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Battle Creek casino readies for Aug. debut

Nathan Hurst / The Detroit News

While Detroit's three casinos struggle through the state's tough recession after making heavy investments in flashy new gaming properties, an Indian tribe based about 100 miles west of the city hopes it'll play a winning hand when it opens a new gambling hall in August.

The Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi also will add 1,500 new jobs with the opening of their FireKeepers Casino at a site off Exit 104 on I-94 in Battle Creek.

Laura Spurr, the Nottawaseppi's tribal chairwoman, said the casino will help support social programs for the 1,000-member tribe, whose members are spread throughout Michigan and across the country.

"We've always been behind other tribes in the state," Spurr said. "This opening not only helps us, but especially the economy of the state."

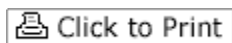
The tribe has partnered with the state-administered Michigan Works! program to staff the casino with employees in a variety of different positions. The biggest needs are for dealers and food and beverage positions.

Peggy Houston, head of FireKeepers' human resources division, said the casino particularly welcomes applications from workers with proven track records in casino and customer service.

Applications will be accepted online beginning Jan. 22, at firekeeperscasino.com.

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