

Spokane Indian Tribe defends new casino

SPOKANE (AP) — The Spokane Indian Tribe on Tuesday defended its opening of a Nevada-style casino and questioned the legality of state-sanctioned gambling operations, including the state lottery.

In a legal response to government motions aimed at shutting down the new casino, the tribe claims authorities are singling out tribal gaming operations for prosecution.

Meanwhile, tribal officials alleged state-sanctioned gambling, such as the state lottery, may be illegal but said that question is being ignored.

The counterclaim asks a judge to direct the Justice Department to take action aimed at preventing state lottery games from being offered on reservations. It also seeks an order prohibiting state-licensed non-Indian taverns and card rooms from operating on Indian lands unless they comply with tribal gaming ordinances and licensing.

"Those activities have been going on without any controversy, without any accusations, without any of the U.S. Congress," said Scott Crowell, an attorney for the tribe.

The Spokanes also argue that a federal court ruling last summer involving state negotiations with the Colville Confederated Tribes gave tribes the right to offer Nevada-style games such as slot machines without negotiating compacts with the state. The Spokanes and the state have been unable to agree on a compact.

The Spokane tribe is trying to defend its sovereign rights and promote economic self-reliance, said Henry Sijohn, a tribal council member.

Despite the absence of a compact and objections from the state, the tribe on March 19 opened the Two Rivers Resort on its reservation.

The casino, which tribal members say has enjoyed heavy business, features more than 100 electronic and lever-pull slot machines that the federal government considers illegal.

Shively said Monday that he expected to file a motion this week seeking an injunction to close down the Two Rivers Resort until the government's civil suit is settled.

The state has no jurisdiction on the reservation, which is considered a sovereign nation.

Asbestos charges dropped

SEATTLE (AP) — Criminal charges have been dropped against two construction companies accused of exposing workers to asbestos during a remodeling project at a Renton hospital.

Dan Satterberg, chief of staff in the King County prosecutor's office, said his office gave up on the case because it wasn't convinced Gall Landau Young Construction and Nuprecon Inc. employees were aware there was a potential asbestos problem.

Superior Court Judge George Finkle on Monday approved dismissal of the misdemeanor charges — the first asbestos-related criminal charges filed in this state — on the day trial was to begin.

Nuprecon President John Hennessy said the charges never should have been brought.

"I am still angered about the harm that has been done to my company's reputation," he said. "We've worked hard over the last seven years to build an excellent reputation for Nuprecon. But where can a business owner go to get back his name?"

Prosecutors file the charges in October.

Gall Landau Young, the project's general contractor, was charged with a single count of violating the Washington Clean Air Act and Puget Sound

Air Pollution Control Agency regulations. Nuprecon, a demolition subcontractor, was charged with six counts of violating those regulations.

Prosecutors had charged that ventilation from the remodeling project at Valley Medical directed the air flow so the air, presumably containing asbestos fibers, escaped into the hospital, its ventilation system and the maternity ward next to the demolition site.

The project took place Oct. 24-30, 1991.

Long-term exposure to asbestos is believed to cause lung damage or cancer, but there is less certainty about the risk of short-term exposure.

Representatives of Valley Medical, which was not charged, and some of the construction and demolition firms involved, had insisted they did nothing wrong and that there was no health hazard.

The air pollution control agency previously fined Valley Medical, Gall Landau Young, Nuprecon, and another subcontractor, University Mechanical, \$710,000 in connection with the remodeling project. Nuprecon's Hennessy said he is fighting the civil penalty.

Book of forest clearcuts stirs controversy

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A book showing pictures of forest clearcuts, where all trees have been logged, was released by environmentalists on the Capitol steps Tuesday.

The environmentalists said the 290-page book provides numerous examples of the need for additional reform of forest harvesting practices.

Ser. Tom Hayden of Santa

Monica, who is running for the Democratic nomination for governor, said the book "bears witness to one of the great tragedies of our time, which is the destruction of the forests in the nation and the world."

But timber industry representatives attacked the book as propaganda, saying that it depicts harvesting methods that are no longer used.

"It's a joke, a joke in California especially because of strict forest practice standards," said Donn Zee of the California Forestry Association.

The timber industry said the book is flawed. Some are old photographs that depict abandoned practices, representatives said. Others show areas that were logged to salvage trees after wildfires, they said.

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An acknowledged visionary, preeminent scholar, and activist in his field, John Echohawk is regarded as the foremost legal spokesperson of his generation on Native American issues.

John E. Echohawk is executive director of the Native American Rights Fund. His success in advocating Indian legal causes and mastering the vast intricacies of Indian law has earned Echohawk a ranking in the *National Law Journal* as one of the nation's 100 most influential attorneys. Echohawk is a member of the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma.

Echohawk has been a member of numerous Native American organizations, a board member of prestigious philanthropic entities, and active with the Natural Resource Defense Council. In 1987, Echohawk received the National Indian Achievement Award from the Indian Council Fire, the nation's oldest Indian urban organization.

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PUBLIC EVENTS

Thursday, April 7, 1994

3:00 P.M., 123 Pacific Hall,
UO Campus

"Reporting Native American
Issues in the Media"

Tuesday, April 12, 1994

7:30 P.M., Eugene Hilton

"The Nature of Tribal
and Indian Law: Current
Issues and Trends"



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