

California voters may be asked to decide casino expansion

SACRAMENTO (AP)—Opponents of a nearly 30 percent expansion of tribal gambling began turning in petition signatures Friday for what could prove to be latest ballot fight over Indian casinos in California.

A group opposing deals between four wealthy Southern California tribes and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said it has col-

lected enough signatures to let voters decide if the agreements should be revoked. It said the rest of the signatures will be turned in by Monday to the secretary of state's office.

The deals, which were approved by the Legislature in June, would allow the four tribes to install as many as 17,000 additional slot machines.

In exchange, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians in Palm Springs, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians in Cabazon, the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians in Temecula and Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation in San Diego would share a percentage of their earnings with the state.

But a coalition of two other

tribes, horsetrack owners and a casino workers' union say the deals are flawed. The coalition consists of the United Auburn Indian Community east of Sacramento, the Pala Band of Mission Indians in Riverside County, Unite HERE International Union and Terry Fancher, managing partner of the parent company of Bay Meadows and

Hollywood Park race tracks.

They point to a state analyst's report that found the gambling expansion for the four tribes would not provide as much money to the state as promised. They also argue the deals amount to one of the single largest expansions of gambling in the nation's history and a major shift in the state's policy toward Indian gam-

bling.

Al Lundeen, spokesman for the coalition, said the group began turning in nearly 700,000 signatures to put four referenda against the compacts on the Feb. 5 presidential primary ballot.

"Voters want to have a say, and they want to say no to this drastic change in gaming policy," Lundeen said.

Filmmaker makes mark with film featuring Navajos

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—When Travis Hamilton set out to make his first feature length film on the Navajo Nation, he lacked money and experience as a director and had a crew that knew even less about moviemaking than he did.

But neither he nor his crew were short on desire to capture a Navajo story in its true setting.

"It really came down to I believed in them and they believed in me," he said.

Hamilton now boasts a movie, "Turquoise Rose," that features Navajos in every Navajo role and a crew that is 90 percent Navajo. That, he believes, is something unique in the film industry.

"I really feel that we're just on the very tip of Native cinema," he said. "For me, it's humbling to kind of look and realize I had a little tiny hand in getting some of that moving."

"Turquoise Rose" is the story of a big-city Navajo girl who has plans to vacation in Europe for the summer with her roommate. But when her grandmother on the reservation becomes sick, she must choose between caring for her or sticking to her vacation plan.

Hamilton crafted the script after being pulled from film school at Scottsdale Community College in Arizona for a 15-month deployment to Iraq. It was there where two Navajo women in his National Guard unit gave him the idea for the story line.

It wasn't far off from his first short film he had produced in school about a young Navajo girl on the reservation.

"I don't know why I was writing a chick flick," he said. "It's just that that's what happened."

Hamilton's main fear was that his idea would be rejected by Navajos, who he said often are leary of a story being told through the eyes of a non-Native.

"I knew going into what I was

trying to do that that would be a factor," he said. "If I was native, I would feel the same way."

But Hamilton armed himself with the Navajo cast and crew, cultural advisers, letters of support from tribal leaders and a resume that included at least 12 other productions filmed on the Navajo Nation.

Hamilton also had lived on the vast reservation for two years before he began writing the script for "Turquoise Rose." As a Mormon missionary, he butchered sheep, hauled wood from the mountains and made bread from scratch.

"It was then up to, 'Let's make the best movie we can and let the movie speak for itself,'" he said.

Lorie Lee, media production specialist for the Navajo Nation Film Office, said the nearly \$1 million film, which debuted in the tribe's capital of Window Rock, Ariz., has a sense of authenticity not seen in other productions.

"I think it was unique in the

way that it was more real," she said. "People that were a part of that were actually Native Americans, young and also Navajo. They could portray what they were a part of because this is the way that they live."

Hamilton has two other productions lined up to be filmed on the Navajo reservation, but he said he's holding off until he breaks even on "Turquoise Rose."

