



## Ak-Chin breaks ground on entertainment complex

By Tim Howsare

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A year from now, the largest entertainment center in Arizona is expected to open adjacent to Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino Resort on Ak-Chin Indian Community land.

A ground breaking ceremony attended by about 100 people was held this morning for a 162,000-square-foot family entertainment complex that will feature a 12-screen movie theater, 24-lane bowling alley, arcade, laser tag, restaurants and an outdoor amphitheater.

The ceremony was led by Ak-Chin Tribal Chairman Louis J. Manuel, Jr. and members of the tribal council. City officials invited by the tribe were Mayor Anthony Smith, Councilmember Marvin Brown, who serves as the council's liaison to the Native American communities, City Manager Brenda Fischer and Intergovernmental Manager Paul Jepson.

Though the city was not involved with the planning of the complex, Smith said after the groundbreaking the city and tribe have a legacy of working together.

"We are very excited about the groundbreaking and will be excited when it opens," he said.

The complex will be managed by UltraStar Cinemas. It is being designed by Nelsen Partners and constructed by A.R. Mays Construction.

"This is a great venture for the area," Manuel said. "This is going to be a worthwhile project for us."

Tribal Councilwoman Delia Carlyle acknowledged past council members who worked on the project and compared the project with the tribe's agricultural tradition.

"Our foundation has always been farming," she said. "We are growing on our foundation."

The complex will be owned by the Ak-Chin Indian Community and managed by UltraStar Cinemas. It is being designed by Nelsen Partners and constructed by A.R. Mays Construction.

Alan Grossberg, president of UltraStar Cinemas, said he first saw the Ak-Chin site a year ago after his company opened a theater in Scottsdale.

He described his first impression with two words: "It's huge."

Grossberg said the objectives of UltraStar are to "entertain, educate and employ" and that the complex will provide 200 new jobs for the community.

Before tribal dignitaries turned ground, community member Joseph Enos blessed the site with holy water — one blessing



*An architectural rendering of the Ak-Chin Family Entertainment Complex. Courtesy of Nelsen Partners Architects.*

project but all of creation.”

As Enos sang, a hawk or eagle was seen circling overhead.

In addition to the complex, the Ak-Chin Indian Community also owns Harrah’s Ak-Chin Casino Resort, Santa Cruz Commerce Center, Ak-Chin Farms, the Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club and operates the Ak-Chin Him Dak Eco-Museum, the first of its kind in America.

For more information, visit [www.ak-chin.nsn.us](http://www.ak-chin.nsn.us).

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