

El Paso TimesA Gannett newspaper
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Anthony casino

It could be a mini-jackpot for El Paso

Fifty-three percent of El Pasoans polled recently say they're in favor of a new casino in Anthony, N.M.

While that's not overwhelming, the results of the El Paso Times/KVIA-ABC 7 Poll show El Pasoans at least realize the benefits a casino would bring. The \$62 million casino is being proposed by the Jemez Pueblo and Circle P Investments, who are looking at land near I-10 and O'Hara Road.

There's opposition and some doubts, of course. The big question is what an Anthony casino might do to the success of the Sunland Park Casino. Although some effect might be noticed, Sunland Park has the powerful added draw of horse racing.

New Mexico has nearly 20 casinos and they don't appear to be hurting each other's profits noticeably. Another concern is that especially in such a poor area, people might be tempted to waste money they can't afford to waste. That problem would need to be

addressed.

But the potential benefits far outweigh the downside, and some of those benefits would accrue to El Paso. A casino north of El Paso, right on the interstate, could persuade a lot of people to spend a little time and money in El Paso while they're in the area.

There would also be a general injection of money into this area, from payroll to construction dollars. It would be foolish to say no to a chunk of that \$62 million, plus whatever ancillary benefits might come our way during the facility's normal operations.

Also, the casino reportedly would employ 950 people, and some of them would undoubtedly be from El Paso — and we need the jobs.

Ah well, much of this is academic because no one's going to be coming to El Paso to approve or disapprove the project. Nevertheless, we have to be alert to any possibilities that can help our city.