

***Norwich Bulletin (Conn.)***  
**Mohegan influence spreads**

By BRIAN WALLHEIMER

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MOHEGAN -- Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs is among five racetracks awarded Pennsylvania's first slot-machine licenses.

Wednesday's award expands the Mohegan tribe's lucrative slot business beyond Connecticut.

The seven-member Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board unanimously awarded the licenses Wednesday to five racetracks. In addition to Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs just outside Wilkes-Barre, licenses went to Philadelphia Park in Bensalem; Harrah's Chester Casino & Racetrack, Penn National Race Course near Harrisburg and The Meadows in suburban Pittsburgh.

The Pocono Downs track was the first of the state's six horse-racing tracks to win approval and, coincidentally, is expected in November to be the first one to open its slot-machine parlor.

Robert Soper, chief executive officer of Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs, said the facility is expected to open 1,083 slot machines and several bar facilities before the end of the year. Further plans include almost 1,000 more slots, restaurants, lounges, a nightclub and retail shops.

Mitchell Etes, chief executive officer of the Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority, which operates Mohegan gaming facilities, said the Pocono slot license helps expand the tribe's reach and could help in other ventures around the country.

"Getting licensed out of state is good if we were going to do any other projects anywhere else," Etes said.

He said having another gaming facility would allow workers at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut to apply for higher positions in Pennsylvania.

"The company continues to grow and everyone wants to be part of a growing company," Etes said. "People like to think they can expand with their company."

This is the Mohegan Tribe's second slot venture and the first outside Connecticut. The tribe owns and operates Mohegan Sun, which is the second-largest casino in the world and boasts 6,200 slot machines.

The tribe also is working with the Menominee Tribe in Wisconsin and the Cowlitz Tribe in Washington state on casinos, giving the Mohegans a hand in lucrative gaming business across the country.

{dcdc} The Associated Press contributed to this story.

{dcdc} BY THE NUMBERS

\$82 million

Slot revenue for August 2006

\$610.7 million

Total slot revenue for January to August 2006