

Tribal gambling money could ease budget battle

SACRAMENTO (AP) - An agreement with Indian gambling interests that would generate nearly \$1.3 billion for the state next year has not been signed, but budget negotiators have already seized on the new revenue as the potential bridge between Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Democrat-controlled Legislature.

Democratic leaders say they want to add at least \$400 million to the governor's proposed \$103 billion spending plan for next year.

The wish list, lawmakers and legislative aides say, includes money to lift a cap on enrollments at state colleges and universities that will cost about \$60 million. They want to restore \$98 million that will help pay wages of home care providers to the disabled, according to sources in the Assembly. And Senate Democrats want to provide a cost of living increase to welfare recipients that will add about \$234 million to the

governor's plan, according to aides in the Senate.

With lawmakers brushing aside Tuesday's constitutional deadline for passing the budget, the focus now becomes getting an agreement before the end of the fiscal year in two weeks. Negotiations center on how to fit more spending into the governor's plan and while the tribal windfall will help, finding compromise will not be easy.

Still, the governor has said negotiations are going smoothly and he expects an agreement well before the end of the month.

The differences hinge on taxes and spending cuts. Schwarzenegger and Republican lawmakers won't back new taxes to pay for the extras Democrats want, while Democrats said they won't support cutting existing programs more to pay for their new wish list.

Despite public assurances that all is well, Schwarzenegger also surprised the Capitol by

announcing Wednesday he would travel to Chico on Thursday to attend a rally on the budget at a local mall. He's expected to call on the Legislature - especially the Democrats - to approve his budget on time.

Rob Stutzman, Schwarzenegger's communications director, said the rally isn't meant to bash Democrats. Instead, the governor just wants to prod legislators to pass a budget on time, he said.

The proposed agreement with the tribes, which could be completed by Monday, would ease much of the tension.

Details of the evolving compact with five tribes indicate it would provide the state an immediate \$1 billion payment, expected to be financed by a bond sale backed by casino profits. Tribes also would pay \$275 million in annual fees until 2030.

In exchange for the money, the tribes would be allowed to add thousands of new slot machines to their casinos.

Schwarzenegger said Tuesday that his administration was negotiating with four tribes that operate casinos. On Wednesday, his administration said the compact also would cover a fifth tribe that is seeking state approval for a casino.

Schwarzenegger's May budget counted on \$500 million in ongoing revenue from the tribes - nearly double the \$275 million that annual tribal licenses is expected to bring. He said in May that any extra money would be used to pay back money borrowed from transportation trust funds.

But Democrats say they want some of that money to pay for their programs.

"Democrats will have to come together to ensure that some of that tribal money will be used across the board," said Assemblyman Rudy Bermudez, D-Norwalk, a member of the budget committee.

Hundreds of American Indians benefit from push toward health

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) - By one estimate, American Indians are the least represented minority in health careers, so two Oklahoma organizations are working to recruit students into medical professions.

Nationally, only about 400 American Indians are medical doctors, estimates Jerry Tahsequah, associate director of the Native American Center of Excellence at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

By that estimate, 0.01 percent of the 4 million American Indians in the country are doctors.

Two programs are bringing teenagers into science laboratories and extra pre-medicine classes.

The Student Enrichment

Academy for Reaching Careers in Health, organized by the Association of American Indian Physicians, had 32 American Indian teens dissecting cow eyeballs last week at the OU Health Sciences Center.

The students are participating in a six-week program geared toward recruiting them to health-related fields.

American Indians in the Oklahoma City area who are 14 to 17 years old are eligible for the program.

American Indians nationwide are eligible for another program run by the Oklahoma City-based Association of American Indian Physicians. The program will take 60 students, including 17 from Oklahoma, to Washington for eight days of academic enrichment this month.

No recognition for Connecticut tribe, casino hopes dashed

(AP) - The Golden Hill Paugussetts' plans for a Connecticut casino and thousands of acres of land claims were dealt a major setback last week, as the Bureau of Indian Affairs rejected their bid for federal recognition for a second time.

The Paugussetts did not satisfy four of the seven criteria needed for recognition - failing to prove they descended from a historical tribe and that they continuously existed as a political and social community.

