

# Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin



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## MENOMINEE TRIBE TO EXPAND AND REMODEL ON-RESERVATION CASINO



\$80 million upgrade **aimed at preserving Tribe's primary income** source  
in increasingly competitive marketplace

KESHENA, Wis. – The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin today announced an \$80 million renovation of the hotel, casino and bingo hall located on the Tribe's Reservation in northern Wisconsin. The project, which will create 60 to 70 new permanent jobs, will include 230 new slot machines; renovation and expansion of the existing hotel; a new restaurant; increased entertainment, convention, banquet and meeting space; an indoor/outdoor pool and recreation area; and 50 RV spaces. Groundbreaking is expected in May.

"Our on-Reservation casino is operating in a highly competitive environment – the Stockbridge-Munsee are in the middle of a \$100 million expansion of their North Star Casino, the Ho-Chunk are planning a new casino in Wittenberg and the Forest County Potawatomi recently completed a major expansion of their on-Reservation casino in Carter," said Menominee Tribal Chair Lisa Waukau. "All of these projects are within 50 miles of us – in fact, the North Star Casino is just 13 miles away. Operating in a competitive market means making adjustments and improvements to enhance our business, serve our customers and preserve an important economic resource for our Tribe. Building a new casino and renovating our existing facility is the best way for us to do that."

Menominee Casino-Bingo-Hotel is the primary source of income for the Menominee, one of the state's largest and poorest Tribes. One hundred percent of the casino's net revenues are transferred to the Tribal Government, which uses its entire budget to fund educational, health care, law enforcement, fire protection, social service programs, community development and other essential services for the Tribe's more than 8,475 members. The casino, which opened in an old warehouse in 1987, is the oldest in Wisconsin. The facility has never undergone a major remodeling; instead, the Tribe has made small additions to the warehouse building for more than 21 years.

"We are operating amid heavier competition than ever before, and renovating our on-Reservation casino is imperative to safeguarding this important income generator for our Tribe," Waukau said. "For a variety of reasons, including the debt service, increased Compact payments to the state and increased operating costs that will accompany a larger facility, the renovation won't bring more money to our Tribe. But it will preserve the revenue stream we currently depend on to serve our members. On the other hand, if we do nothing to respond to changing market forces, our casino's market share will decrease, its revenues will decrease and our Tribe's budget will decrease. That will surely result in a loss of government services to our members – as one of the largest and poorest Tribes in Wisconsin, we are not in a position to do more with less."

## Different from Kenosha Project

Waukau said that expansion of the on-Reservation casino is separate from the Tribe's proposed \$808 million entertainment center and casino at Dairyland Greyhound Park in Kenosha. The projects are very different, she said, and mean different things for the Tribe.

"Improving our on-Reservation casino will help the Menominee maintain existing conditions by allowing us to continue to provide very limited, but badly needed, services to our members. But building in Kenosha will allow us to do much more – we will be able to hope, plan and work for a better tomorrow for our Tribe," " she said. "While the on-Reservation casino generates most of Menominee's current operating income, the Kenosha project will provide new resources to address the significant unmet needs our Tribe has even with current funding in place.

"Revenues from Kenosha, while creating thousands of good jobs and a multimillion-dollar economic boost that will be felt statewide, will allow us to more effectively address the issues of poverty, health care and housing; train our young people for positive and rewarding careers; better care for our elders; and contribute more in our communities." she said. "Like other Wisconsin Tribes that have benefited from expanded gaming, we will be able to build a more solid Menominee future."

Waukau said the Tribe weighed the decision to build a new on-Reservation casino carefully.

"A great deal of analysis and careful thought went into this move – our Tribal Legislature and the Menominee Indian Gaming Authority Board of Directors have been reviewing renovation plans for more than a year," she said. "It was extremely difficult for the Tribal Legislature to decide to put the Tribe into debt – we have always remained debt-free and this is a significant move for us. But to do nothing, and watch our primary source of income generate less and less revenue amid intense competition, would be worse. We have more than 8,475 members relying on us, and we cannot allow that to happen."

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## About Menominee Casino-Bingo-Hotel

The Menominee Casino-Bingo-Hotel opened in 1987. The facility features 33,000 square feet of casino space with more than 850 reel and video slot machines, a 400-seat bingo hall, blackjack, poker, craps and roulette. The facility is owned and operated by the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. One of the largest employers in Menominee County, Menominee Casino-Bingo-Hotel has more than 500 employees. More information is available at [www.menomineecasinoresort.com](http://www.menomineecasinoresort.com).