

Rincon To Spend More Gaming Revenues Locally

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By Alison St John

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A Native American band in North County has reached an agreement to share some of its gaming profits with the County.



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Photo by Alison St John

Above: Bo Mazzetti, chair of the Rincon Band; Danny Tucker, chair of the Sycuan Band and Alan Lawson, chair of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, appearing before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on Oct. 11, 2011.

For eight years, [The Rincon Band](#) has argued that money the state requires from tribes wanting to expand their casinos is an illegal tax.

In June, it won the case: The Band will share some of its proceeds with the county instead of the state.

Supervisor Bill Horn says this is a big change in the way gaming profits are distributed.

“The gaming revenue was being put into the general fund of the State of California,” he said, “and not coming back to mitigate anything.”

Horn said millions will now be available to help mitigate increased

traffic, crime, and gambling problems. Some money may also go to increased fire protection in the vicinity of the casino.

Bo Mazzetti, Chair of the Rincon Band, said exactly how many millions is not clear yet.

“It doesn’t have a dollar figure in it, “he said, “because we don’t know until we finish negotiating with the state what that pot of money is going to be. “

Negotiations between the state and the band will determine how much money the band must share with the county, but the band and the county will decide together how the money will be spent.

[Harrah's Rincon Casino](#) is east of Valley Center. It currently has 1600 slot machines but wants to expand that eventually by 900.

The shift of gaming revenues from the state to the county is in line with Governor Jerry Brown's realignment strategy: shifting more responsibility for solving problems to the counties, and providing some revenue to do that.

San Diego is home to more Native American bands than any other county in the state. The region could ultimately benefit from many millions of dollars in gaming revenues, if other tribes negotiate future agreements the same way.