

Seneca County wants bingo hall closed

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Seneca County will ask state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer to investigate whether the gaming hall operated by the Cayuga Indian Nation in Seneca Falls is still a legal business in light of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling on tribal sovereignty.

The Seneca County Board of Supervisors and Seneca County District Attorney Richard Swinehart plan to send a letter to the attorney general. They want Spitzer to prosecute any violations he finds and possibly shut down the Cayugas' operation.

The Cayugas run a similar gaming business in Union Springs, but Cayuga County officials have not publicly discussed the legality of the facility since the ruling in the city of Sherrill vs. Oneida Indian Nation case.

The high court decided last month that tribes cannot simply purchase land on the open market and claim it as sovereign, a ruling that reversed findings of lower courts. The Cayugas opened both gaming facilities after clearing lower-court legal hurdles last year.

Steven Getman, Seneca County's attorney, said Spitzer's statewide jurisdiction and past experience dealing with gambling violations made him the right choice for such a review.

Spitzer's office said it had not received the Seneca County request as of Wednesday afternoon, but the attorney general has not yet taken a position on how the Sherrill case should affect Indian gaming facilities already open.

Spitzer spokesman Paul Larabee said if Seneca County does follow through with its request, the attorney general will look into the issue.

"All matters that are brought to our attention have received a thorough review," he said.

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