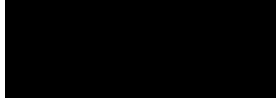


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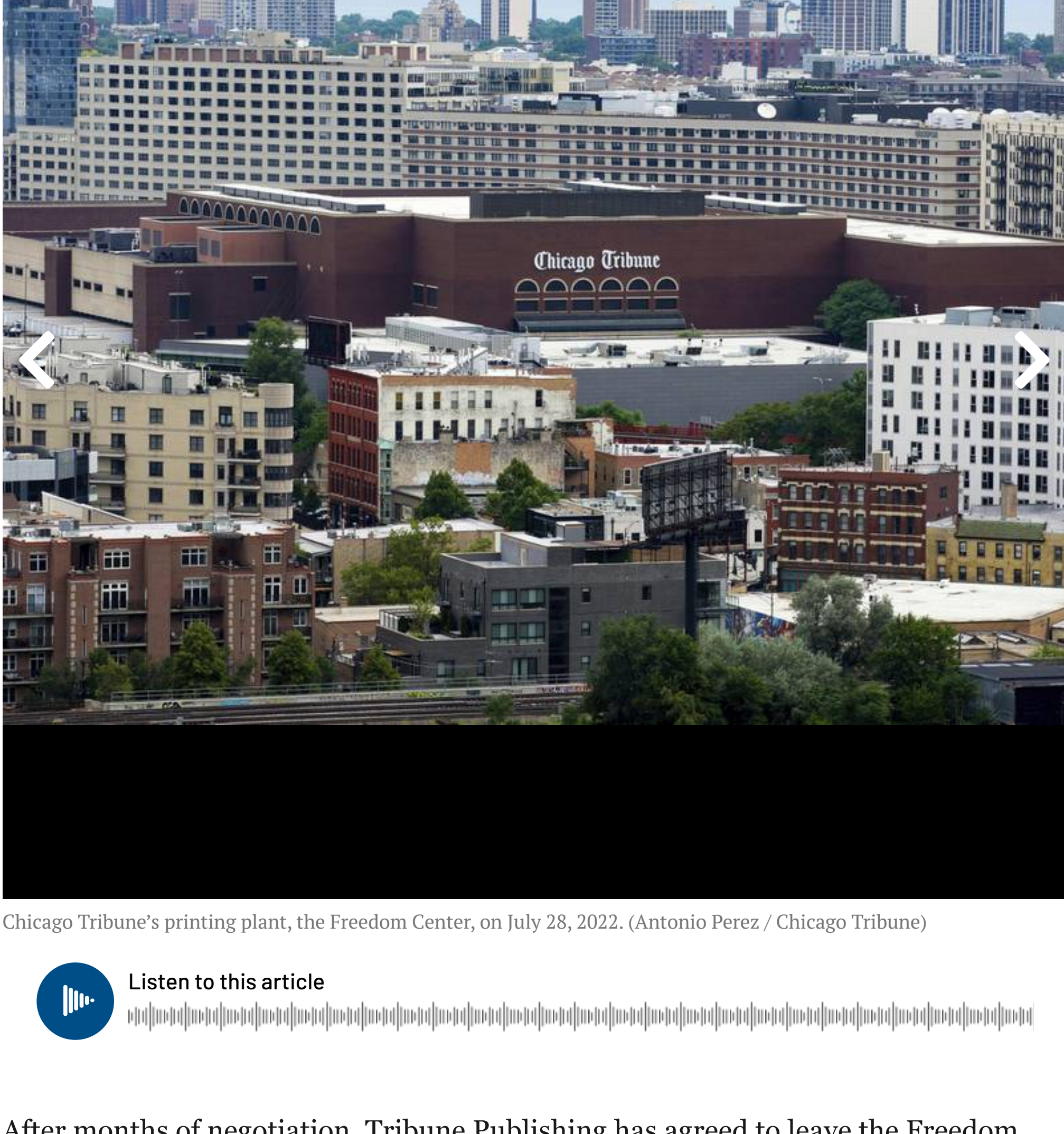
# Tribune Publishing to exit Freedom Center printing plant to make way for Bally’s Chicago Casino

