

Discussion coming on gambling deal

The News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE — Re-upping a lucrative gambling deal between the state and the Seminole Tribe will be a crapshoot when lawmakers return to Tallahassee next year.

A portion of the agreement, called a “compact,” signed in 2009 giving the tribe exclusive rights to conduct card games at seven of its facilities, dries up in July unless lawmakers and Gov. Rick Scott renew the deal.

Insiders working on a new plan say it’s a heavy lift.

“I do not believe it’s as easy as just deciding whether or not the tribe maintains the banked card games. When the issue goes into play, then all of the various interests are going to promote their goals,” said Senate Majority Leader Bill Galvano, a Bradenton Republican who played a major role in crafting the compact five years ago and is expected to take a lead again this year. “You will end up having a robust discussion if you address this issue. Given that the issue needs to be addressed by the end of session or by July, that means that discussion’s coming.”

Scott was ready to ink a new compact this spring but ran out of time before

the end of the legislative session in early May.

And while the governor may be prepared to extend the Seminoles’ exclusive rights to popular card games like blackjack and even allow them to host craps and roulette, getting the Legislature’s required blessing is problematic.

A sweeping gambling proposal crumbled last year when proponents of allowing at least one mega-casino in South Florida put the bill on ice because they lacked the votes for Senate passage.

The prospect is even grimmer this year. Senate President Andy Gardiner, an anti-gambling legislator who frequently says he would scrap the state lottery if he could, said recently that he doesn’t care if the table games disappear and the state loses the Seminoles’ cash.

Florida stands to lose about \$116 million a year if the portion of the compact giving the Seminoles exclusive rights to table games such as blackjack expires, according to the latest estimate from state economists.

Gardiner, who took over the chamber last week, is an Orlando Republican whose district is in the shadow of casino-hating Disney World and who has strong ties to the Florida Chamber of Commerce,

another strident opponent of casino gambling.

“I’m one that says, you know, it may be \$50 million or \$60 million — that’s big money, don’t get me wrong — but as our economy has come back, I don’t feel the pressure to necessarily renew that compact,” Gardiner told The News Service of Florida earlier this month.

“Obviously, the governor will lead the negotiations, but I think everybody needs to take a step back and not assume that this has to be done. I think we have to take a comprehensive look.”

Any “comprehensive look” runs the risk of being weighed down by a kitchen-sink of elements long sought after by the state’s existing pari-mutuels which, depending on where they are located, have agendas not always aligned with each other, and out-of-state casino operators anxious to establish a footprint in South Florida. And it’s an even thornier endeavor given that, as one former state gambling regulator put it, industry operators are often more focused on keeping their competitors from getting additional perks than on nailing down more benefits for themselves.

Pari-mutuels in Broward and Miami-Dade counties,

already allowed to operate slot machines, want a lower tax rate and table games like blackjack so they can better compete with the nearby Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino. They also want “portability” for pari-mutuel licenses so they can move or expand their facilities.

“It’s so competitive down here with the tribe, it’s really very simple. When we ran the campaign for slots, it was called ‘Floridians for a Level Playing Field.’ We created a level playing field for about a week. We need to be able to compete with the Seminole tribe, at least in South Florida where voters have approved it,” said Dan Adkins, vice president of Hartman & Tyner, which owns Mardi Gras Casino Florida in Hallandale Beach.

Adkins said South Florida “racinos,” horse and dog tracks and jai alai frontons that also have slot machines authorized by voters statewide in 2004, want comparable table games, hours of operation and tax rates that the Seminoles now enjoy.

Dog and horse tracks and jai alai frontons in other areas of the state want slot machines and also the option of ending live races or jai alai games altogether.

Judge won’t reopen evidence in Medicaid case for children

The News Service of Florida

A federal judge Tuesday rejected the state’s arguments that he should consider new evidence in a long-running lawsuit about whether Florida has properly provided care to children in the Medicaid program.

