



# St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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## PRESS RELEASE

For release:  
Tsiiohohrkó:wa / January 17, 2012

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### **Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police to Begin Casino Duties**

#### *State Police Will Still Conduct Background Checks*

**Akwesasne Territory --** The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council has successfully concluded negotiations with New York State to reduce the New York State Police detail assigned to the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino. The agreement, effective January 1, 2012 reduces the detail from 17 officers to five officers. "The Tribe will achieve a significant cost savings in policing fees paid to the state of New York," said Mark Garrow, Tribal Chief. In recent years, the Tribe has seen significant increases in state policing costs. Prior to that, the Tribe paid between \$2 and \$3.4 million per year. The reduction in the state police casino detail will result in an approximate 60 percent reduction in these payments to the state. New York State Police had been providing casino policing service since the casino opened in 1999.

When the Tribe and the state entered into the gaming compact, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police were not certified to enforce New York criminal law. Since then the Tribal Police have been certified. The Tribal-State Compact contains a provision allowing for Tribal Police to assume criminal jurisdiction, once they were certified. "The Tribal Police are now able to conduct the public safety function in the casino," observed Tribal Chief Randy Hart. "We are confident that they will do a fine job."

For many years, the Tribe has raised objections that the number of state troopers assigned to the casino. They believed that the number was unreasonably high and not justified by the number of actual criminal calls coming from the casino. "The state pretty much ignored those objections," remarked Tribal Chief Ron LaFrance. "But with the change in administration last year, we've been able to move forward on this issue."

Under the Tribal-State Compact, for the Tribal Police to assume casino policing duties, it required the agreement of New York State. Governor Cuomo's staff came to the table prepared to negotiate in a way not seen previously.

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Since 2005, the Tribe maintained that the Compact allows for Tribal Police to assume public safety duties and that it was prepared to take on those duties. The Tribal Police Department is capable of handling the additional work load at this time, with their current staffing. Depending on any additional coverage of the casino, Chief Police Andy Thomas may recommend that additional officers are necessary. Not much crime occurs at the casino and the police only rarely make arrests. The majority of calls involve minor theft, theft of slot machine tickets and the occasional disorderly patron. The state police will continue to provide a small contingent to conduct background investigations necessary for Class III gaming licenses.

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government  
of the Saint Regis Mohawk People