

Dispute over tribal casino is back in Michigan court

LANSING, Mich. (AP)—A long-standing legal fight over the way state government and American Indian tribes negotiate to open casinos is back before the Michigan Supreme Court.

The justices will hear arguments Thursday on whether Gov. Jennifer Granholm can renegotiate a profit-sharing deal and let another tribal casino open without getting the changes approved by state lawmakers.

The case directly involves one northern Michigan tribe, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, but may have

implications for future attempts to change other tribal agreements known as compacts.

The dispute centers around compacts in 1998 between American Indian tribes and then-Gov. John Engler, which legislators endorsed in a resolution, an easier task than passing a bill. The compacts included a provision allowing Michigan's governor to negotiate future amendments on behalf of the state.

During 2003 talks with the Odawa tribe, which runs a casino in Petoskey, Granholm agreed to let it build another one

in Mackinaw City in exchange for the tribe giving a higher percentage of its revenue to the state. The second casino has not opened.

The compact also was changed so the tribal payments would be sent to the state "as directed by the governor" instead of going to the usual source: a state fund for business development.

An anti-gambling group that in 1999 challenged the validity of the original deals, which have since been OK'd by the state Supreme Court, also is opposing the amendments. Critics say not

getting legislative approval of the amendments violates the separation of powers doctrine in the state constitution.

But Eugene Driker, a lawyer representing the state, said Wednesday that the original compacts gave the governor authority to act on the state's behalf.

"If the Legislature didn't want to permit the governor to negotiate amendments, presumably it wouldn't have ratified the compacts," he said.

A lawyer for Taxpayers of Michigan Against Casinos said the group will not comment on

the case until after the Supreme Court issues a ruling, which is expected by August 2007.

Last year, a state Court of Appeals panel ruled 2-1 that Granholm should not have been allowed to renegotiate the deal without lawmakers' approval.

The tribal gaming dispute is not new to the high court.

It ruled in 2004 that it was OK for the Legislature to have approved the 1998 compacts by resolution rather than a bill because they are contracts. A resolution only needs the approval of the majority of lawmakers present. A formal bill is harder

to pass because it requires a majority of all lawmakers.

The Supreme Court did not rule on the constitutionality of letting the governor amend the compacts.

Richard McLellan, an attorney for the Odawa tribe, said the court's prior reasoning should also apply to Granholm's amendments because the separation of powers does not apply to agreements between two sovereign entities.

Michigan has 20 casinos, including 17 run by American Indian tribes and three Detroit casinos.

Sculpture returned to Canadian tribe

SEATTLE (AP)—A sculpture depicting what tribal lore says was a Canadian Indian tribe's first male ancestor is being returned to British Columbia. The sculpture has spent a century at the University of Washington's Burke Museum.

The 4-foot-tall granite sculpture depicts the medicine man T'xwel'se (Til-wil-aht-sah), who was turned to stone thousands of years ago,

according to the Chilliwack Tribe's history.

It was taken from the tribe in 1892 and displayed for a time at a dime-store museum. It was donated to the Burke Museum in 1904.

The Chilliwacks, part of the Stolo Nation of Canada, enlisted the help of Washington state's Nooksack Tribe to claim the stone under the Native American Graves Repatriation Act.

Alaskan Indian tribes deployed to Iraq

JACKSON, Miss. (AP)—After spending the summer getting used to sweltering temperatures, hundreds of Alaskan soldiers are getting ready to head to Iraq in that state's largest deployment of National Guard troops since World War II.

Camp Shelby was to host a send off bash Tuesday for nearly 600 soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry, representing 81 different communities and more than a half dozen cultures—Eskimos, Tlingits, Haidas, Aleuts, Athabascans and others.

"It's fascinating watching this group come together and get ready to go to war," said Gen. Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard.

The soldiers have spent much of their time in "theater immersion" training.

That type of training uses Arabic role players and mock Middle Eastern communities to simulate what the troops will encounter in hot spots overseas.

Lt. Col. Duff Mitchell, battalion commander, said the hot summer conditions the

soldiers have endured in south Mississippi helped prepare them for the scorching heat they will face in Iraq.

"The physical and mental demands placed on our soldiers during training were at times stressful," Mitchell said.

He added, "But they persevered and are now ready to perform their duties professionally. Alaskans can be proud of their soldiers."

Other soldiers from Alaska currently in Iraq include members of the Fort Wainwright-based 172nd Stryker Brigade,

whose deployment was recently extended four more months.

Officials said the 297th is the only activated Army unit with a Native American language motto: Yuh Yek, which means, "Be on watch. Ready to fire."

The 297th will provide security for coalition forces in Iraq, according to a statement from Camp Shelby spokesman Lt. Col. Doris Sanders.

"Our duties include convoy security, control point searches of vehicles and people, and security for Forward Operating Bases," Mitchell said.

Cherokee Indians subject of new book

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — "Cold Mountain" author Charles Frazier said the Cherokee Indians were a natural subject for his second novel because their history surrounded him as a youth.

At a reading that opened his 15-city book tour to promote "Thirteen Moons," Frazier explained that he grew up in Andrews in far western North Carolina, a region that was once part of the tribe's homeland.

"It was impossible to live in that place and not know that other people had owned that land or occupied that land," he said.

The title, "Thirteen Moons," comes from the Cherokee calendar and tells the reader that "even something as basic, to our way of thinking, as a year divided into 12 segments is out the window," he said.

The appearance was a homecoming of sorts for the 55-year-old Frazier, who lived nearby before quitting his teaching job at North Carolina State University to finish his first book, the best-selling "Cold Mountain."

