

NORTH FORK RANCHERIA PROJECT PRESS



FRESNO BEE

Opinion

TUESDAY

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'Hope and opportunity'

Your Feb. 12 article, "Stakes high for Madera Co. land," reveals the dividing lines in the North Fork casino project: hope and opportunity versus fear. We should support hope and opportunity. That's what we need and what the project truly represents.

A recent University of California, Riverside study confirmed the positive contributions of Indian casinos: good jobs, business opportunities, stronger rural communities, lower tax burdens and less welfare -- all with minimal negative impacts. That represents hope and opportunity for Madera.

But such facts don't prevent North Fork's opponents from pushing negative, fear-based messages while offering no

practical solutions to community needs.

Challengers of the project are motivated by inaccurate, outdated stereotypes of gaming and competitive interests. The strange result is the sight of the opposition backed by local casinos opposing a development project strongly endorsed by local officials and community members.

The North Fork Tribe has committed to mitigate impacts from the project. So let's not throw out the hope and opportunity that will help our community so much. Let's not yield to fear tactics. The proposed development is the biggest economic opportunity in generations and is already attracting additional local investment.

Herman Perez
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for Building a Better
Madera*

MADERA TRIBUNE

OPINION

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THURSDAY

MARCH 2, 2006

North Fork Casino Opposition: Misguided, Miniscule and Wrong!

Your Feb. 10 story "No Casino on 99" revealed the opponents to the proposed North Fork Rancheria casino for what they are: a small collection of well-intentioned but misguided rivals backed by Chukchansi Gold Casino.

Opponents preach a litany of dire outcomes that will plague the proposed casino, but conveniently ignore abundant evidence to the contrary. The skeptics also fail to provide alternative solutions to the region's social and economic problems.

It's time for North Fork's opponents to stop preaching inaccurate, outdated stereotypes of Indian gaming. It's time to

move from faith, fear and fiction to facts and frankness.

Has crime, traffic, prostitution and addiction destroyed Madera County and Coarsegold in the wake of the Chukchansi casino? NO. Has the proposed North Fork casino already attracted new development and investment to the area. YES, as Pastor Brannon himself points out in the article.

One need look no further than the good Pastor's colleagues in arms - Chukchansi - to see the best and worst Indian gaming has to offer. At it's best, it represents a unique opportunity to improve the lives of tribal citizens while contributing to the well being of surrounding communities. At its worst, it represents well-off gaming tribes manipulating well-intentioned community groups to keep poorer non-gaming tribes and communities away from the ultimate jackpot.

Cathey Thornburg,
North Fork