

New tribal pact will provide county with \$161M over next 22 years

By Hans Peter, Daily Democrat

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When Yolo County and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation collaborate to expand the Cache Creek Casino, everybody wins.

The tribe and the county have approved an intergovernmental agreement that will provide the local area with more than \$161 million over the next 22 years. The money will be used for a variety of public services.

The mitigation agreement is in connection with the expansion of the hotel at Cache Creek Casino Resort in Brooks and will deliver resources for public safety, Capay Valley programs, roads, public transit and the county's general fund, according to Beth Gabor, the county's public information officer.

"This is much more momentous than even the 2002 agreement," said Supervisor Don Saylor.

Yolo and the tribe entered a similar agreement that year in attempts to create support for the community and county around the casino, though no support was required. This new plan would further build that connection and funding.

"This is not a normal relationship for the area," said County Counsel Philip Pogledich. "This is far above and beyond that."

Pogledich said the agreement took careful collaboration and planning, but the county and tribe were able to craft a rare document, one that other governments have admired.

"We are very pleased and excited about the agreement because it will provide valuable resources focused specifically on important programs and concerns in the county and valley we share as our home," said Yocha Dehe Tribal Chairman Leland Kinter. "This shows how much we can achieve by working together, government-to-government, as partners."

While mitigation agreements now prove mandatory for tribes building or expanding gaming operations, Yocha Dehe has long exceeded those requirements, according to Gabor.

Gabor said the new pact requires the Tribe to:

- Pay Yolo County \$1.5 million within 90 days before the start of construction, plus \$6.16 million each year (adjusted over time for inflation) as reimbursement for gaming-related costs and additional dollars for the county's discretionary general fund;
- Commit \$300,000 per year (nearly \$7 million over the life of the agreement) for Capay Valley community-specific projects and initiatives, payable directly by the Tribe;
- Salaries for two additional sheriff's deputies and vehicles to serve Capay Valley, \$20,000 annually for the California Highway Patrol and \$50,000 per year for Capay Valley emergency and fire service districts;

- Fund up to \$5 million in CalTrans road improvements on Highway 16;
- Further enhance public transit with subsidies and programs (on top of the \$1.5 million the Tribe already provides annually); and
- Continue environmentally sustainable practices and aesthetic design commitments.

Yolo County and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation worked collaboratively to identify issues of shared concern and develop the agreement, with participation by Yocha Dehe's Tribal Council and an ad hoc subcommittee of the Board of Supervisors, according to Gabor. The agreement takes effect immediately upon execution by the parties. Construction of the hotel expansion is expected to begin in coming weeks.

Pogledich also said the casino has continued to fully employ two deputies to patrol the area around the casino, and may consider adding another two deputies after expansion. The casino also pays \$50,000 annually toward the fire protection district. Moreover work closely with Yolo County to provide a gambling addiction fund.

"The hotel expansion is going to offer great benefits to our county and valley, generating hundreds of construction and permanent jobs, and serving as an important entertainment asset as our region grows as a tourist destination," added Kinter. "It is great to be starting with such a strong, cooperative agreement with the county, focused on delivering important benefits to the local community as well. Everyone wins under our new agreement."