

3 men charged with defrauding Thunder Valley casino owners

By C. Johnson, News 10

SACRAMENTO – Two local men and a developer from San Diego were indicted for allegedly defrauding the United Auburn Indian Community of more than \$18 million in connection with the construction of four buildings in Auburn for the tribe.

The United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) owns the Thunder Valley Casino Resort in Lincoln.

Greg Scott Baker, 45, of Newcastle; Darrell Patrick Hinz, 47, of Cameron Park; and Bart Wayne Volen of San Diego and Hawaii, were charged with conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud as well as money laundering, announced the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of California.

According to court documents, between October 2006 and December 2007, Volen, the building developer, submitted more than 160 false and/or inflated cost invoices to UAIC for his work.

Baker and Hinz, who were employed by UAIC, were responsible for approving all invoices before they were presented to the tribal council for payment. Federal prosecutors allege the two men conspired with Volen and made provisions so their duplicity regarding the false invoices would go unnoticed. In turn, Volen, according to the indictment, paid off Hinz.

Hinz claimed he worked as a consultant to Volen, submitted false invoices to that in effect, and in turn, received approximately \$7.5 million in checks from the developer, the indictment read.

Federal investigators charge Hinz paid off bills for Baker and

bought him a \$70,000 car, a backyard pool, a vacation condominium in Lake Tahoe, a trip to Hawaii, a mobile home, and home improvements for his alleged participation in the scheme. The value of the items was more than \$1.4 million.

If convicted of the charges, each defendant could received a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine and three-years probation for each count of mail and wire fraud.