It took Frazier seven years to finish that book. Following its 1997 release, the hardcover and paperback editions logged a combined 94 weeks on the New York Times best-seller list. Four million copies were sold. The novel also won a National Book Award and became a big-budget Hollywood movie that featured an Academy Award-winning performance by Renee Zellweger.

The success prompted Random House to give Frazier an \$8 million advance for "Thirteen Moons."

It also sparked much anticipation among his fans, who waited anxiously Tuesday evening to pick up copies of "Thirteen Moons" at Meredith College, the first

stop on the tour. Some sat on the steps of the auditorium, reading the first few pages.

Among them was Cindy Farrar, a lab technician from Wilmington, who took two days off from work to devote her attention to the novel. She even got up Tuesday morning to buy a CD version of the book, so she could listen to the tale as she made the two-hour drive to Raleigh.

"I've been looking forward to this for months," she said.

The novel tells the story of Will Cooper, an orphaned white boy who runs a trading post on the edge of the Cherokee nation.

A Cherokee elder adopts Cooper, who eventually becomes a tribal chief. He meets his true love, Claire, when he wins her in a card game at age 12, then finds her again decades later.

"It's a life story," Frazier said. "I wanted this book to be a lot of things, and part of it is Will's connection to another culture and his sense of beholdenness to another culture. Another is a sense of America in the 19th century and the really grand goals we had as a nation."

Reviews have been mixed. In a starred review, Publisher's Weekly said, "Frazier's storytelling prowess doesn't falter in this sophomore effort, a beautiful literary panorama again set primarily in North Carolina's Great Smoky Mountains."

But The Associated Press said "Frazier is constantly overwriting, ladling on far too many side plots and embarrassing everyone with love scenes in which Will and Claire go 'at each other with incandescent yearning, all the bleak hopefulness of youth manifested in our grasping and clashing.'"

Officials lift suspension of Navajo Head Start

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. (AP)—Federal officials have lifted the suspension of funding for the Navajo Nation's troubled Head Start program, and it is expected to resume Oct. 23.

"That's good news for our parents out there who have children who were attending school when the funds were suspended," Navajo President Joe Shirley Jr. said Wednesday. "Now we are back in operation."

The tribe's Head Start and Early Head Start programs were suspended in May after the federal Administration for

Children and Families found local officials had failed to perform background checks on hundreds of employees. An investigation turned up dozens of employees with criminal records.

The suspension was lifted that same month for the Early Head Start program, and the tribe began submitting proposals to the federal government seeking the partial lifting of funding for the Head Start program.

Federal Head Start bureau director Channell Wilkins visited the Head Start program in early September and determined "there is no longer a threat to the health and safety of chil-

dren."

"We have determined that Navajo Nation has sustained its burden to show cause why the suspension of funding for its Head Start program should be rescinded," Wilkins wrote in a letter to Shirley.

The tribe also received \$8.8 million in federal funding Monday, completing its \$24 million budget for the school year. George Hardeen, a spokesman for Shirley, said the money will be used to pay vendors.

The tribe has developed policies that require potential employees to undergo background checks and assessments before

being hired and every three years thereafter as a condition of employment. Employment applications also include fingerprint authorizations and revised declaration forms that ask potential employees about any criminal history.

Shirley said the tribe will work closely with federal officials on the program and vowed it would be "totally different."

"I don't see it ever happening again, Washington suspending our funds for the Head Start program," he said.

Authorities search for serial rapist on the Fort Apache reservation

WHITERIVER, Ariz. (AP)—At least 10 girls and women have been raped on the Fort Apache Reservation by a man who poses as a police officer, federal authorities said.

Since March, nine girls and one young woman—all American Indian—have been attacked on a trail between two housing projects between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., said officials with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The attacks began in March, but the bureau became aware of them only in August. The agency formed a task force of 10 agents to investigate.

"Once they saw it was involving someone posing as law enforcement, the BIA made this a high priority," said BIA agent Warren Youngman.

Bureau officials said Wednesday they had identified the four newest victims after the task

force canvassed the neighborhood where the attacks occurred.

The panel found victims who did not come forward because they thought their attacker was a police officer, Youngman said. "It has created an atmosphere of fear," Youngman said. "When we did our neighborhood canvassing, we had people afraid of our officers."

The attacker is believed to be American Indian, 20 to 40-years-old and of medium height and build.

According to victims, the attacker wears a dark shirt and a dark baseball cap, both bearing "police." White Mountain tribal police officers' uniforms do include black shirts, but the shirts should show a badge above the left breast pocket and a U.S. flag above the right breast pocket, Youngman said.

Court declines Indian tax case

NEW LONDON, Conn. (AP)—The U.S. Supreme Court will not review a case involving a member of the Mashantucket Pequot who had claimed she does not have to pay state income taxes.

The Connecticut Supreme Court had ruled last December

that Jo-Ann Dark-Eyes, a Mashantucket Pequot tribal member who did not live on the reservation must pay state income taxes, a decision hailed as a victory for state authority. The nation's top court, acting without comment Monday, declined to review the Connecticut ruling.

Mark's Auto Repair
541-475-6140
Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mon. - Fri.

FREE ESTIMATES • GUARANTEED WORK
CUSTOM EXHAUST • MUFFLERS • RADIATORS
ENGINES • TRANSMISSIONS • HEATERS
AIR CONDITIONING • ELECTRICAL • BRAKES
SUSPENSION AND MORE...

Fax: 475-2677 880 S. Adams Dr., Madras, OR

Happiness is knowing you made a difference

Reach out to a child

Be a Foster Parent

Call 553-3209 for information