

Thunder Valley casino tribe split on \$1 mil. contribution to Sac Kings

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

A political rift within the tribe operating the Thunder Valley Casino Resort is fueling acrimony over a \$1 million sponsorship pledge for the Sacramento Kings and triggering a recall drive against tribal council members.

The turmoil within the United Auburn Indian Community, whose Placer County casino is one of the nation's richest tribal resorts, is centered on internal issues that include disputes over distribution of casino income and payments to a tribal attorney.

But an apparent lightning rod in the recall effort – announced Monday against all five members of the United Auburn tribal council – is the tribe's decision to pledge \$1 million to support a community drive to keep the Kings in town.

A tribal faction, including former council chairwoman Jessica Tavares, complained in a news release that the tribal council made the pledge "without first notifying or obtaining approval from the tribe."

The group took issue with the tribal council pledging to support the pro basketball team while apparently denying financial support for a tribal school and drug rehabilitation services for tribal members.

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