

# Tribe Proposes Idea To Fund Baseball Stadium in Portland

■ Oregon Schools could benefit from the proposal, media provides major coverage.

By Brent Merrill

At *Smoke Signal's* press time, Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy was meeting with Portland Mayor Vera Katz to discuss the Tribes' idea of possibly funding a Major League Baseball Stadium in Portland in exchange for the opportunity to establish a Tribally-owned and operated casino in the state's largest metropolitan area.

As news of the idea leaked out to the media early last week, Tribal officials were shocked and surprised at the attention the idea was getting, but were pleased with the initial reaction of the media and the citizens of Oregon. People, including Governor Ted Kulongoski, Portland Mayor Vera Katz and Portland City Council member Dan Saltzman, seemed to be open to the Tribe's idea and that openness was reflected in several television polls that favored the idea of potentially bringing Major League Baseball to Portland.

Following his State of the State Address — Governor Kulongoski said he was willing to listen to any ideas that might help improve Oregon's struggling economy and help the state's Native people.

"They (The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde) are sovereign people and if this is what they think helps them and their people, I think it is something they should advance," said Kulongoski in a KATU interview with reporter Katy Brown.



Courtesy of Associated Press

Portland Mayor Vera Katz

On Thursday (February 27) Mayor Katz at the very least seemed intrigued by the idea after the meeting.

"Opening discussions about the Tribe's interest, the Tribe's interest to stimulate the economy in this community and the state and help us perhaps with some funding for education and being partners," said Katz as reported by KOIN's Drew Mikkelson.

Portland City Councilman Dan Saltzman was positive in his response to questions from the news media as the story broke on KGW news reports.

"I don't have any philosophical problems whatsoever with a casino in the metropolitan area," said Saltzman, who said he liked the idea of the city gaining Major League Baseball and not having to use public funds.

The Tribe sees the proposal as an idea that could be a win-win for the Tribe, and possibly other Tribes, and the city.

"We really believe in giving back," said Kennedy. "We believing in assisting when at all possible."

After the meeting with the Mayor, Kennedy also sounded optimistic.

"We have mutual concerns," said Kennedy. "We have a community development fund that one of our primary emphasis is education. We all know what the education situation is like in Oregon and it's a shared concern."

Kennedy said there is a possibility that if the proposal reaches fruition, some casino profits could be designated to go towards improving Oregon's education needs.

Katz and Kennedy said there would be future meetings to discuss the Tribe's idea.

**"They (The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde) are sovereign people and if this is what they think helps them and their people, I think it is something they should advance."**

**~Governor Ted Kulongoski**



Several things must happen for this proposal to be more than pleasant, timely discussions about the need to improve the state's economy, education situation and the desire to attract professional baseball to Portland. The Tribe wants to remain competitive in the current gaming landscape in Oregon.

Saltzman said he has been worried about the use of public funds to lure the Expos to Portland given the current economical situation in Oregon and was not opposed to teaming up with the Tribe in order to ease the financial pressure of acquiring a team.

"If they are willing to step forward and fund a stadium, I think that is one down and two to go," said Saltzman.

First, Governor Kulongoski is the man who must decide if off reservation gaming is going to be allowed in Oregon. Recently, when pressed on the off-reservation issue, Kulongoski deflected the controversy by saying that the cat had already been let out of the bag when the Siletz Tribe was allowed to build Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City off of their reservation. Any off-reservation casino must be approved by the Governor's office and the Interior Secretary Gale Norton.

Next, Portland would have to find a legitimate, willing owner or owners that could put together a realistic and attractive proposal to Major League Baseball in order for the move of the Montreal Expos to the northwest to happen. The new ownership and their proposal would have to be better than the package currently being discussed by potential ownership groups in Northern Virginia and Washington D.C.

Finally, the move would have to be approved by Selig and the other team owners.

Katz and a team from Portland will make a presentation to Major League Baseball at the league's meetings next month in Arizona.

One of the next steps for the Tribe will be to talk with the other Tribes in Oregon to see what their reaction to the proposal is and what interest in the project they might have. ■



Photo by Brent Merrill

**Baseball Proposal** — Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy (right) is hoping Interior Secretary Gale Norton (left) will approve the Tribe's offer to fund a Major League Baseball stadium in Portland in exchange for the right to establish and operate a casino in the city. Norton and Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski would both have to agree to the proposal for it to happen.



Photo by Peta Tinda

## Tribal Member Jake McKnight Joins Crew Searching for Shuttle Debris

Debris continued from front page  
nization of the search."

In addition to the six Tribal employees, the team also will include four U.S. Forest Service workers from the Siuslaw National Forest and nine from the Willamette National Forest.

The team's special expertise is in gridding the search areas by walking as well as following compass lines in rough vegetation. "The work is often difficult," according to a memo from the USFS's Southern Area Director,

"walking ten feet apart for 12 hours a day through forests and fields, which are often cold and wet. Living conditions are very similar to a large fire. Crews are camping, meals are provided by caterers and shower units are in place."

Making the effort more interesting, a "What to Expect" news release noted, "At this time, temperatures are generally too low for snakes to be very active, however, if we get more than two days in a row of 70-degree temperatures, they may be-

come active. The two most common types of snakes are copperhead, cottonmouths and alligators are rare to encounter this time of year and are slow moving with the lower temperatures; watch where you put your hands."

The assignment was to last a minimum of two-weeks but could continue for as long as a month, said Nepstad.

"It's too bad it has to be done," said Tribal Council member Ed Larsen, "but I'm glad and honored we're able to help in any way we can."



Jake McKnight



Brandi Duff



Bill Borck



Shane Harmon



Jeremiah Spencer



Joshua Clift