By Robert Channick  
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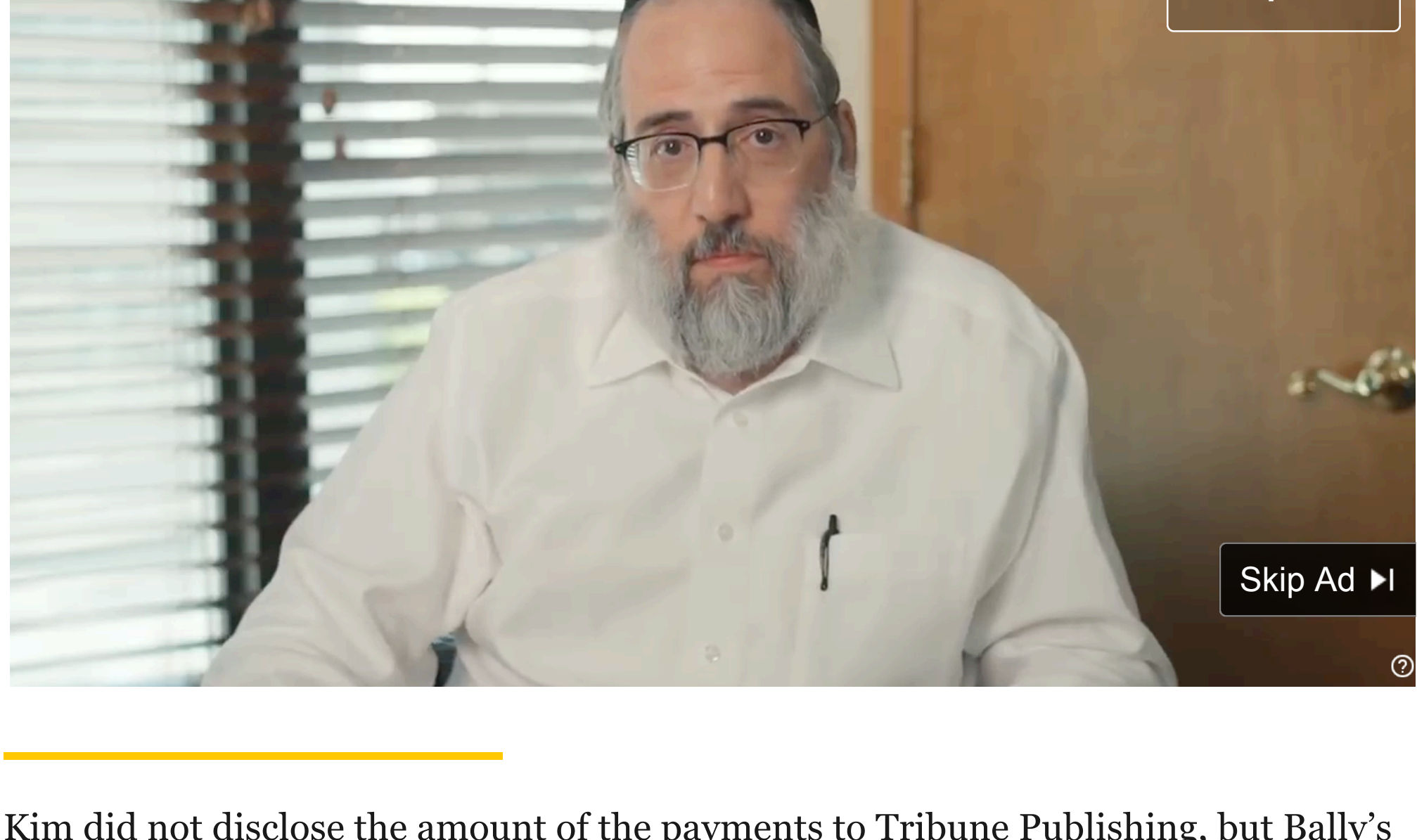
Chicago Tribune's printing plant, the Freedom Center, on July 28, 2022. (Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune)

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After months of negotiation, Tribune Publishing has agreed to leave the Freedom Center printing plant in River West by July 2024 to make way for Bally's Chicago Casino.