The film, which for the majority of the actors was their first time on screen, was shown in Gallup this week.

"It was a very true and positive story. In the end, hopefully it fostered pride especially with the youth that they need to stay connected to our traditional homeland," said Lee, who has seen the film. "What we have as Dine but also knowing we have to live sometimes in the modern world."

Groups ask UC Berkley to return artifacts

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP)—Native American groups have asked the University of California, Berkeley, to return thousands of museum artifacts to tribes from California to Alaska.

University staff members joined tribal representatives in a protest Friday, calling for tribes to be given a say in the Hearst Museum's decisions on which items in its collection must be returned. The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. is the only museum in the country that has a larger collection of remains than the Hearst.

A reorganization of the museum stripped tribal representatives of their say in deciding which of the museum's artifacts get chosen for return. Now, the decision making in the hands of museum staff.

"It's our ancestral right to bury our dead," said 43-year-old Lenora Starr, a descendant of Oregon's Warm Springs tribe. "Regardless of which nation you are a member of, I consider this our people."

Native American groups are trying to get possession of human remains and cultural artifacts using the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act — a law that orders museums and federal agencies to return as many of the estimated 200,000 remains being held for study as possible.

Assistant Chancellor Beata FitzPatrick said the university is abiding by the law.

"I would like to say our chancellor has very great respect for native peoples," FitzPatrick said. "We believe the university is in compliance with (the law)."

Company begins selling buffalo-cranberry energy bars

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP)—An American Indian-owned company has gone back to its roots for a healthy, natural alternative to the energy bars now on the market: the Tanka Bar, made with South Dakota bison and Wisconsin cranberries.

The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation company came up with the Tanka Bar as a modern-day spinoff of a traditional Lakota food called "wasna" that sustained Great Plains Indians during long trips centuries ago.

The Tanka Bar is produced and marketed by Native American Natural Foods, whose primary owners, Karlene Hunter and Mark Tilsen, also run a direct marketing company, Lakota Express.

After two years of development, the bars launch Friday at the Black Hills Pow Wow in Rapid City and will be available for sale online at www.tankabar.com and eventually at some stores.

Hunter said native people

were healthy before they started eating food with which they were unaccustomed. That has led to epidemic rates of diabetes and other health-related problems, she said.

"We're getting back to a healthy lifestyle and a healthy diet," Hunter said of the new venture. "The buffalo supported everything to us — meat, utensils, clothing. It's coming full circle."

Bison meat is high in protein and low in cholesterol. The cranberries add antioxidants and a sweet, natural flavor, Tilsen said. The bars look like jerky but have a lot more water in them than the dried meat, he said. Each package is sealed with a unique card that keeps the bars fresh.

"It will be the first protein bar on the market with meat in it and the first dried meat product that has fruit in it," Tilsen said.

Each 1-ounce bar has 70 calories and will retail for \$2.25. The smaller Tanka Bites, which

are half the size, also go on sale Friday. Tanka Trail, a mix of shredded buffalo and dried cranberries, is due out in the spring.

Children on the Pine Ridge Reservation who helped test the various recipes dubbed the Tanka Bar "buffalo candy," Tilsen said.

The buffalo snacks are a lot healthier than cheap snacks loaded with processed ingredients, said Dr. Kevin Weiland, an internal medicine physician from Rapid City who wrote a book called "The Dakota Diet" about the health benefits of eating grass-fed buffalo and other such food from the plains.

Weiland was part of an upcoming PBS documentary filmed earlier this year featuring Beau LeBeau, a Lakota man who lost more than 60 pounds in 100 days, lowered his cholesterol and reduced the fat in his liver simply by eating bison and

other natural foods.

"He basically is a diet-controlled diabetic by what he's eating," Weiland said.

One of the people who helped with development of the Tanka Bar, buffalo expert Duane Lammers of Hermosa, said more Americans are discovering the benefits of eating bison, though the market is minuscule compared to beef.

