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Tribal gaming could chip in to Texas revenue pot

Houston Business Journal - by [Carlos Bullock](#) Special to Houston Business Journal

At the direction of Gov. Rick Perry and Texas' top legislative leaders, state agencies and universities are identifying ways to cut spending by 5 percent to help offset what is expected to be a budget shortfall of at least \$10 billion next year.

This belt tightening is clearly warranted, but so is identifying and tapping into new sources of revenue without raising taxes. After all, forecasts from the state Comptroller's Office indicate the national recession is taking its toll on Texas. A weakened state economy means less state revenue to cover what by all accounts will be mammoth budget gaps not only next year but in subsequent years as well.

At the same time, Texans are subsidizing — yes, subsidizing — state budgets, job creation and economic growth in other states. Our fellow citizens do this every time they cross the border bound for casinos in neighboring states. All told, some \$3 billion leaves Texas every year for gaming-related travel and tourism in New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Let there be no mistake: These states market their entertainment facilities specifically in Texas. Consider the newly expanded casino resort in Durant, Okla. This \$300 million expansion, which includes a conference center, hotel and spa, is targeting its advertising in Texas.

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