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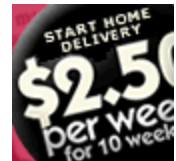
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State vs. tribes -- a rundown of the options

By Steve Wi... and -- Bee Staff Writer

Published 2... a.m. PST Monday, November 17, 2003

Based on inter... news with tribal leaders and legal and gambling industry analysts, here... the cards the new governor will be holding when he sits down with California... casino tribes and tries to win substantial revenue for the state:

-- The idea th... up to \$1 billion might be found is based on the premise that tribes would... to give up as much as 25 percent of their take from what is estimated to... a \$4 billion-plus annual industry.

Only one other state, Connecticut, collects a rate that high. In return, the two Indian casinos operating there are guaranteed a monopoly. No other state collects anywhere near 25 percent.

Moreover, the U.S. Department of the Interior, which would have to approve new compacts, has signaled it would look with disfavor on states that appeared to be strong-arming tribes into providing revenues.

2. A lot of nonplayers -- The 53 tribes with operating casinos still have 17 years left on their compacts with the state, and they have no legal obligation to renegotiate unless they want something, such as an increase in the 2,000-slots-per-tribe limit.

3. Beginners with shallow pockets -- The tribes



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most eager to bargain are those without compacts. But most of those are in small markets that won't generate much money even if they agree to share profits.

4. Road games -- Gov.-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger has indicated that, unlike Gray Davis, he doesn't object to tribes building casinos away from their rancherias. That could generate big money from tribes looking to move closer to urban centers -- if they can win federal approval and beat back local opposition.

5. Enlarging the field -- The governor-elect also has said he has no qualms about exploring the idea of slot machines at California racetracks and card clubs. The idea, which sends shudders through casino tribes, would take a constitutional amendment. But it may prove to be Schwarzenegger's ace in the hole in getting tribes to the table.

About the Writer

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