The state Agency for Health Care Administration, the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Health filed court documents last month suggesting that the case should be reopened and that at least part of the lawsuit is moot and should be dismissed. Those arguments stemmed from Florida’s recently completed shift

to a statewide managed-care system in Medicaid and from changes related to the federal Affordable Care Act.

But Judge Adalberto Jordan, who has been expected to rule late this year in the nearly decade-old case, flatly rejected the state’s arguments in a four-page order Tuesday.

As an example, he said reopening the record for more evidence and trial sessions would cause “substantial prejudice” in the case.

The lawsuit, filed in 2005 and spearheaded by the Florida Pediatric Society, challenges the adequacy of care provided to low-income children in the Medicaid program.

TRAVEL: Weather should be sunny after today

Continued from 1B

Thornton said. “It’s been great — a lot of courteous drivers on the road.”

The National Weather Service is forecasting rain, sometimes heavy, through this morning and then tapering off. The rest of the holiday through Sunday is expected to be

sunny.

FHP has these tips: Get plenty of rest before setting out, observe and obey speed limits, drive sober and use seat belts.

Distractions should be avoided: No texting, talking on the phone, eating, adjusting the stereo.

Call “FHP to report intoxicated or

aggressive drivers, or if your car breaks down.

“Quite frankly, just be patient,” Hsiao-Pace said. “It’s not a secret that Thanksgiving weekend traffic is very heavy. None of us are going to get to where we are going any quicker, so have patience, be courteous and take your time.”

FIVE BAR: Homeless center also will host meal

Continued from 1B

take for granted if we live in homes,” he said.

Since the center opened in May, DeCarmino said Grace Marketplace serves about 300 unique people a month, and an average of 200 people a day who return frequently.

City buses aren’t running on Thanksgiving, so it’s unlikely that many of the homeless people who

use Grace Marketplace’s services will be able to make it to Five Bar.

But, DeCarmino said, the homeless center will do a traditional Thanksgiving meal of its own.

The center will soon start an online fundraising campaign through Indiegogo, and Sanctuary Yoga and Meditation will offer by-donation yoga classes Thursday to benefit Grace Marketplace, as well.

But the center’s relationship with Five Bar has been especially meaningful, DeCarmino said.

“What they’ve done for us is really important, in terms of us being able to provide services and keep our doors open,” DeCarmino said. “And it’s a great example of different parts of the community coming together to help people.”

For more information, call Five Bar at 224-5253.

REDISTRICTING: Bainter fought against releasing records

Continued from 1B

political operatives worked so hard to hide from the public, along with their testimony given in closed proceedings, revealing great detail how they manipulated the public process to achieve their partisan objectives,” said David King, a lawyer for voting-rights organizations challenging the state’s congressional districts.

In the end, according to a brief filed with the Supreme Court by those fighting the districts, maps submitted under the names of at least seven individuals were cited as support or inspiration for the congressional and state Senate plans approved by the Legislature.

Because the groups’ brief relied on the secret documents, it was released Tuesday with the testimony of Gainesville’s Pat Bainter, a Republican political consultant, and documents from Data Targeting Inc., his Gainesville-based consulting firm.

That brief is part of an ongoing challenge to the congressional maps and a related case against the state Senate map, filed by the voting-rights groups. The League of Women Voters of Florida and its allies have appealed to the Supreme Court a ruling by Leon County Circuit Judge Terry Lewis, who struck down the congressional map but approved a second draft by the Legislature. The coalition opposed to the map wants a more extensive makeover than the one approved by Lewis.

The case challenging the Senate plan has not gone to trial.

Bainter fought efforts to release the records, but the Supreme Court recently ruled that the records and Bainter’s closed testimony in the redistricting trial this past summer should be unsealed. After U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence

Thomas rejected a last-ditch effort by Bainter to keep the documents secret and the records began leaking to the news media over the weekend, the Florida justices ordered them released Tuesday.

What appears clear from the testimony and documents is that Bainter and his allies inside and outside the firm drew maps that were then submitted under the names of members of the public beyond just Posada. The voting-rights groups have argued that the effort was intentionally aimed at undermining a constitutional ban on gerrymandering approved by voters in 2010.

