Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today denied an application by the Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska for the Federal Government to take in trust three acres of land in Council Bluffs, Iowa, as the site for an Indian gaming casino.

The tribe in partnership with Harvey's Wagon Wheel, Inc. has proposed a $67 million hotel-convention-gaming complex to be known as "Ohiya" on a 50-acre site in Council Bluffs. The tribe sought trust status for three acres of the property so that it might qualify for a Class III (casino-type) enterprise as defined in the Indian Gaming Regulatory of 1988.

"I have decided to deny the request of the Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska to take into trust three acres of land they own in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on which they had planned to build the casino component of the Ohiya project," Lujan said.

The Secretary said he found no fault with the applicants.

"Because the project crosses the Nebraska-Iowa State boundary, the proposed venture could directly compete with the interests of a tribe in Iowa," Lujan said. "Given the location of the project, I am unable to ignore the interests of a tribe in Iowa in favor of those of a tribe in Nebraska."