

Letter: Our neighborhoods are under attack

To the community,

Thank you to the “bought and paid for” *Mountain Democrat* – they receive significant income from the advertising Red Hawk Casino purchases from the paper, God knows you don’t want to bite the hand that feeds you – for bringing us the front page propaganda on the wonderful, exciting and all around beneficial gun range and motocross track. What better way to show that you are a “good neighbor” than for our Indian neighbors to select two significantly intrusive activities that negatively impact the value and enjoyment of the surrounding residential property by the surrounding owners.

The “tribe” decided to place a 29-lane outdoor gun range on property located next to residences and a short distance from two schools and a church because the “community” wanted it soooooo much. I have lived here almost three decades and have never heard one person indicate that we need a 29 lane or any other public or semi-public gun range in Shingle Springs. After protests from local neighbors and community organizations, the “tribe” indicated that they would scale down the 29-lane gun range to a five-lane gun range. Thank God we will only have five guns going off at once next to residences.

So, what better way to show the community that our Indian neighbors understand that we all moved here to have a rural lifestyle than to reduce the gun range to five lanes and add a motocross track. That certainly will not disturb the neighbors. The opening day of the motocross track looked like a race day at Prairie City Off Road Park, trucks and motorcycles everywhere; people parked along Shingle Springs Drive, (no shoulders), trucks parked in private driveways,

significant dust drifting across Highway 50 creating a hazard for everyone traveling east or west, but, not to worry. What the "tribe" wants to do is much more important than neighborhood disruption or public safety; after all, the community has been begging for a gun range and a motocross track. I am sure most of you, the past 20 or 30 years, have sat in the kitchens of your rural homes, each and every Sunday and asked each other, "why don't we have a gun range and motocross track right next to residential property in Shingle Springs?" Seems natural, doesn't it?

But the above may only be a diversion. While the community was fighting the gun range and motocross track, the "tribe" has been quietly developing and going forward with plans for a 12-pump fueling station, car wash, two fast food restaurants, hotel and other major commercial development at Shingle Springs Drive on the south-west parcel bordering Highway 50. Why is this a problem? 1) It is bordered by residential properties, 2) the "tribe" will pay no taxes to the county and have taken property off the tax rolls, 3) The "tribe" has applied for a liquor license, (nothing better than the mix of guns and alcohol right across the street from each other), 4) Gas tanks near two schools and a church, 5) Underground gas tanks in an area dominated by parcels with wells, 6) The impact on local tax paying businesses and the resultant reduction of money to the county and reduction of employment opportunities at those local businesses, 7) The significant disruption of the rural lifestyle we all sought in moving to El Dorado County and Shingle Springs, 8) The "tribe" is exempt from state court lawsuits brought by citizens for negligent actions that cause injury to patrons. (Yes, you can sue them in federal court, good luck finding an attorney to bring the action) and oh, yes, I almost forgot, 9) Right in the midst of one of the worst droughts we have seen in our lifetimes, and especially for all of you who are conserving water and letting the lawns you paid your hard earned money for die, EID is about to approve a 12-inch diameter water line along Shingle

Springs Drive for the benefit of the Indians' planned commercial development. They apparently have enough water for the above identified commercial purposes, but not for you.

One more thought, have you wondered why the San Stino project people, now the "Mill Creek" project people, have been so quiet? Here is an answer for you. The San Stino/Mill Creek 1,150 housing project also needs a water line along Shingle Springs Drive. San Stino/Mill Creek will be able to piggy-back on to the Indians' commercial use infrastructure and "presto-chango" – water for 1,150 homes.

The activities I am identifying are and will take place on land that was not part of the original 160-acre Rancheria. It is taking place on property that was "off-Rancheria" land, previously privately owned by non-Indians and subsequently acquired by the "tribe" by representing to the United States Secretary of the Interior, that none of the off-Rancheria property would be used for commercial purposes. Why is this significant to you? The "tribe" can buy off – Rancheria property anywhere they so desire and then do whatever they desire regardless of the county zoning. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is nothing but a rubber stamp robot, so do not count on the BIA to use common sense or reason or regulate the type of activities tribes decide to do on land they acquire in your neighborhood.

Some have postulated that the "tribe" is engaged in a "land grab", purposefully taking actions to devalue the surrounding properties so they can pick up parcels cheap for further extended commercial development. Your residential neighborhood can have the same thing happen to it. This is a communitywide concern. The fact that this may not be happening in your back yard right at this time is not a reason to ignore what is going on. The time to act is now. Contact the Board of Supervisors, state representatives, the governor and your federal representatives. Let them know what is happening to our rural neighborhoods and that you do not support this out

of control development.

Maureen Sample, Shingle Springs