



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Tribes will contribute its fair share to community

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By Jason M. Palmer

In recent weeks, Gun Lake Casino opponents have said the tribe's casino would be untaxed, thus unfair. This argument is not based in fact.

Currently the Gun Lake tribe is responsible for paying the host community of the proposed casino, Wayland Township, \$30,000 per year in property taxes. After the land is placed into federal trust, the tribe will no longer pay that tax. Instead the tribe will pay more than \$3 million per year to the township and other surrounding governmental units.

Compare that to businesses owned by the very same group making the "unfair, untaxed" argument against the tribe.

The honorary chair of 23 is Enough, Rich DeVos, the famed co-founder of Amway is one of a handful of billionaires from Michigan. His Marriott hotel received a \$5 million subsidy from the Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority, and another \$6 million subsidy from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

The Marriott hotel was the second DeVos venture to receive MEDC funds. The first was DeVos Place convention center. By the way, the MEDC has received hundreds of millions of dollars from tribal casinos.

Amway is hosted by Ada Township, which provides a subsidiary company more than \$97,000 in annual tax abatements. Why? Does a company with over \$6.3 billion in 2006 sales really need to save a hundred thousand dollars?

The chairman of 23 is Enough, Michael Jandernoa, is a board member of Perrigo. Jandernoa owns more than \$100 million in Perrigo stock alone. Both he and Perrigo obviously have tremendous financial resources. Yet Perrigo receives more than \$600,000 per year in tax abatements from its host, the city of Allegan.

And finally, wily tribal fighter Peter Secchia is the majority shareholder of Universal Forest Products. He moved his manufacturing operations to greener pastures -- states with lower taxes!

The Gun Lake tribe does not seek tax abatements, just the opposite. We're ready to invest hundreds of millions into West Michigan while providing millions more in revenue to state and local governments. We're also ready to create thousands of good-paying jobs and purchase more than \$20 million worth of goods and services per year.

The tribe's revenue sharing payments will far exceed current taxes paid. Remember this next time you hear the bigwigs talking about taxes.

Jason M. Palmer, of Portage, is director of development for the Gun Lake tribe.

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