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NEW STUDY PROVES ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF JEMEZ/ANTHONY CASINO

In a study released at a press conference in Anthony, New Mexico Wednesday morning by Jemez Pueblo Governor Paul Chinana and Tom Rutherford of Circle P Investments, the economic benefits of a proposed casino near Anthony are explained in detail. The study, prepared for Jemez Pueblo and Circle P Investments by GVA Marquette Advisors, an international hospitality and gaming consulting firm, found that the new casino would spend \$55 million during the construction phase, including 570 construction-related jobs, eventually bringing 950 permanent jobs with benefits to the area. The payroll for the casino is estimated to be \$28 million annually.

Jemez Pueblo Governor Paul Chinana says the study proves that the proposed casino benefits everyone. "It's a win-win-win situation for my community and also for the Anthony area and community around here," he said. "We want to build a casino that will employ a lot of Anthony residents." Tom Rutherford of Circle P echoed that sentiment, and said the study confirms the positive impact for Anthony. "There is so much need in this area," he said. "Two specific commitments by the developers and the casino are to buy New Mexico and hire New Mexico. And we are going to go out of our way to do that." It also planned to feature Mesilla Valley agricultural products in the gift store.

GVA Marquette enumerated the economic benefits to the area in the study. Developers are projected to spend \$55 million during the construction phase of the new casino, including 570 construction-related jobs, or \$16 million in construction job paychecks. Once completed, GVA Marquette estimates the casino will offer 950 jobs, with an average annual salary of \$29,200 including benefits. The casino will require \$30 million annually in local supply purchases, or about \$2.5 million of local spending monthly.

The casino will be in fact an excellent source of employment for people entering the work force for the first time and for other workers with limited education and skills. The casino is expected to provide on-the-job training that will allow all employees to advance within the casino organization. Since Spanish is spoken by many area residents, as well as anticipated visitors from Mexico, there should be opportunities in most job categories for Spanish speaking and bi-lingual employees. This will, therefore, provide employment opportunities for the area's Spanish-speaking residents. Positions at the casino in areas such as management, accounting, human resources and marketing will provide stable long-term employment with good salaries.

The study estimates that the casino would attract 2.7 million visitors to the area each year, with 1.7 million coming from Texas and 586,000 from Mexico. Many of the casino visitors from more than 50 miles away are anticipated to spend the night in area hotels, eat in local restaurants, shop and contribute to the tourist economy of the area. This increased spending will result in \$7.2 million in payroll taxes and other taxes to improve area schools, and it is estimated that fewer people will need welfare or other government assistance.

The study also clearly shows that the area can easily support the new casino without significant impact on nearby competing gaming facilities. The study states, “While the proposed new casino will share the same market with Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino, the combined number of gaming devices, at around 2,235 will still be less than one-third the number of gaming devices that are supported in the Albuquerque market by a smaller population.” The greater El Paso/Juarez area has a population of approximately 2.2 million people with current access to 700 slot machines. The population within 50 miles of Albuquerque is 786,000 and supports seven casinos and one racetrack/casino with a total of 7,200 slot machines. The population within 50 miles of Santa Fe is 372,000 and supports 2,600 slot machines.

The promise of shared economic success was met by a lot of enthusiasm by Jemez Pueblo Governor Paul Chinana, who looks forward to implementing positive initiatives in both communities. One of his goals is to improve educational opportunities in both areas, saying, “We all need education. My people need education and the people of Anthony need education.” He hopes to institute scholarship programs at Jemez and Anthony to inspire the youth of both communities to higher levels of success.

Additional information on the casino and its economic impact can be found at the developer’s new web site, www.anthonycasinofacts.com where highlights of the GVA Marquette Advisors study will be posted shortly. Governor Chinana and Tom Rutherford have both stated that the new casino will grow the economic pie for everyone, representing a true win-win-win scenario.

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