

NBC TV Charlotte

Waiting on word of casino, Catawba Indian Nation plays bingo

by TONY BURBECK / NBC Charlotte

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ROCK HILL, S.C. -- The Catawba Indian Nation is getting back into bingo gaming in for the first time since 2006.

Catawba Bingo on Cherry Road in Rock Hill opens to the public this Saturday. .

This new bingo center is part of the Catawba Indian Nation's financial plan to help the tribe.

It's so new you can smell the carpet and paint. Crews are working on the finishing touches.

The bingo gaming facility seats 1,300 people. Money raised will go to bingo winners and the tribe.

Meanwhile, the tribe is still waiting to see if it will be awarded a casino in Kings Mountain.

They applied for the casino last year and the application is still under review by the federal government.

Thursday night, casino opponents are bringing in Les Bernal, the National Director of Stop Predatory Gambling, to raise awareness about the proposed casino at Dixon School Road in Kings Mountain.

Opponents allege a Catawba Indian casino will drain people's money, weaken nearby businesses, hurt property values and increase crime.

Supporters love the idea of an estimated 4,000 new jobs.

"If there was somebody else, other than me, as a representative of a tribe, walking in and saying we're going to bring 4,000 new jobs in, you think they would fly somebody in to say no, we're not going to want 4,000 jobs. There's no way. Look at what it is, it is economic development," said Catawba Indian Nation Chief Bill Harris.

The Catawba India Nation is trying to get a casino built is happening the same time casinos in the Northeast are closing.

Chief Harris says part of the problem folks there have is overbuilding, and if a casino is approved here, it will start small and grow as need determines.