

Kansas extends casino deadline

If no applicants emerge by January 21 to manage a state-owned casino in southeast Kansas, the deadline will be extended to April 21. The Kansas Lottery Commission agreed Wednesday to the extension. "Right now we have no applicants," spokeswoman Sally Lunsford.

In a failed first round of bidding last year, Penn National, which owns Argosy Casino Hotel & Spa in Riverside and other US casinos, was the lone bidder for the designated gambling zone in the state's southeast corner.

But Penn walked away from that deal in September after announcing it could not compete with the USD 300 million, tribal-owned Downstream Casino that opened July 5 literally next door to Penn's site and just across the state line in Oklahoma.

The successful applicant must pay the state an upfront, USD 25 million gambling "privilege" fee, but the state budget plan unveiled Tuesday by Governor Kathleen Sebelius anticipated there will be no applicants in the southeast zone. "At this time, it is unlikely that a gaming facility manager will pay the USD 25 million privilege fee to place a gaming facility in either Crawford or Cherokee County," it said.

The budget does account for USD 25 million fees expected later this year from successful applicants in Wyandotte and Sumner counties after a second round of bidding in those zones gets underway after an April 1 application deadline.