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N.Y. casino more generous to host community

By **BRIAN LYMAN**
Norwich Bulletin

Like Foxwoods Resort Casino and Mohegan Sun, Seneca Niagara sends a portion of its slot win to the state. Unlike the Connecticut compact, a set proportion of that money returns to its host city.

The compact the tribe negotiated with New York State in August 2002 requires the state to send 25 percent of the casino's contribution back to the City of Niagara Falls, where the casino is located.

That arrangement, said Mickey Brown, president and CEO of the Seneca Niagara Casino, comes out of his experience at Foxwoods working with the Connecticut compact.

Casinos compared

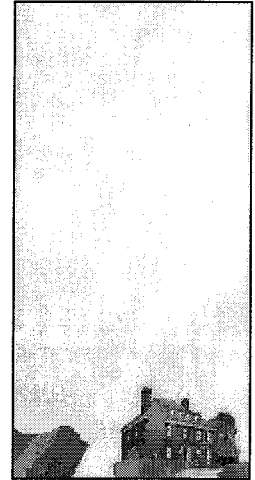
A look at Seneca Niagara after its first year, compared to Foxwoods.

	Seneca Niagara (2004)	Foxwoods (1993)
Employees	2,100	4,200
Slot machines*	2,900	942
Table games	135	125
Gaming space (square feet)	105,000	84,000

***=Foxwoods did not have slots its first year. An agreement reached with then-governor Lowell Weicker in January 1993 led to a rapid installation of slots at the casino.**

"There's going to be a substantial benefit to the Niagara Falls community," he said. "That's one thing I tried to correct in this compact. It was successful, and they agreed to do it."

Niagara Falls will see a minimum \$9.5 million from Seneca Niagara's slot win in 2003. Under the 14-year compact, Seneca Niagara will send 18 percent of its slot win to New York State for



its first four years of operations, 22 percent the next three years and 25 percent after that, an arrangement Brown said will give the casino time to develop its market base.

Niagara Falls Mayor Vice Anello said the city plans to use the money to fund a number of business and infrastructure projects. "I know we have projects that could use all of that and then some," he said.

Foxwoods sent a total of \$196.3 million to the state in the 2002-03 fiscal year; Mohegan Sun sent \$190.9 million.

With an arrangement like Niagara Falls', a town neighboring Foxwoods or Mohegan Sun would have received \$47 million to \$49 million for the year. The Town of North Stonington got about \$500,000 in casino compact funds this year.

Towns surrounding the two casinos in eastern Connecticut have long complained about the Connecticut compact, which requires the casinos to send 25 percent of their monthly slot win to the state, but only a small portion of that goes to the communities nearest the facilities, which deal with the most impact from traffic and crime.

About \$135 million of the Connecticut casinos' \$400 million contribution goes to all 169 Connecticut municipalities, based on a formula that sees larger communities such as Hartford and Bridgeport take the bigger share.


Preston First Selectman Robert Congdon, who also represents the town as a state representative, said a similar arrangement in the Connecticut compact would improve relationships between the towns and the casinos greatly.

"We've been fighting for years to increase that," Congdon said. "It shouldn't just go to Preston, Ledyard and North Stonington. Griswold is affected by casinos, and so is East Lyme. If that were the case here in Connecticut, I think it would be a much better relationship."

North Stonington First Selectman Nicholas H. Mullane II said additional money would not get to the heart of a casino's effect on a municipality.

"That one community isn't the only one that's going to be affected," he said. "Anyone in the direct line of this thing, within 70 to 75 miles, it causes problems."

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