The group also did not provide sufficient evidence that its ancestor, William Sherman, was an Indian, and it weakened its petition by trying to include descendants from the historical Turkey Hill tribe, which ceased to exist around 1825, the BIA said. Paugussett Chief Quiet Hawk said the BIA is "out of control on this decision." The tribe will appeal, he said.

River washing away Indian reservation

FORKS, Wash. (AP) - The Hoh Indian Reservation shares its name with the Hoh River, but the river is getting greedy.

Amid record flooding, fueled partly by clearcut logging and an ill-designed public works project, the glacier-fed river has moved progressively southward and eroded about 10 percent of the 443-acre coastal reservation about 14 miles south of Forks in the past decade.

With each shift the stream moves closer to the tribe's six government buildings, including tribal headquarters, and 30 homes with 111 residents.

In bygone years, Hoh Tribal Chairwoman Mary Leitka, said, she had to walk clear across the reservation to reach the river.

"Now I just have to look out my back window and I can see the river," Leitka said.

In more than a century since the federal government confined the Hoh to the wetlands and steep hillsides at the river mouth, flooding has been a not uncommon threat.

In recent years children and the elderly have often been evacuated at night by small boat in flooding that also contaminates the water supply and overwhelms the septic system.

Tribal members often are warned to boil tap water, "but if you're elderly and can barely carry a pot, are you going to boil water?" Leitka said.

Census figures show the tribe's population has nearly tripled in the past 30 years, more than half the tribal members are younger than 20 and the birthrate is more than twice that of the state, but the last home built on the reservation was in 1988.

Three or four families sometimes share a house, and there is little chance the tribe can win grants for more housing because almost all the available land is in a flood plain, officials say.

"There's nowhere left to go," Leitka said.

Before being confined to the reservation, the Hoh ranged from the Olympic Mountains to the coast, said Rick Cook, a regional fisheries biologist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"Historically, the tribe never had to live permanently on the river," Hoh said. "If it flooded, they could always move to higher ground."

Initially covered by the Quinalt treaty of 1855, the Hoh gained separate tribal recognition - and a reservation

covering less than a square mile near a rainforest with average precipitation of about 160 inches a year - in the 1960s.

Since 1995, logging upstream in the Olympic National Forest has left "nothing to hold the water in place," says Rod Thysell, the tribe's natural resources director.

Worsening the problem was the use of riprap, or large rocks, by Jefferson County workers to shore up the river bank just upstream from the reservation to protect a public road, resulting in a swifter streamflow that figures strongly in the southward shift.

"At times, it's like a pipeline right into the reservation," Thysell said.

One recent flood left a foot of standing water in the Tribal Center, damaging carpets and heating systems in the tribe's main government building.

Late last year, when a foot of rain fell in 24 hours, prison inmates were brought to join tribal members in a frantic round of early morning sandbagging to save reservation buildings. An earthen berm now surrounds the tribal center year-round.

"Essentially, it's throwing

Band-Aids on arterial wounds," Cook said. "What the tribe needs is a permanent solution."

Thysell and others said that means new land for the Hoh.

"Inevitably, we have to let the river do what it's going to do," he said. "We just don't want to be here when it does."

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Remains may be part of Indian burial site

MARINELAND, Fla. (AP) - Human remains discovered near the Marineland park are believed to be from an Indian burial site, and could halt a planned expansion of the attraction and other nearby developments.

Flagler County sheriff's deputy Michael Lutz said the remains included "a couple of teeth and a piece of bone." He said a medical examiner determined the remains were not new, and were not the result of a crime.

The Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research was called in to confirm whether the fragments are part of an Indian burial site.

If graves are found, state law requires development to stop while a medical examiner and the state archaeologist investigate.

Marineland was the site of an extensive 1941 dig conducted by then-state archaeologist Vernon Lamb.

One of the three people who discovered the remains, David Zacharias, an assistant professor of neurobiology at the University of Florida's Whitney Laboratory, said he saw at least six bone fragments

The planned development of a condominium complex and retail center nearby could

also be affected if the remains are found to be part of a gravesite.



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