

General Assembly on Ice in Hot July



Legislators' travel plans, vacations, conferences, graduations, and other previously scheduled events are keeping the legislative work – including the budget – at a standstill this month.

According to NCTIA lobbyists, the entire month may produce little work. "It was universally expected that the legislative session would be wrapped up by June 30," said NCTIA lobbyist Skye David. "With both the House and Senate having their budgets done by Memorial Day, something we've never seen, making July plans seemed reasonable and that's what many legislators did."

Then came the budget impasse in June over tax breaks, vouchers, private-public partnerships, state employee, and teacher raises.

"Before the leadership realized it the fiscal year was gone and plans had already been made for July," David said. "We expect that August will be a more productive month for the General Assembly, including the passage of a state budget."

Are Non-Tribal Casinos Coming to NC?

The article below was excerpted from a story published in WRAL by reporter Travis Fain on Monday, July 17. [Click to read the entire article.](#)

A holding company connected to a casino developer is seeking to rezone nearly 200 acres in Rockingham County, home to one of the state's most powerful legislators, as lawmakers quietly weigh whether to authorize multiple new casinos across the state.

NC Development Holdings, whose registered address is the same as Baltimore-based gaming developer The Cordish Cos., asked last month to change the permitted use of 192 acres on U.S. 220 from residential/agricultural to a designation that would allow for a broad array of commercial uses.

Representatives for NC Development haven't said what they're planning for the land, and they don't have to as part of the rezoning process. Paperwork filed with the state lists the head of Cordish's casino division as the contact for NC Development Holdings, a limited liability company that registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State's office last month.

Senate Republican Leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, said last week there's better than a 50-50 chance new gambling legislation passes the legislature. He has expressed concerns that North Carolinians are crossing the Rockingham County border with Virginia to visit a new casino in nearby Danville and said North Carolina should explore its own options.

Cordish says it has 10 main lines of business, including a casino division led by Cordish senior partner Joseph Weinberg.

There are three casinos in North Carolina now – two on Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians land in western North Carolina and another on Catawba tribal land off Interstate 85 near the South Carolina border. A recent analysis predicted \$1.6 billion in new revenue if the legislature authorized three more casinos, and it pegged Rockingham County as a potential location.

Berger and Speaker of the House Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, have repeatedly acknowledged that casino options are part of high-level legislative talks. The issue ultimately could be decided as part of the state budget. Casino discussions could be one of the things slowing budget negotiations.

Asked to share casino language that might be coming together, Moore said he'd "leave that confidential for the moment" and that language has not been agreed to.

[Click to read the entire article.](#)