

Indian casino expansion threatens Reno-Tahoe gaming venues

By Howard Stutz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Expansion plans by an Indian casino near Sacramento signal another bad omen for Northern Nevada's beleaguered gaming market.

Casino revenues in Reno and the Lake Tahoe area have been decimated for almost three years. The recession has zapped tourism, while bad weather routinely impedes travel by casino patrons from the important San Francisco Bay Area feeder market.

But Northern California's large Indian casino community is the primary reason Washoe County hasn't seen positive gaming revenues in 29 months and South Lake Tahoe's casinos are reporting figures mirroring the 1980s.

Bay Area residents have a choice. The Red Hawk in Placerville opened a year ago with 2,100 slot machines and 75 table games. The 7-year-old Thunder Valley near Sacramento is answering with an \$800 million expansion opening in July.

Now, Cache Creek is adding to the pain.

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