

Around Indian Country

Casino suit funded by Grand Ronde

A lawsuit that seeks to stop the Cowlitz Tribe from opening a casino in Washington is largely being funded by the Grande Ronde Tribe, and private interests.

Clark County has paid "almost nothing" while the city of Vancouver has paid about \$187,000 since 2007, according to reports.

That means funding for the litigation has fallen primarily on the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, non-Indian card rooms, and a group called Citizens Against Reservation Shopping.

The Cowlitz Tribe broke ground on the casino earlier this year, and it's due to open next spring.

The casino will be located near La Center, Washington, about 25 miles north of Portland.

The Grand Ronde Tribes operate the Spirit Mountain Casino in Grande Ronde. It's about 63 miles from Portland, the most populous city in the state.

Leaders of both tribes attended a packed hearing in Washington, D.C., in March as part of the lawsuit. The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals will determine whether the BIA should have approved the land-into-trust application for the Cowlitz Casino Project in light of the U.S. Supreme

Court decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar*.

In the February 2009 ruling, the justices held that the BIA can only acquire land for tribes that were "under federal jurisdiction" as of 1934. The Cowlitz Tribe didn't gain recognition until 2000.

The Supreme Court, however, did not define the meaning of the phrase "under federal jurisdiction" and the BIA has since developed a two-part test to determine when it can take action. The agency concluded that the Cowlitz Tribe qualified, a decision that was upheld by a federal judge in December 2014.

Elders Picnic on July 14

The Warm Springs Senior Program will host the Elders Picnic on Thursday, July 14.

There will be eels, buffalo burgers, hot dogs, fresh fruit including watermelon, water and juice, etc.

Lunch will start at noon.

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