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THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE GRAND RONDE COMMUNITY OF OREGON

JUNE 1994

Gaming waits green light from D.C.



Jim Willis, Mark Mercier and Bruce Thomas discuss the plans for the gaming facility site behind the Natural Resources offices.

By Tracy Olson
Editor

If all goes well, construction of the Tribe's multi-million dollar gaming facility is scheduled to begin in late spring or early summer.

Last summer, Governor Roberts signed the compact agreement with the state, but final approval was delayed in Washington D.C. The Tribe is currently awaiting for an amendment to the Grand Ronde Reservation Act to pass, which would end Interior Department confusion about gaming on the land along Highway 18.

The delay is a result of a technicality in the act.

"Section 20 of IGRA (Indian Gaming Regulatory Act) states that the tribes cannot conduct Class II or Class III gaming on land that wasn't held in trust before October 17, 1988," said Michael Mason, tribal attorney. "The exception to this rule is land that has been part of land restored to a restored tribe."

However, in 1989, after IGRA was passed, Congress appropriated funds for the Tribe to buy the property that is currently the Natural Resources site---and the future site of the gaming facility. The Tribe then sent a team of people back to

Washington D.C. to meet with John Duffy, counsel to Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt. The Tribe hopes to hear of the passage of the amendment within a few days, and announce a definite construction time. Look for more information in future newsletter articles.

The gaming facility is expected to generate an economic shot in the arm for the people of Polk and Yamhill counties, as well as provide revenue for the Tribe that will lead to other economic opportunities and funding for tribal programs.

Chairman attends tribal summit

● President Clinton discusses Indian issues with tribal leaders.

By Tracy Olson

Tribal Council Chairman Mark Mercier attended a day-long conference with President Clinton on April 29.

More than 300 Indian and tribal leaders gathered together on the White House South Lawn to discuss Native American issues with the president. Hillary Rodham Clinton was also present, as was Vice President Al Gore, Tipper Gore and the full cabinet.

Clinton assured the tribes that Native American concerns were important to the administration, and promised to "dramatically improve the federal government's relationship with the tribes" and to support Native American religious freedom.

Other topics of discussion included natural resources, economic development, federal monies for health care, and education.

The meeting resulted from repeated requests from tribal officials all over the United States to have an opportunity to express their concerns. During the meeting, Budget Director Leon E. Panetta told tribal leaders a budget amend-



President Clinton

ment had been sent to Congress calling for \$125 million to be restored to the Indian Health Service budget. The money was cut out of Clinton's Fiscal Year 1995 budget.

"We heard you," Panetta told tribal leaders at the D.C. Sheraton Hotel. "We listened to your concerns."

Clinton acknowledged the fact that although leaders from every federally recognized tribe were invited to the gathering, some couldn't attend because their tribes don't have the financial resources.

"I know many of you come here at great personal sacrifice to yourselves and your tribes," he said

The last time a group of tribal leaders were invited to the White House was in 1822, by President James Monroe.

Survey answers will assist in future planning

This month, Grand Ronde tribal members were mailed a special survey asking them to voice their opinions regarding the services and programs they would like the Tribe to maintain, establish, or expand. During the month of June, there will be a series of community meetings held in various Oregon towns. The topic of the meetings will be: What do tribal members think of the strategies and policies as described in the mailout and what modifica-

tions should be made based on the survey responses?

The times and dates of the meetings are as follows:

City: Eugene
Monday, June 13, 6-10 p.m.
Willamette High School

City: Salem
Wednesday, June 15, 6-10 p.m.
Chemeketa Community College
South Campus: Building 50
Rooms 111, 112

City: Portland
Monday, June 27, 6-10 p.m.
Benson High School

City: Grand Ronde
Wednesday, June 29, 6-10 p.m.
Tribal Community Center

Also, feel free to write or call with questions. There will be more information on strategic planning in future newsletters.

Tribal Council nominees

During the May general meeting, nominations were held for the three open Tribal Council positions. Elections will take place September 10, 1994 and the results will be posted at the September 11 general meeting. Tribal members wishing to register to vote in this election may do so in the Enrollment Department. Eligible tribal members may vote in person or by absentee ballot. (See related story, page 2.) The candidates will be profiled in next month's newsletter. The nominees are:

Robert Haller
Merle Holmes
Tim Holmes
Joyce Kirk
Matthew Kirkland
Earl "Butch" Labonte
Eugene LaBonte
Merle Leno

Reyn Leno
Bob Mercier
Dean Mercier
June Olson
Ed Pearsall
Margaret Provost
Candy Robertson
Wilbur West