Most jerky eaters are young men, but the Tanka Bar's sweet taste and softer texture will attract health-conscious people of all ages because they taste good, aren't salty and stick to the ribs, he said.

"I think this is a product that is going to appeal to people as a snack, whether it's at a golf course or just out for a day hike," Lammers said.

"If you're not starved to death when you eat the first one, it seems to carry you pretty well to the next meal."

Former Miss South Dakota promotes new Nike shoe

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP)—A former Miss South Dakota, Vanessa Shortbull, is a spokeswoman for Nike's new Air Native N-7, a shoe the company says is designed specifically for the foot structure of American Indians.

The shoes won't be available from retailers. Nike plans to sell the shoes wholesale, for \$42.80 a pair, to Indian wellness programs, reservation schools, the Indian Health Service and similar organizations. Shortbull said the proceeds will go back to Indian health and wellness pro-

grams.

Air Natives will be offered free as incentives to participate in programs to prevent obesity and diabetes. Nike said the N-7 is made to fit the wider and "taller" feet of Indians.

Shortbull, 28, was born in Pine Ridge and grew up in Rapid City. She was Miss South Dakota in 2002.

She'll travel and speak on behalf of Nike as time allows. Shortbull is employed with the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board in Oregon and is in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Muckleshoot tribe buying Salish Lodge at Snoqualmie Falls

SNOQUALMIE, Wash. (AP) — The Muckleshoot Tribe is buying the Salish Lodge at Snoqualmie Falls.

The Muckleshoots beat out the Snoqualmie Tribe, which regards the falls as sacred.

A Muckleshoot spokesman, Rollin Fatland, says it respects

the significance of the site and bought the resort as a business opportunity. The tribe plans no change in the lodge, which was built in 1919.

The sale price was not announced, but King County records show the property is valued at more than \$16 million.

Tribes sift for history in road project

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. (AP) — Some clues to ancient life may emerge from the careful excavation of an American Indian site that could be paved over when highway crews begin construction on a safety improvement project.

The last day of the four-week archaeological dig by University of Oregon researchers and tribal members was Friday. Testing of artifacts from the site indicate that people lived there as far back as 1,500 years ago.

One portion of the site has primarily prehistoric significance while another portion

is the location of potential homes built on top of prehistoric remains, said Pat OGrady, staff archaeologist.

Artifacts found include obsidian flakes called debitage and bone and shell fragments. Arrowheads were unearthed as well as blue beads and even fish scales.

One member of the dig was Deborah Herrera, who grew up in the small town of Beatty along Highway 140 near Klamath Falls. A descendant of the Modoc, Yahooskin and Paiute tribes, Herrera's grandfather was given an allotment of land near Beatty in the early 20th century.

"Whatever they found out

here I wanted to witness first hand," Herrera said.

The state first sought to improve a dangerous curve on the highway in the 1970s, when artifacts were discovered during land surveys.

The curve is a regular site for accidents because vehicles don't slow down enough to make the turn safely, said Tom Connolly, University of Oregon research director.

The discovery of artifacts combined with the presence of wetlands and fish spawning grounds complicated efforts to improve the highway.

Senate panel OKs bill to return bones to tribes

RICHLAND, Wash. (AP)—A U.S. Senate committee has approved a bill that could allow American Indian tribes to claim the ancient bones of Kennewick Man, a 9,300-year-old skeleton found on the banks of the Colum-

bia River in 1996.

This is the third time a change has been proposed to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The change would ensure that federally recognized tribes could claim ancient remains

even if a direct link to a tribe can't be proven.

The act governs the control of American Indian skeletons, requiring museums and federal agencies to return them to tribes if there is evidence that links the remains to the tribes.

MADRAS PLUMBING COMPANY

The Drip Stops Here

541-475-6900
541-410-4357

CCB# 174496