

Proposed resort/casino gets mixed reaction from Peoria

by **Sonu Munshi** - Jul. 29, 2010 02:26 PM
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Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett described the recent federal decision to approve the Tohono O'odham Nation's application to turn land near the city into a reservation as "fabulous good news," while several other city leaders had little or no comment.

The latter say they await more information on the potential impact of the tribe's planned resort and casino on 54 acres near 91st and Northern avenues. Although much of the unincorporated property is surrounded by Glendale, its northern edge borders Peoria.

"As far as I'm concerned, this will undoubtedly help Peoria," Barrett said, citing jobs and boosts to nearby retail shops.

As city planners draft strategies for growth and jobs, they see the casino as a catalyst for redevelopment along Northern Avenue.

Councilman Carlo Leone, who represents the area near the proposed casino, would not comment on the project. He did indicate the full council might not be as supportive as the mayor.

"Just because the mayor supports something doesn't mean everyone else supports that thing, too," Leone said.

The Tohono O'odham proposal has generated plenty of controversy since being unveiled in January 2009.

Eighteen months later, the U.S. Department

of Interior on Friday said it would take the land into the reservation system. The tribe still must seek federal government go-ahead to allow gaming on the land. A timeline on that decision is unknown.

As for taking the land into the reservation, the Interior Department will allow 30 days for public comment.

The issue is sure to get comment.

Leaders from neighboring Glendale have been far from discreet about their opposition to the planned West Valley Resort. They, along with Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jon Kyl, and Gov. [Jan Brewer](#)

, a Glendale resident, all oppose the plans. The reasons vary. Some oppose what they say would be a negative impact on neighborhoods. Glendale leaders say the casino would drain resources such as water, police and roads.

Barrett said he would be comfortable forming agreements for Peoria to provide the tribe with those services.

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