

Koi partnering with Chickasaw nation on Shiloh casino proposed for Windsor area

Written by Administrator
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When the Koi Nation, an economically disadvantaged local Pomo band with approximately 90 members, announced last September that it had purchased land for a major casino project in an unincorporated area near Windsor, many wondered where the money and expertise would come from.

The answer came Monday, when Koi leaders revealed a predevelopment agreement with the Chickasaw Nation, a much larger tribe that owns 23 casinos in Oklahoma.

Under the agreement, Global Gaming Solutions — a wholly owned Chickasaw business — would partner with the Koi on its planned Shiloh Casino & Resort. The company would also manage and operate the facility on East Shiloh Road on Windsor's eastern outskirts.

Koi leaders say the enterprise will include 2,500 Las Vegas-style gaming machines, a 200-room hotel, six restaurants and food service areas, a meeting center and a spa. In all, the complex will employ more than 1,100 full-time workers when fully operational.

The Chickasaw generated a data model within a 125-mile radius from the Shiloh site, and determined there is demand for a gambling facility of this size.

"The word 'saturation' gets used a lot in gaming," said Sean Boyd, executive officer for marketing and business development for the Chickasaw Nation. "Our modeling shows this area is nowhere near that point."

The Chickasaw Nation, based in Ada, Oklahoma, is a commercially successful tribe, with at least 200 business ventures. Its 23 gaming establishments include [WinStar World Casino and Resort](#) in Thackerville, Oklahoma, which the tribe bills as the largest casino in the world.

"We're honored that the Chickasaw Nation would consider moving forward with us on this project," Koi vice chair and director of development Dino Beltran told The Press Democrat.

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“When it comes to industry, infrastructure, hospitality and Native American values, we feel we found a great partner moving forward, on those fronts alone.”

The Koi were “courted by quite a few” tribes seeking partnership in the Shiloh development, Beltran added. He said it would have been difficult for the Koi to proceed alone on a development of this scale.

“I think at the end of day, it’s probably a matter of means to help us get through the process,” he said. “And we had limitations there.”

That acknowledgment is prudent on the part of the Koi, said Kathryn Rand, co-director of the Institute for the Study of Tribal Gaming Law and Policy at the University of North Dakota.

“If I were giving advice to a new casino operator, I’d tell them to look for experienced partners,” Rand said. “The area of tribal gaming and gaming regulations are very specific. A tribal operator, even one in Oklahoma, will operate under the same federal laws and regulations. They know what compacts mean.”

In Rand’s opinion, the Chickasaw’s most important contributions could be political.

“I think you would expect a small tribe that had not yet had the benefit of running a casino would need outside expertise and investment. That’s no surprise,” Rand said. “But who they choose can have political blowback depending on local and state politics. This is complete speculation on my part, but that could be one of reasons the Koi Nation has reached out to a tribal partner.”

Operating another tribe’s casino isn’t a new enterprise for the Chickasaw. They currently manage the Golden Mesa Casino in Guymon, Oklahoma, for the Shawnee Nation, Boyd said. The Chickasaw assisted the Shawnee through state and federal regulatory protocols.

“All recognized tribes have the right to be self-sufficient,” Boyd said. “A tribe like the Koi Nation,

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we believe we can assist them with their goals. And while there may be money to be made, (self-sufficiency is) really the core value of who we are as a tribe.”

This could be a big opportunity for the Chickasaw. All of their 23 existing casinos are in Oklahoma. Only one state has a larger Indian gaming industry than that one: California.

“This could be a signal that the Chickasaw Nation is looking to expand its role in gaming beyond Oklahoma,” Rand said.

The [Koi Nation](#) , a distinct band of Pomo Indians with roots in modern-day Lake and Sonoma counties, purchased the 68-acre property in Shiloh for \$12.3 million in September. The project was immediately opposed by neighbors, and by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, who own the Graton Casino & Resort in Rohnert Park.

Read more <https://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/article/news/koi-partnering-with-chickasaw-nation-on-shiloh-casino/>