

Yakama Nation may vote on casino

(AP) - Members of the Yakama Nation say they may vote this week on whether to pursue opening a tribal casino that could make it the fourth player to try to pluck the potentially lucrative Portland market.

The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs are trying to put an off-reservation casino in Cascade Locks 40 miles east of Portland and the Cowlitz Tribe wants one in La Center, Wash., about 16 miles north of Portland.

The Grande Ronde Tribes' Spirit Mountain Casino 60 miles west of Portland already is the state's largest tourist attraction.

Louis Cloud, chairman of Washington's Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, said the tribe owns trust land in Battle Ground, Wash., and in Oregon City. The general council, which includes all adult members, was to meet Tuesday (after deadline for this publication).

The Yakima Herald-Republic said the tribes also are looking at possible sites in Washington at Tri-Cities, Snoqualmie and

Ellensburg.

"I have no idea how they're going to vote. It's entirely up to them," Cloud said.

The Yakama already operate a casino in Toppenish, Wash., near Yakima.

An Oregon City location could cause problems. Oregon policy limits each of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes to one casino, generally on reservation or restored land.

Cloud contends trust land does not require the tribe to get permission from the federal government or Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski.

Anna Richter Taylor, a spokeswoman for Kulongoski, said the governor's office is "not aware of any land that's in trust with the Yakama Tribes in or near Oregon City."

Cloud estimates the tribe owns 80 acres in Oregon City and 70 acres in Battle Ground. But it's uncertain whether members own trust land in either city. City Manager Larry Patterson said Oregon City has not been approached by the tribe or its representatives about a casino.

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