

## NATIVE NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

### Stillaguamish Betting Casino Will Bring Financial Independence

ARLINGTON, WA. (AP) — Members of the Stillaguamish Tribe are betting that razing its village and replacing it with a 40,000-square-foot casino will bring in a new era of financial independence.

And while many Tribal members have welcomed the casino decision, others say they worry the casino could lead to a loss of cultural connections.

"It's devastating a lot of our people," said Paki Martin, a former Tribal Council member.

All but two of the 30 federally funded houses where Tribal members had lived since 1984 were torn down in January to make room for the casino, which is scheduled to open within nine months.

For years, the 190-member Tribe resisted the lure of gambling revenue, focusing instead on economic development projects deemed more culturally enriching. Various small business endeavors on or near their 20-acre reservation either failed to turn a profit or closed, including a wholesale plant nursery, a pharmacy and an espresso stand.

Frustrated by those failures, the

Tribe changed its compact with the state in December 2000 to include the possibility of running a casino, but didn't publicly acknowledge it was planning a casino until November.

Countering criticism that the Tribe misled people, the Tribe's Executive Director, Eddie Goodridge, Jr., said inquiries about rumors of a casino weren't specific enough.

"Nobody asked me whether we were going to build a casino on this site," said Goodridge. "They asked me about the 80 acres (a Tribal property about a mile east), not here."

Critics complain that the casino is being built in a residential area not zoned for commercial use, far from Interstate 5 and without sewer or water hookups nearby. But it's the Tribe's only large parcel of trust land.

When American Indian Tribes buy land, they can apply to have the federal government put it into trust status. That essentially immunizes the parcel from local land-use laws.

Goodridge has said if the casino were to be moved, the Tribe would develop high-end housing on the village site.

The Tribe has spent \$5 million in investor money to relocate 28 households. Of those, 19 got replacement houses worth up to \$215,000. Nine got up to \$90,000 for their houses.

Goodridge, whose father, Ed Goodridge, Sr., is Tribal Chairman,

anticipate the casino will generate, but say they expect the Tribe to be able to repay a \$36 million loan within five years.

The Tribe is planning to use casino profits to buy more land. One parcel in its sights is 19 acres of farmland

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~Paki Martin

Former Tribal Council Member

said he and his family are interested in Tribal culture but that others aren't focused on sharing what they know.

"I'll fully admit that a large portion of our family don't know a lot about how the powwows work," said Goodridge Jr. "We don't know the language. They won't show us."

Several Tribal members declined requests for interviews, saying they feared repercussions. Some said they feared they could be sued because of nondisclosure agreements they signed about the casino project.

The Tribe and its investors have refused to disclose how much money they

next to 2.5 acres of trust land at Island Crossing. Another is 80 acres about a mile away from where the casino is planned. The Tribe hopes to develop a rural cluster subdivision on those 80 acres, another potential source of revenue.

Meanwhile, Martin says she's worried that the Tribe has not formed a corporation that could protect against lawsuits from investors in case the casino fails.

"There won't be a Tribe in 15 years if the casino doesn't make it," she said. "The investors will own it."

### American Indians Mark 30 Years Since Standoff With Feds

WOUNDED KNEE, S.D. (AP) — In 1973, the American Indian Movement occupied this Pine Ridge Indian Reservation village and held federal agents at bay for 71 days in a siege that left two Indians dead.

Recently, a peaceful ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of the takeover attracted a crowd that spread out in all directions from the burial spot where the U.S. Cavalry had killed an estimated 300 Indians in December 1890.

It was the same site as the 1973 siege.

"I would like to pay tribute to those warriors who fell here 30 years ago," AIM co-founder Dennis Banks told the large crowd that lined the hill containing the grave.

"We stand here today at Wounded Knee to declare that this be a national holiday. A national day of recognition."

The day started with walks from four directions toward Wounded Knee. Some people carried banners; AIM flags and upside down American and Canadian flags as they negotiated mud puddles made by

melting snow. Others rode horseback, wearing light jackets in the bright sunshine. Many were children.

