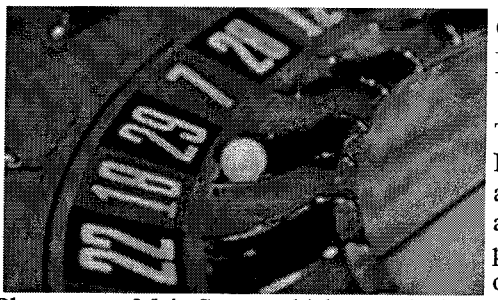
America's #1 Nightly Newscast



Could there be a casino in Rochester's future?

The state constitution bans casinos on non Native American land but there's talk about amending the constitution to allow them anywhere in the state. Among the places people are talking about for a casino is the old Sibley's department store, or Midtown Plaza across Main Street, which even, had a hotel once atop Midtown Tower.

Midtown's new principal owner Larry Cohen, a Rochester native, is open to talk about a casino in Midtown.

Sandra Parker from the Rochester Business Alliance says a downtown casino could help revitalize the local economy. "Well, first and foremost, jobs. Secondly, bringing more people downtown. Bringing more dollars into the area."

But Mayor Johnson is against the idea. "I just don't think it's wise to build a casino in the heart of downtown where it will be tempting for too many people who can't afford to gamble and too convenient for them to get there."

"My feeling is that those people are going to the casinos anyway," said Parker.

And Parker says people's attitudes are changing about casinos. "A casino can be a very exciting place to spend an evening. It can be a fun place to spend time with friends."

Senator James Alesi of Perinton thinks a constitutional amendment is the way to go. And whether to have one would remain a local decision. "And I'm not saying I'm a big proponent of casino gambling. But I am saying it is here. And it's going to continue. And my feeling is more people than just the Native Americans should have a shot at operating casinos in New York State."

Constitutional amendments must be approved by two separately elected state legislatures before it could go to the voters. But this could be done quickly as this is the last half of the current legislature and a new legislature takes office in January.

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