“Thus, the operatives made it appear as though members of the public submitted the consultant drawn maps and provided input in the process, and the Legislature gave the outward appearance of public participation when it was in fact relying on partisan districts drawn by well-connected Republican operatives,” the brief says.

The map attributed to Posada — who said he didn’t draw it and didn’t authorize its submission — was the only one that the voting-rights groups say was used to help guide the drawing of the congressional map. But other maps submitted under the names of Christie Jones, Micah Kethel, Andrew Ladd, Delena May, Alex Patton and Remzy Samarra were used to guide the process of drawing the Senate maps, they say.

In one exchange with King, the lawyer, Bainter gave a more innocent explanation of how the maps ended up being submitted by everyday people.

“Well, we certainly had, again, a number of citizens out there that — that wanted to be involved,” Bainter said in the previously sealed testimony. “And, yeah, so we absolutely would — would give them the opportunity, if we had maps

sitting around that — that could be submitted, it seemed like a good idea to do that.”

Later, alluding to three other Republican operatives, King asked Bainter: “Did Mr. Reichelderfer and Mr. Heffley and Mr. Terraferma understand that you were going to find citizens to sign — to send maps in to the Legislature?”

“Again, I — the mischaracterization needs to be cleared up,” Bainter replied. “I think they certainly knew that — that we had a broad network of grass-roots folks that wanted to participate in the process, and, you know, to that end seemed like, again, a really good idea to be able to allow those citizens the opportunity to participate.”

Alachua County Republican leader Stafford Jones emerges in the testimony and documents as a key figure in the process. He appears to be the one who arranged for citizens to submit maps from the consultants.

“Stafford getting me 10 more people at least,” Bainter wrote in an email to two employees on Oct. 11, 2011. “We could start by submitting the map (sic) had sent us.”

Bainter said during his testimony that he was referring to Jones and, he believes, political consultant Marc Reichelderfer.

King and Bainter clashed over how to define Jones’ role in the process.

“And (Jones) was the fellow that was rounding up the people to file your maps, isn’t that right?” King asked.

“I think I would resent the term ‘rounding up,’” Bainter responded. “But he certainly was talking to other citizens, yes.”

“And he was getting other citizens to be willing to sign — to put their name on your maps, correct?” King asked.

“I don’t know what Stafford was — I don’t — again, you’re — I don’t know that, no,” Bainter replied.

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The Gainesville Sun

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Obituary Information

All obituaries are paid notices and are placed by the funeral home or crematorium handling the arrangements as a service to the family.

For more information: 337-0304 or 374-5017 obits@gvillesun.com fax: (352) 338-3131

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA

Notice is hereby given that the City Commission of the City of Alachua will hold a public hearing on a proposed ordinance. The hearing will be held on Monday, December 8, 2014 at 6:30 p.m., in the James A. Lewis Commission Chambers in City Hall, located at 15100 NW 142nd Terrace, Alachua, Florida.

The ordinance title is as follows:

ORDINANCE 15-02

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR A SIX (6) MONTH TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON ALL APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL FOR “DISPENSING ORGANIZATIONS” AS DEFINED BY CHAPTER 2014-157, LAWS OF FLORIDA, ALSO KNOWN AS THE “COMPASSIONATE MEDICAL CANNABIS ACT OF 2014”; PROVIDING FOR EXEMPTIONS; PROVIDING FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

At the public hearing, all interested parties may appear and be heard with respect to the proposed ordinance. Copies of the proposed ordinance and related materials are available for public inspection at the Planning and Community Development Department, 15100 NW 142nd Terrace, on any regular business day between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Written comments on the proposed ordinance may be sent to the following address: City of Alachua, Planning and Community Development, P.O. Box 9, Alachua, FL 32616. Notice is given pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, that, in order to appeal any decision made at the public hearing, you will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, you may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any persons with a disability requiring reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should call the City Clerk at (386) 418-6100 x 101 at least 48 hours prior to the public hearing.