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Oklahoma Tribe Bets on Casino

31 January 2006

MIAMI, Oklahoma – As reported by the Joplin Globe: "What was a barren piece of farmland two weeks ago is now a huge concrete pad with the beginning of a steel structure. By mid-May, it will be home to the Four Winds Casino, a \$20 million project by the Ottawa Tribe.

"The casino, the first to be Las Vegas-style, will employ 150 people initially. It also will generate revenue the tribe says will go to social services provided to Ottawa members.

"But, it will do something else. It will contribute to the transformation of Miami into a travel destination. It's a change that has been going on for several years.

What's different now is that it appears to be gaining momentum. Though some are saying Miami is unlikely to become a new Branson, others are saying: Don't bet on it.

"Brian Barger, director of economic development for Miami, said the casinos that exist in the county probably employ well over 1,000 people. The tribes, he said, have invested close to \$200 million.

"...Gary Green is the Las Vegas-based gambling consultant who has been hired to help bring the Four Winds Casino to life on Highway 10, 4.5 miles east of Miami. The casino initially will have 400 machines and 16 gambling tables.

"...The Four Winds will not have a hotel, but it will have a park for recreational vehicles to serve people passing through. It does have a spot on its 80-acre tract for a hotel in the future..."

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