

Tribal gaming has role in California gov race

By Jack Chang, Sacramento Bee

This year, the long road to the governor's office runs through the high desert reservation of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians.

It also stops at the reservations – and casinos – of the Sycuan and Viejas bands of the Kumeyaay Nation east of San Diego.

In fact, the campaign trail crosses many of the state's Indian reservations, especially those with lucrative gambling compacts. That's where Democrat Jerry Brown and Republican Meg Whitman – along with candidates for other offices – are seeking the support and potentially hefty donations of tribal leaders.

At stake is the financial backing of a state gambling industry that generates an estimated \$7.2 billion a year in revenue. Also at play are the state-negotiated gambling compacts of 47 tribes that expire in 10 years and a proposal to open Indian casinos far away from reservations.

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