

## **PAUMA BAND OF LUISEÑO INDIANS RECEIVE APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FROM NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION ON EXPANSION PLANS OF CASINO RESORT**

### *Tribe Responds To Valley Concerns with Major Changes in Plans*

**PAUMA INDIAN RESERVATION**, Pauma Valley, California, May 7, 2008 -- Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians announced today the approval of the combined Environmental Assessment and Tribal Environmental Impact Report (“EA/TEIR”) from the National Indian Gaming Commission for the proposed expansion of the casino resort.

The National Indian Gaming Commission is the federal agency that reviews and approves management agreements, such as the one proposed between the Pauma Band and Foxwoods Development Company. As part of that process, the Commission serves as the lead agency for issuing and approving an Environmental Assessment effecting the Band’s reservation.

The TEIR is a requirement under the Band’s State Compact that assesses any off-reservation impacts resulting from its proposed expanded casino. The Pauma Band combined both documents for purposes of assessing the total environmental impacts.

The Band has simultaneously certified the TEIR component of the Environmental Review and immediately forwarded copies to the County of San Diego. The next step in the process is for the Pauma Band to commence negotiations with the County of San Diego where, in compliance with the Pauma Band’s Compact with the State of California, the Band will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the County to mitigate any off-reservation impacts.

Pauma revised its plans for the new casino resort after receiving input from local neighbors during public hearings and in written comments last Fall as well as working one-on-one with concerned community groups.

“Following the meeting when the Pauma Tribe first publicly presented its draft EA/TEIR, many residents were of the view that nothing could be done and that any approach to the Tribe would be a waste of time”, said Bill Taylor, an author of the residents’ letter. “The Tribe has proven those views to be wrong,” he elaborated, “as it has spent considerable sums of money and delayed development to create an alternate plan that is meaningfully less disruptive of the beauty of Pauma Valley in which the Tribe and the off-reservation residents share.”

Several new aspects to the project have been modified with the help of the community; highlights of the changes in the four major categories are:

**Traffic:** New plan will work with Caltrans and its administrative process to signalize the intersection of Highway 76 and Pauma Reservation Road.

**Site and Sound:** The height of the hotel tower was reduced from 23-stories to 19-stories; major reduction in the size of the casino gaming floor by 10,000 square feet; reduction of the special events center by 15,000 square feet; to eliminate noise concerns, forgoing the

construction of the proposed outdoor amphitheatre; abiding by the San Diego County's Dark Skies Ordinance.

**Safety:** Pauma will make additional financial contributions to the Sheriff Department to offset additional costs. Pauma will develop and fund a Tribal Fire Department to protect the area from wildfires and other fire-related threats. Furthermore, Pauma will expand existing agreements with local fire departments and the California Highway Patrol to further protect our community.

**Water Use:** New casino resort will use less water than the current casino and agricultural uses, and will also result in a net increase in groundwater recharge.

“In so extensively reworking its plans for the expansion of Casino Pauma, the Pauma Tribe clearly worked to respect the views of the over 120 of its neighbors who signed a letter identifying concerns about the off-reservation impacts of the original development plan” said Charles Mathews, another author of the residents’ letter.

“With its good-neighbor approach, the Pauma Tribe has uniquely provided an opportunity for the County of San Diego to negotiate an agreement that protects members of the Tribe, off-reservation residents, and visitors of Pauma Valley” said Roger Warburton, another author of the residents’ letter.

"Tribal sovereignty creates a duty for us to work with others," said Chairman Chris Devers "As a tribal government we have a responsibility to our community and future generations to work with those around us in pursuit of our common interests. Environmental consciousness and economic growth are important issues for all the residents of the valley" he said.

#### **About the Pauma Band of Mission Indians**

Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians is a federally recognized tribal government located in the Pauma Valley of Southern California. The Pauma Band is one of seven Bands of the Luiseño people located in San Diego and Riverside counties. Pauma produces Hass avocados, Valencia oranges and lemons; and is engaged in protection and reforestation of their tribal lands. The Pauma tribe owns and operates Casino Pauma, providing employment to the Tribal Members and the surrounding communities. Its revenues enhance the Tribal Government's ability to meet the essential needs of the membership.

#### **Media Contacts:**

Joely Proudfit, PR Consultant

Pauma Band of Mission Indians /Naqmayam Communications

951-816-3301

650-255-2860

[jproudfit@naqcom.com](mailto:jproudfit@naqcom.com)