James Cuny, 12, of Martin, carried a staff taller than him. His father is part of AIM and the boy said he believes much good came from the 1973 standoff.

"It brought them all together."

Robert and Phinet Red Owl of Batesland said they are pleased with the progress of Indian issues since 1973. But health care, education and housing are still lacking, they said.

Phinet held a portrait of Robert's late mother, Nellie Red Owl.

"She supported the American Indian Movement. She was one of the first supporters," said Phinet Red Owl.

Though people came from all over the country, some Indians whose ancestors survived the 1890 massacre and stayed after the 1973 occupation ignored the events.

They said AIM is an outside group that used the symbolic past of Wounded Knee to advance its own cause and those of its members but

has done nothing to help people who lost homes and other property in 1973.

"Since '73 there hasn't been much progress. The population grew but poverty and unemployment are still just as high," said Belva Hollow Horn Emery.

Julie Shot To Pieces has collected a stack of papers from Wounded Knee residents who listed what they lost during the occupation. The documents were part of an unsuccessful attempt to get the federal government to compensate.

Among the buildings destroyed in 1973 was the town's only store and museum. Now the only employers in town are the post office and Head Start, though children have to meet in a condemned building, she said.

"These people that are talking - they don't have to live here. They all have stores," said Shot To Pieces.

"Our focus is to rebuild. There's nothing here," said Phyllis Hollow Horn.

AIM could have made Indians

more sovereign without inviting the violence, she said. "It's everyday people like us that make those changes."

Banks said the occupation helped advance education, health care and economic development for Indians, although "the struggle is not over."

AIM would like Tribes with thriving casinos to share some of the wealth with poorer, isolated reservations, he said.

"I think gaming should be spreading more resources around," said Banks after speaking to the crowd.

Vernon Bellecourt, another AIM founder, acknowledged that the standoff did hurt some people. But much good came out of it, he said.

Bellecourt invited AIM's detractors to meet with the group in effort to heal.

"We have not stepped back. We continue to move forward," he told the crowd before naming some of the people who died at the site.

"It is their blood that nourishes this sacred ground and continues to nourish us."

### School Board Votes To Reinstate American Indian Logo, Opposition Arrested, Jailed

OSSEO, WI. (AP) — The Osseo-Fairchild School Board has decided to reinstate its controversial Chieftain logo, but will hold a referendum later this spring to ask the community to advise it about the issue.

The board recently voted 5-1 to reinstate the logo until the referendum. The logo won't be placed on athletic jerseys or painted on the gymnasium floor, but students will be allowed to wear clothing with the logo to school, said Board Clerk Rollie Colby.

Colby said the board needed to base its decisions on the majority opinion.

Matt Stewart, an American Indian from La Crosse, countered, "Should the Emancipation Proclamation have

been put to a vote?"

The school district began phasing

high school logo.

Board Vice President Duane Merritt

**"I'm willing to go to jail to make a point here."**

~Harvey Gunderson,

Wife is a member of the Oneida Nation

out the American Indian head logo in the mid-1990s. The board voted in July to officially remove the logo that many say is offensive.

The board voted to keep the school's nickname of Chieftains or Chiefs but replace the logo with the letters "O-F" on school materials.

Voters recalled four members of the school board in November over the

was the lone member opposing the non-binding referendum.

"I don't need a referendum to tell me what is right or wrong," said Merritt. "We certainly don't want to discriminate against anybody."

A member of American Indians and Other Patriotic Americans Against Indian Logos said the group planned to sue the board before the referen-

dum, which could come as early as the April 1 general election.

"Every time that we see a piece of clothing with an Indian head logo on it, it is like a slap in the face of American Indians and the families of those Indians," said Harvey Gunderson, whose wife, Carol, is a member of the Oneida Nation.

Colby said there was no evidence proving the logo is hurtful.

Gunderson was arrested for disorderly conduct during the meeting after he tried to read from a prepared statement. Police escorted another man peacefully from the meeting.

"I'm willing to go to jail to make a point here," said Gunderson.