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Kitzhaber rejects Cascade Locks casino proposal

1 SALEM — Gov. John Kitzhaber on Thursday rejected an Indian tribe's request to build a casino in the Columbia Gorge town of Cascade Locks.

Kitzhaber said he turned down the request by the Warm Springs tribe because of his longstanding policy of trying to limit tribal casinos to one per tribe and keeping those facilities on reservation or trust land.

If Kitzhaber had approved the off-reservation site for the Warm Springs tribe, the state's other eight tribes with casinos likely would have pushed for building casinos in more profitable locations, closer to urban areas.

Kitzhaber's decision means that Warm Springs tribe may build in nearby Hood River, a move that's opposed by gorge conservationists and others in the community.

Black civil rights activist Daisy Bates dies at 84

2 LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Daisy Bates, a civil rights leader who helped nine black students break the color barrier at Little Rock Central High School in 1957, died Thursday at 84.

Bates, who was black, became a symbol of black hope and a target of segregationist hate, first for her role in desegregating the Little Rock bus system in 1956, then as a mentor to the first black students to integrate all-white Central High.

In 1957, whites rioted outside Central High and National Guardsmen, on orders from Gov. Orval E. Faubus, turned away the nine students. In response, President Eisenhower sent in Army troops to escort the students to class.

Inside Bates' small home, which was vandalized several times during the unrest, she advised the black students on how to face the taunting and urged them to be proud of what they were accomplishing.

Bates later said the Little Rock experience "had a lot to do with removing fear that people have for getting involved."

She was the recipient of more than 200 citations and awards. Her book "The Long Shadow of Little Rock," published in 1962, won a 1988 American Book Award.

President Clinton on Thursday described Bates as a dear friend and a heroine and said her death "will leave a vacuum in the civil rights community, the state of Arkansas and our country."

Clinton asks Congress for more flood money

3 WASHINGTON — President Clinton asked Congress for more money Thursday to buy the ruined homes of flood victims and move the residents to higher ground.

The request for \$429 million would buy about 12,000 homes damaged or destroyed by flooding from Hurricane Floyd. About 11,000 of them are in eastern North Carolina, which was drenched by 20 inches of rain on Sept. 16. The state would get \$381 million out of the new money.

To free up the money, Congress must pass a special waiver as part of the current budget negotiations. Without the waiver, the Federal Emergency Management Agency could spend only about \$58 million to buy homes affected by Floyd, the agency said.

FEMA Director James Lee Witt said he will argue to Congress that buying out homeowners in flood-prone areas saves money in the long term.

"I think it's the appropriate time to do it," Witt told the Associated Press. "It will save money in the years to come because these are houses that do not have to be rebuilt" after each devastating storm.

Homeowners who take the federal buyout leave the flood plain permanently, and rebuild elsewhere.

The money would come from FEMA's general disaster fund for fiscal 2000, which began Oct. 1. That means the agency would borrow from the current year's disaster pot to pay for a disaster that came in the previous fiscal year.

World Trade Organization to focus on agriculture

4 GENEVA — Disagreements over agriculture are among the major stumbling blocks as countries prepare to meet in Seattle later this month for the next round of World Trade Organization negotiations.

Officials of the global trade-regulating group said Thursday they have made progress on other areas of the agenda, but not on agriculture.

Representatives from the WTO's 135 member countries plan to meet in Seattle on Nov. 30 to launch new talks on how to open global markets to free trade.

The agriculture issue principally pits the European Union, Japan and South Korea against the 16-nation Cairns Group, which includes Australia, Canada and Brazil.

The Cairns Group countries oppose heavy subsidies given to farmers, especially by the EU, claiming they create artificially low prices and prevent other nations' producers from competing on an equal footing in the world market.

The EU and its supporters say they are prepared to talk about subsidies but claim that agriculture is different from other goods. They want agriculture talks to include non-trade issues like protection of the environment, food safety, animal welfare and protecting rural communities.

The United States, while opposing EU farm subsidies, has taken a sideline role in the WTO wrangling.

Phone company begs for silence from ringing mobiles

5 HONG KONG — Have you ever heard a telephone company ask people to get off the phone?

It's happening Friday in Hong Kong, where local phone giant Cable & Wireless HKT will announce half-year financial results and wants its executives to enjoy solace from the ringing that seems to interrupt everything else in town.

The company invited journalists but attached one condition: "It would be very much appreciated if you can switch off your mobile phones and pagers before the conference starts."

That puts the phone company in a league with fancy restaurants, theaters, courts and other Hong Kong institutions — even churches — that issue constant reminders for people to shut off their phones, with only mixed success.

Nearly 3 million Hong Kong residents — 40 percent of the population — carry a mobile and they seem to go off everywhere. The phenomenon may have hit a new low point last week, when a doctor got into trouble for allegedly chattering with a car salesman while he was performing an operation.

Phone companies typically enjoy the ringing — to them it's the sweet sound of money — but a Cable & Wireless HKT spokeswoman explained that previous news conferences have been disrupted.

Ngai rejected suggestions that shushing the phones could be bad for business. "It's just politeness," she said by telephone.

The Hong Kong phone company is a partially owned subsidiary of London-based Cable & Wireless Communications PLC.