit 41.
- The project is planned to have 2,000 slot machines, at least 100 gambling tables and a 200-room hotel.
- However, the resort faces competition from other projects in receiving a license from the state.

TYRE – A Rochester-area developer has received unanimous support from the Seneca County Board of Supervisors to build the proposed Wilmot Casino and Resort, a Finger Lakes project that will compete with three Southern Tier bidders for a casino license.

"The feedback we've received — from government officials, business owners and residents — since we unveiled the proposal three months ago has been overwhelmingly positive, and the suggestions we've received have only made the proposal stronger," said Thomas Wilmot, chairman of Rochester-based Wilmorite, in a statement.

The Board of Supervisors voted 13-0 Tuesday night — with one member absent — in favor of a resolution supporting the project.

Wilmorite, a commercial real estate development, construction and management company

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based in Rochester, is proposing a \$350 million destination in Tyre with about 2,000 slot machines, at least 100 gambling tables and a 200-room hotel.

Wilmorite says the planned resort, immediately off exit 41 on the New York State Thruway and bordered by state Route 414, will create approximately 1,800 permanent jobs, 1,200 construction jobs and attract an estimated 9,000 visitors daily.

Robert Hayssen, chairman of the Seneca County Board of Supervisors, announced just days after the casino proposition passed in November that the Route 318/414 corridor in Seneca County would be the best location for a casino in the Finger Lakes/Southern Tier region, which stretches from the Pennsylvania border through the Finger Lakes to Lake Ontario. On Dec. 12, Wilmorite announced plans to build in Tyre.

"I am very hopeful this project gets chosen to be the casino for the Finger Lakes/Southern Tier region," Hayssen said in a statement.

But three Southern Tier groups have expressed interest in challenging Wilmot for the region's casino license.

In Broome County, the Walsh family plans to submit a bid to construct a \$150 million destination called Traditions Resort and Casino. Meanwhile, the Vista Hospitality Group is deciding between two locations in Binghamton for a facility that could cost as much as \$150 million.

Jeff Gural, owner of Tioga Downs in Nichols, is planning a \$90 million expansion project should his racino get a casino license. About \$50 million was spent acquiring and rebuilding Tioga Park nearly a decade ago. The Nichols racino has already started construction on a \$13 million, three-story parking complex with enough room for 274 cars.

The state can issue up to four casino licenses upstate, with at least one facility each in the Capital region, the Catskills and the Southern Tier. That means it's possible for the Southern Tier to get two casino licenses, although many believe that scenario will play out in the Catskills, a region that could conceivably attract downstate residents.

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