

Portland Casino: a Win or a Loss

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occupy the now defunct Multnomah Kennel Club in Troutdale's Wood Village.

"We're taking a place with a 53-year history of gaming and retrofitting it," said Roger Gray, Good For Oregon's political consultant.

But there are other incentives to the proposed location. Across the river in La Center, Wash., the Mohegan and Cowlitz tribes hope to develop their own mega-casino.

"The money goes across the river and doesn't come back," Gray speculated.

"If people don't take action on our proposal, about \$700 million a year will be spent over there."

Currently, the nearest casino to Portland is in Grande Ronde, about a two-hour drive from Portland.

Stan Speaks, regional director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, doesn't speculate much competition between the proposed casinos.

"At this point I think there will be very little impact," he said, "but it's too early to tell."

While a Portland area casino would put millions of dollars into Oregon's schools and thousands of jobs would be created, opponents call the revenue little more



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A proposal to turn the Multnomah Kennel Club greyhound racing track in Wood Village into a casino includes plans for 3,500 video lottery terminals, about 150 gaming tables, restaurants, a spa, bowling alley and a sizable hotel.

than bribery.

"It ends up costing the state three dollars for every dollar they

collect in taxes," said David Robertson, past chairman and current board member of the National

Coalition Against Legalized Gambling.

"There are social costs for people

who are addicted," he said. "Social services, spousal and child abuse and bankruptcy."

Good For Oregon says building a casino doesn't create more gamblers, but the coalition against gambling claims the games double gambling addictions in populations within 50 miles of casinos.

There is one fact supporters and opponents agree on, gambling is gaining popularity nationwide.

"It has progressed in the last six to 10 years," Gray reported, noting a recent measure passed in Florida allowing residents to vote for casinos on a county-by-county basis.

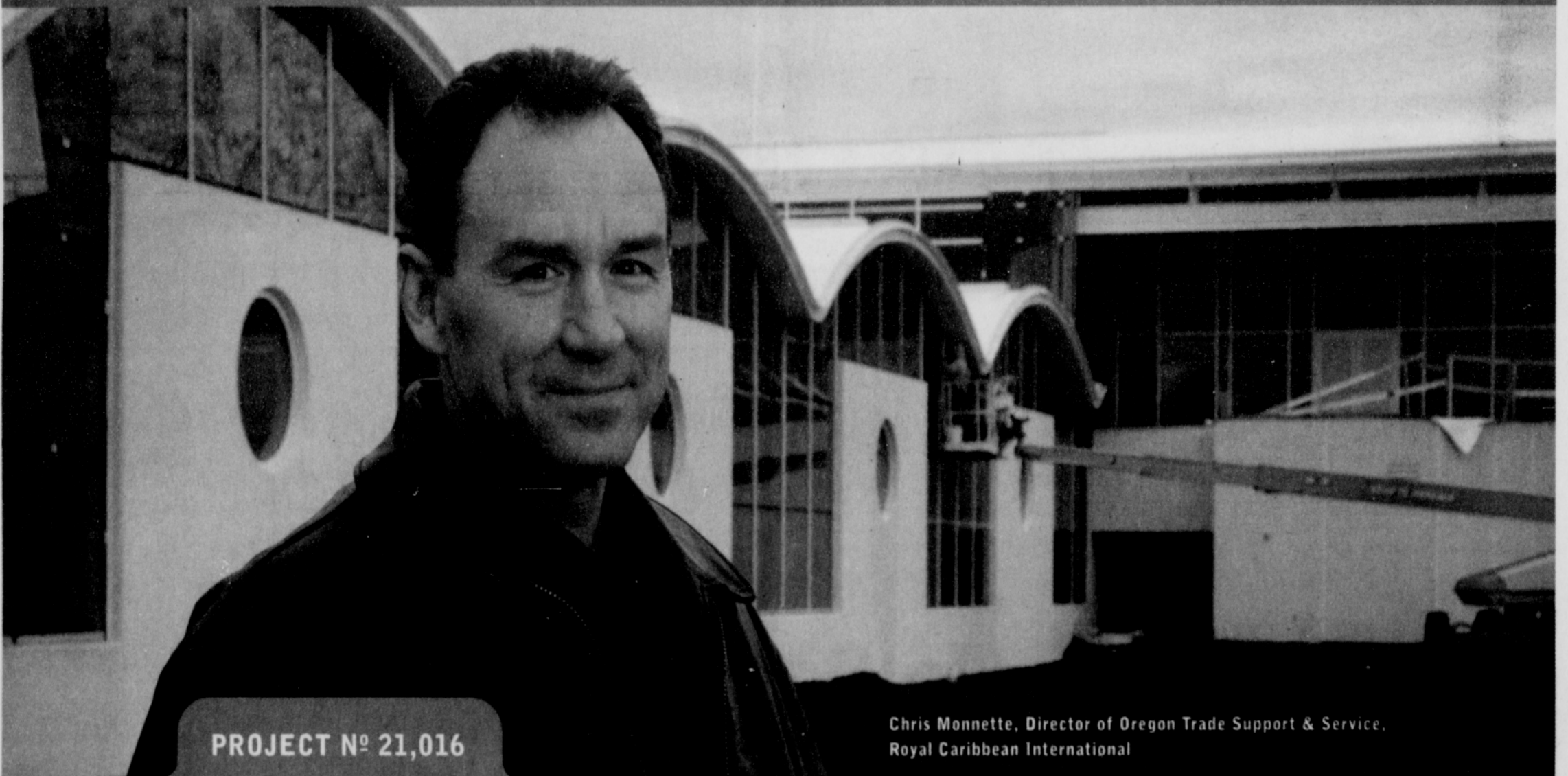
"We're beginning to see it more and more, especially with the poker explosion," Robertson said. "It's become acceptable because when a state brings in a lottery, they're saying 'gambling is good.'"

Gray also cites a high suicide rate among gambling addicts; according to survey participants in a study conducted in southern Nevada, nearly one in five people with gambling problems contemplated suicide.

Gray said his coalition plans to fight the casino through public education and conferences nationwide.

Good for Oregon has until July to collect the necessary signatures to place the issue on the ballot in November.

"Lottery profits helped attract Royal Caribbean – and 1,000 jobs – to Springfield."



PROJECT № 21,016

Chris Monnette, Director of Oregon Trade Support & Service, Royal Caribbean International

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