

# Arizona Republic

## Norris: Proposed resort-casino is a win-win for everyone

By Ned Norris Jr.

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The Tohono O'odham Nation recently announced plans to bring a high-quality resort-casino to the West Valley. This decision—which we believe is a great opportunity for renewed prosperity—has been long-coming. We've spent years conducting careful examination of our needs, the needs of the West Valley, and the eventual impact of such a facility to area governments, residents, businesses, and tribal members. Results from in-depth economic impact and feasibility studies show benefits being both widespread and substantial.

The impacts will go far beyond our doors. More than 6,000 individuals will be employed for the construction phase while over 3,000 high-quality, permanent jobs for the region will be created once the resort opens. Hundreds of area businesses supplying materials and services will also be positively impacted; governments in turn will bolster their tax base. Because our facility is designed to complement the community—both in architecture and amenities—we will work in a cooperative manner with surrounding businesses, not as competitors.

In short, the local and state economy will get a desperately needed boost. To put it in perspective, this new venture will have the same economic impact as having a Super Bowl in the West Valley every two years.

With over 20 years experience in the gaming and hospitality industries, we take great pride in being good neighbors and working with surrounding communities. Our gaming enterprise is a regular contributor to community and charitable programs, and we have contributed millions of dollars to critical government programs across the state as part of our revenue-sharing program. For example, grants have recently been awarded to the Willcox Fire Department to purchase a new attack truck and Tucson Medical Center for a newborn transport incubator; the impacts of both are invaluable. It is a true honor to help others in this way and we expect to bring this same level of commitment to communities in the West Valley.

Since announcing this project, we have had dozens of productive meetings with government, business, and community leaders. The focus of these meetings has been to not only demonstrate our vision for the new West Valley Resort, but to also share our history and the reasons behind our ability to move forward with this project.

There's no denying that this is a unique situation. But a great deal of time has been spent to ensure we are working within the provisions of the law and making sure that the process is done correctly and completely.

We are looking forward to working with the entire West Valley community and we know that the new state-of-the-art resort will be something that we can all be proud of.

*The writer is chairman of the Tohono O'odham Nation.*