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The Portland Observer 43

'City of Roses'



Volume XXXXI
Number 40



www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • October 17, 2012

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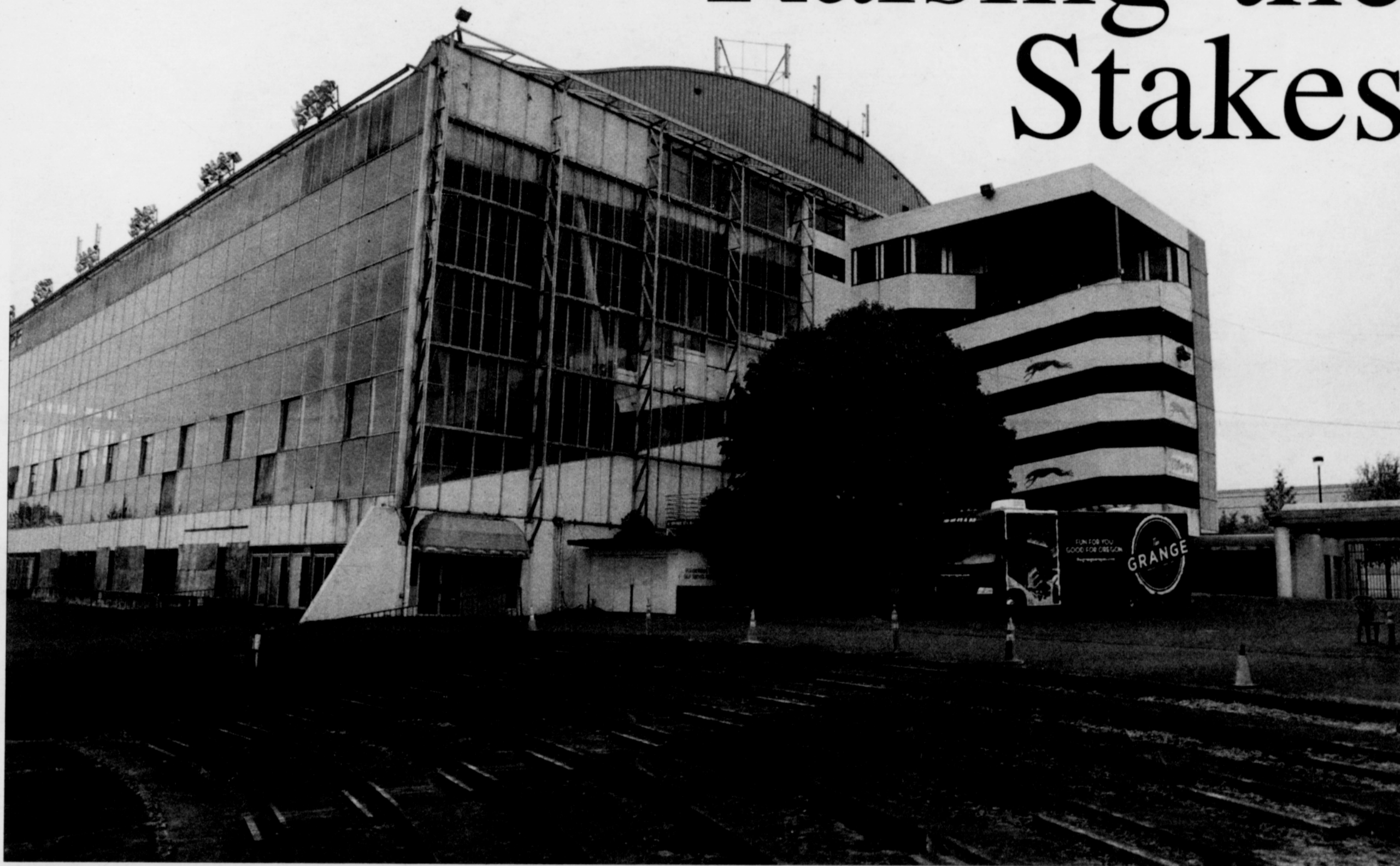


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The abandoned Multnomah Kennel Club race track east of Portland in Wood Village could turn into Oregon's first non-tribal and first privately-owned casino if voters statewide approve two ballot measures on Nov. 6.

Casino draws backers, but also opponents

BY CARI HACHMANN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Advocates proposing a \$3 million dollar non-tribal casino—the Grange—might as well be throwing the dice in a gamble to convince Oregon voters that a giant megaplex to replace the abandoned greyhound race track in Wood Village truly is “Fun for you. Good for Oregon,” as the casino’s campaign slogan advertises.

Two years ago, voters statewide defeated

Once you open up a place like the Grange, it opens doors to opening similar larger casinos in other parts of the city, again drawing customers away from other small, family owned and operated businesses.

— Bill Mildenberger, Nighthawk Café and Lounge owner

a similar privately-owned, for-profit casino at the former racing park east of Portland, by a 2-1 margin.

But the Grange is “different” say the casino’s Canadian investors, Great Canadian Gaming Corp. and Clairvest Group, Inc. They advertise a family-friendly entertainment center complete with a water park slide, bowling alley, hotel plaza and theater.

The casino backers also promise 2,000

jobs with healthcare benefits and 25 percent of the casino’s yearly revenue (estimated at about \$1 million) for Oregon public schools.

Before any cutting of grand opening ribbons, voters must approve two state-wide measures in the Nov 6 general election. Measures 82 amends the Oregon Constitution to allow privately-owned casinos, and Measure 83 authorizes for a single privately-owned casino in Multnomah County ca-

pable of operating up to 3,500 slot machines.

The 4,000 residents of Wood Village must also vote yes on Measure 26-142. If one of the three measures fails, all go down together.

While the Grange has drawn supporters, a number of critics oppose the idea, most obviously tribal governments who say a non-tribal casino breaches current state agreements with tribes.

The Portland Observer was interested to know how local residents feel about the proposals.

We started by asking some small businesses who participate in the Oregon Lottery. A new glistening Vegas-style casino so close to Portland could lure valued custom-

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