



Fort Sill Apache Tribe Hosts a Scoping Meeting for Proposed Casino

Fort Sill Apache Reservation, Akela, New Mexico (March 27, 2012) — If you've wondered what the Fort Sill Apache Tribe has been up to since the December town hall meeting, now is your chance to find out. The Tribe invites you to attend a Scoping Meeting in Deming on April 4 to learn about and comment on its casino plans for Akela, NM.

As part of the Section 20 two-part determination process under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), the Tribe must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Once the Section 20 Application and NEPA compliance are completed, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) will review the application and make a determination that the project is in the best interest of the Tribe and local community. The BIA will then request a concurrence from the Governor of New Mexico that the project is in the best interest of the state and local region. Following the approval of the Tribe's Section 20 Application, the Fort Sill Apache Tribe can move forward with building and operating a Class III casino on its reservation at Akela, NM.

The Fort Sill Apache Scoping Meeting will include water experts from Intera and traffic experts from Bohannon Huston, Inc. to join the Tribe in presenting environmental, traffic, market analysis and jurisdiction logistics for the casino project.

The Fort Sill Apache Scoping Meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 4 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. at the Mimbres Valley Special Events Center located at 2300 E. Pine Street in Deming, NM.

"We welcome all community members and interested parties to bring questions and comments they may have to the forefront," said Fort Sill Apache Chairman Jeff Haozous.

Chairman Haozous said unlike the town hall meeting that was held in December 2011, this Scoping Meeting will be more formal, and will include technical presentations.

The Tribe is seeking approval of the federal government and state of New Mexico to be placed on equal footing with the other Tribes in the state and bring the economic benefits of gaming to the citizens of southwestern New Mexico as tribes and non-Indian racinos are doing throughout the state.

In 1968, the U.S. Indian Claims Commission (ICC) determined that the Fort Sill Apache Tribe was the legal successors of the Apache Indians that once lived in southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona until their forced removal after the surrender of their leader Geronimo. The ICC went on to find that the Tribe was in possession of 14 million acres of land in New Mexico



and Arizona and that this land was illegally taken from the Tribe. These landmark decisions were approved by the U.S. Supreme Court.

While they always maintained their status as a Tribe, their government-to-government relationship with the United States, which was severed during the imprisonment, was restored in 1976 when they organized with a constitution as the federally recognized Fort Sill Apache.

After receiving an invitation from the Governor of New Mexico in 1995 and again in 2000 to return to New Mexico, the Tribe purchased the property at Akela Flats in 1998 that has been designated the Reservation of the Fort Sill Apache Tribe and upon which the Tribe is seeking to exercise its rights as all other Tribes in the state with Reservation and Pueblo lands to game on their property.

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