Jon Harris, jharris6@gannett.com 6:08 p.m. EDT July 30, 2014

This map shows the three regions that are eligible for a total of four destination gambling resorts. At least one facility must be sited in each region, with one region possibly getting a second. (Photo: NEW YORK STATE GAMING COMMISSION PHOTO)

Story Highlights

- In the Eastern Southern Tier, 43% of the voters polled said a casino would benefit local people.
- 32% percent said traffic would be the biggest disadvantage of having a regional gambling venue.
- Public hearings, which will be held in each region, are slated for Sept. 22 through Sept. 24.

While voters in the Southern Tier/Finger Lakes region support casino development in the area, would the majority of residents frequent a new gambling parlor once it's up and running?

Probably not, according to a new Time Warner Cable News/Siena College poll released in two parts on Monday and Tuesday.

The poll shows voters in the oddly drawn Southern Tier/Finger Lakes region — also referred to as the Eastern Southern Tier — support casino development, 45 percent to 36 percent, in the area. Meanwhile, 57 percent of the same voters said they would not likely frequent their region's casino.

The bidders in the Eastern Southern Tier are Traditions Resort & Casino, in the Town of Union, Tioga Downs, an existing racino in Nichols, and Lago Resort & Casino, in Tyre, Seneca County.

Even more voters in the other two casino-eligible regions — 64 percent in the Catskills/Hudson Valley, and 63 percent in the Capital — said they would not likely visit a new area casino.

"Right now, voters in the three regions slated for new casinos are willing to gamble on them," said Don Levy, director of the Siena College Research Institute , in a statement. "Overwhelmingly they hope for new jobs and help with tax revenues. While many expect the new casinos to make their area a better place, the majority will wait and see."

In the Southern Tier/Finger Lakes region, 43 percent of the voters polled said a casino would benefit the area's people. But 29 percent said a casino would have a negative impact, and 26 percent said it would have little real effect.

While 76 percent of voters polled in the Southern Tier/Finger Lakes region agreed that casinos in New York will create thousands of jobs, 32 percent said traffic problems would be the biggest disadvantage of having a regional gambling venue.

The poll was conducted July 20 through July 23 via phone calls to 816 registered voters from the three regions. Twenty-one percent of those polled were from the Southern Tier/Finger Lakes region.

While the poll's overall margin of error is 3.4 percentage points, the margin of error for the Southern Tier/Finger Lakes region is 6 percentage points.

The first part of the poll was released Monday, the same day the New York State Gaming Commission named Kevin Law chairman of the New York Gaming Facility Location Board, which will evaluate casino applications.

Also at its meeting Monday, the Gaming Commission said the casino applicants will make presentations in front of the Gaming Facility Location Board on Sept. 8 and Sept. 9 in Albany. Public hearings, which will be held in each region, are scheduled for Sept. 22 through Sept. 24.

Selections are expected in the "early fall," a period of time the Gaming Commission has failed to define. The state can issue up to four casino licenses upstate, with at least one facility in each of the three eligible regions.

While there are just three bidders in the Eastern Southern Tier region, there are five in the Capital and nine in the Catskills/Hudson Valley.

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