

Gaming Alliance Formed, Economic Development Director Hired

by Jessie Davis

I'd like to cover three items in this report – the Gaming Alliance, the panel on gaming held at the recent Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) convention in Portland, Ore., and the Siletz Tribe's newly appointed economic development director.

Gaming Alliance

The Oregon tribes have appointed representatives to begin developing an association to deal with gaming issues. We were motivated to form an association of Oregon tribes because of our belief that through unity, we would have greater strength in dealing with critical issues common to us all. Seven tribes were represented at the last meeting. As the saying goes, "United we stand – divided we fall!"

Although we'll refine the organization's statement of purpose at our next meeting, I can say that

generally, the association is being formed to:

- promote greater communication and information sharing among the participating gaming tribes
- enable tribes to collaborate in dealing with critical Oregon gaming issues
- enable tribes to have a stronger voice at the state, regional, and national levels
- be pro-active vs. reactive in addressing gaming issues

Tribal attorneys Craig Dorsay of the Siletz Tribe and Dennis Carnopp of the Warm Springs Tribe were assigned to prepare bylaws for the new organization. The draft will be presented at the next scheduled meeting of the alliance and then submitted to each participating Tribal Council for adoption.



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Until a permanent chairman is elected, I've been serving as chairman during the organizational planning phase. The next scheduled meeting is April 6, 2003, at The Mill Casino at 10 a.m.

We recognized that there may be differences of opinion among tribes of a political nature. We agreed that the association wouldn't become involved in inter-tribal politics.

ATNI Gaming Meeting

John McCoy, regional representative to the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) who serves as a Washington state legislator, was unable to chair the Gaming Panel. As requested by Ernie Stevens, president of NIGA, I chaired the meeting, my second gaming meeting since being elected as an alternate representative to the NIGA board from the Northwest region.

Ernie attended the general session, but was unable to attend the afternoon gaming meeting because he needed to return to Washington, D.C. New legislation was being introduced that would negatively affect gaming tribes and Ernie was scheduled to testify in Congress on behalf of Indian tribes.

Most of the meeting that included about 30 tribal representatives centered on the negative articles published in *Time* magazine. It was obvious that *Time's* purpose was to focus on the negative aspects of tribes and Indian gaming.

We learned that *Time* visited the Grand Ronde and Umatilla tribes, but finding nothing negative there, omitted any reference to these tribes in its

articles. Credible research studies have proved that gaming has had a positive impact on Umatilla and Grand Ronde tribal members and surrounding communities, but *Time* chose to disregard that.

We reached a general consensus that tribes must improve their efforts to educate legislators and the general public on the positive impact Indian gaming has had on local communities. The public needs to be educated about how Indian casinos are significantly impacting local economies by removing non-Indians as well as Indians from welfare and unemployment rolls.

Tribal representatives were urged to meet with the editorial boards of local newspapers and other media as one way of getting accurate and favorable information disseminated to the public about Indian tribes and Indian gaming.

Also, contrary to *Time's* assertion that Indian gaming is unregulated, tribes need to inform the public and their state and regional representatives that Indian gaming is the most regulated of all gaming.

I received many comments from those who attended the ATNI meeting of the value of such meetings. They provide important information, such as the activities of anti-Indian forces intent on destroying Indian gaming, and they give tribes an opportunity to network as they deal with critical Indian gaming issues.

New Economic Development Director

As Tribal Council liaison to the Economic Development Department, I wish to report that Dwight Butt has been appointed as director.

Most recently, Dwight served as executive director of the Southwest Washington Public Development Authority. Prior to that, he owned his own management consulting firm for 14 years and for four years, Dwight was the director of the Oregon State Fair Exposition Center.

The Siletz Tribe has a number of promising but as yet unfinished economic development projects on the table. With the help of Dan Lundy, Economic Development coordinator, we are looking forward to having Dwight tackle these and other projects.



To the editor:

The failure of Ballot Measure 28 is not the end, nor a failure. It is more an opportunity, a beginning. We need to set aside divisive arguments and acknowledge most voters want the same things. We all agree that funding education and other vital services should be a priority.

The "No" vote does not argue that. Those in opposition want our legislators to demonstrate the budget is being managed effectively and non-essential programs are being cut first. The "Yes" vote doesn't suggest anyone wants more taxes. Those in favor simply carry an intense desire to save education and vital services for the disadvantaged and the elderly and (hopefully) want time to develop and implement a permanent, stabilized source of funding.

I firmly believe we can have both. The results of this vote should be a catalyst for us all to take part in effecting a change. Write, e-mail, or call your legislators and let them know what you want. They all have a fiduciary responsibility to represent our interests, second to their individual agendas. We cannot afford to make it "their problem." It's our problem. If we do nothing, we get what we deserve.

A solution for public education might include a repeal of Ballot Measure 5, returning control and funding to the local level. It may require a sales tax. I know how unpopular that idea has been historically, but the package has never included critical relief elements for other taxes. It should include a reduction of personal income taxes and a cap on capital gains, exempt food and medicines, and require a majority vote prior to any increases.

These aren't necessarily the answers, but it's painfully evident our current system is not working for us. The time has come to have a serious discussion about viable options, convert that discussion to action items for our legislators, and hold the legislators accountable for delivering results. Results we want and our children and disadvantaged citizens deserve.

Write, e-mail, or call your representatives to tell them to find a solution, a non-partisan solution. A complete list of legislators can be found at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/findset.htm>.

Terry Shanley