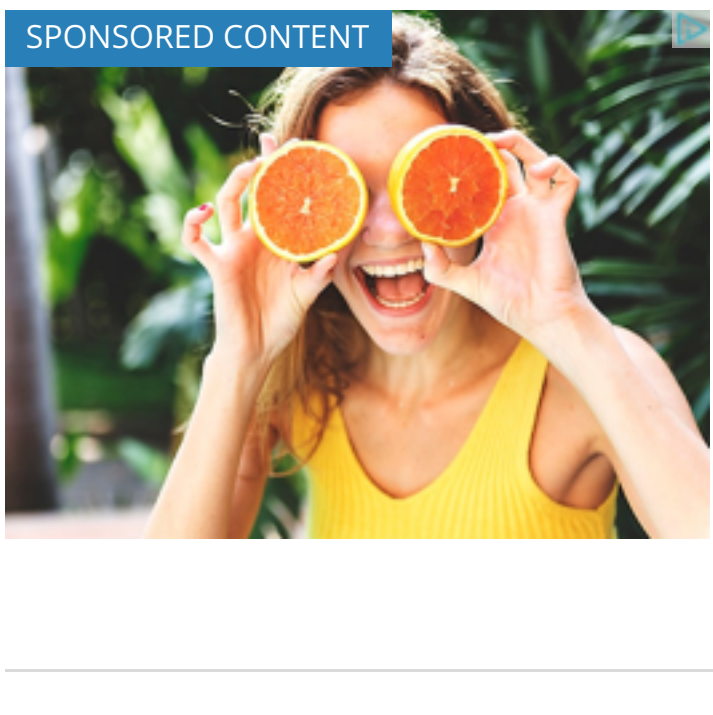
Bally's, which bought the 30-acre site last year, will give the newspaper company a "series of cash payments" in return for its commitment to exit the Freedom Center, Bally's Chairman Soo Kim said Thursday.

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Kim did not disclose the amount of the payments to Tribune Publishing, but Bally's may reveal more details about the relocation agreement during its first quarter earnings call Tuesday.

The sprawling printing plant, which has enjoyed a four-decade run as the nexus of newspaper publishing and distribution in Chicago, is slated for demolition to make way for a \$1.74 billion casino and entertainment complex to be built in its place along the Chicago River.



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In February, Bally's gave Tribune Publishing notice to [vacate the plant](#), which prints the Chicago Tribune and other newspapers. The Rhode Island-based casino company plans to break ground next year and open the permanent casino by 2026.

*[ Timeline: How Tribune Publishing — the parent company of the Chicago Tribune — has changed since 2006 ]*

Tribune Publishing did not announce plans for a new printing plant, but said the presses would continue to roll throughout the relocation. The newspaper company, which owns the Chicago Tribune, issued a statement Thursday regarding the move:

"We are saddened to be relocated from our long-term home at the Freedom Center, but gratified to help clear the way for an economic development project that is so important to this city.

"We are committed to a print edition of the Chicago Tribune and anticipate continuing to print the Chicago Tribune and our commercial print customers with very substantial investments in several locations through the Greater Chicago Metropolitan area. We hope to announce those plans shortly.

"In the meantime, it's business as usual for our employees and commercial print customers as we invest in a transition that will take some time. In any event, we will continue printing without interruption after moving."

Built in 1981, the Freedom Center prints the Chicago Tribune, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Chicago Sun-Times and other newspapers. It has also housed the Chicago Tribune newsroom since 2021.

Bally's became Tribune Publishing's landlord in November when it [bought the Freedom Center](#) site from Nexstar Media for \$200 million. Within days, Bally's executed a [sale-leaseback](#) on the land with Chicago-based Oak Street Real Estate Capital, raising up to \$500 million to help build the casino complex.

Tribune Publishing's lease at Freedom Center was set to expire in June, but the newspaper company exercised an option to extend it for another 10 years. Bally's and Tribune Publishing went to binding arbitration over the terms of the lease extension.

As part of the lease, Bally's was required to help Tribune Publishing find an alternative printing location. They opted instead for an undisclosed cash settlement, Kim said.

"We have come to an agreement that instead of us presenting a site, picking it and then building it, they've agreed to just handle that themselves," Kim said.

Bally's won a [heated competition](#) last year to build the Chicago casino, an entertainment complex that will include an exhibition hall, 500-room hotel, a 3,000-seat theater, 10 restaurants and 4,000 gaming positions.

It is planning to open a [temporary casino](#) at Medinah Temple in the River North neighborhood this summer — pending approval by the Illinois Gaming Board.

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