

Another casino not planned

While the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians said it has „no plans“ to build a third casino, just the thought of it caused locals to wonder where a new casino would go and if the tribe would just expand what it already has.

„I don't think there's a parcel big enough for (another) casino,“ said Paula LaBellarti, president of the Palm Springs Regional Association of Realtors and a Realtor with Keller Williams.

The tribe received a thumbs up from the governor Tuesday for a third casino and 3,000 additional slot machines.

Developer and property owner Ernest Noia says he knows of a spot for a casino: Indian Oasis, his business park/retail/hotel/golf course development in Palm Springs.

„It would be between the two casinos (they already own),“ said Noia.

The tribe owns 32,000 acres sprawling from Palm Springs – where it owns the Spa Resort Casino – to Rancho Mirage – where it has the Agua Caliente Casino. It also owns 530 acres at Murray Canyon and Palm Canyon drives in South Palm Springs, where it built the Indian Canyons Golf Course and is in the process of building a hotel.

Noia figures that could be a potential location for a new casino, except for its proximity to the residential neighborhood.

The tribe also owns 640 acres in the Chino Cone, a large parcel of open space leading up to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. But at least one property owner there said he hasn't heard of any casino coming to the cone.

„There's nothing on our property,“ said Charlie Creasy,

director of operations for Shadowrock, a proposed luxury hotel and golf course development.

And so far, there's no talk of the proposed Hard Rock Hotel in downtown Palm Springs becoming a casino like its other Hard Rock locations.

„I know nothing about it,“ said Rich Meaney, with Nexus Development, which is working to bring the Hard Rock to town. „This is the first I heard.“

In Cathedral City, where the tribe also has land, the city manager said Tuesday he'd be willing to talk shop with the tribe.

„We've had a very good relationship with the Agua Caliente tribe,“ said Don Bradley, adding he is not aware of the tribe contacting the city for a new casino.

Others are hoping the tribe expands what it already has. Joy Meredith, president of the downtown Palm Springs merchants' group, said she'd like to see the Spa Resort Casino add more entertainment venues.

„The casino experience is not just about gambling,“ she said.

Maggie Montez, senior vice president of the real estate company CB Richard Ellis in Indian Wells, said a new casino or expansion would be good for tourism in the desert.

„The operations they've done have been first-class,“ she said.