

Tribal Leaders Take Their Case To Nation's Capital

WASHINGTON, D.C.
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wards Indian gaming should be fair and consistent for all Tribes and that there should not be a separate policy for each individual Tribe.

In order to make their point at the federal and highest state levels, Tribal officials traveled to Washington D.C. to bring their message and to deliver a proposed amendment to the current Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) Section 20 that pertains specifically to off-reservation casinos.

"We are very hesitant of amending IGRA, but we recognize the need to address controversy that has surrounded the off-reservation debate and threatens the delicate balance of the Indian gaming industry throughout the country," said Grand Ronde Tribal Council Vice-Chairwoman Angie Blackwell.

The key to the amendment proposed by Grand Ronde is the idea that Tribes must concur with each other if a Tribe wants to encroach on another's traditional areas. Many of the Tribes brought to the



Department of
Interior Secretary
Gale Norton

Tribe's treaty signers was located near the current Cascade Locks site.

Grand Ronde officials believe that gaming is only one of the issues at stake and say that cultural issues like the dissemination of artifacts and other culturally significant finds are also of extreme importance.

Blackwell, Leno and Giffen kept a whirlwind pace during the three-day trip to D.C. They met with State Representatives, Senators and Congressional delegates and their staff in crowded offices and historic hallways between official business like voting on Hur-

ricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita relief for the people of Louisiana and Mississippi. Sometimes the officials made brief appearances — Earl Blumenauer left a meeting to meet with Grand Ronde leaders for less than a minute and Senator Ron Wyden stopped his busy schedule long enough to say hello while each of his sentences took him a step closer to the exit. Some officials, like Congresswoman Darlene Hooley, sat down with our leaders and staff for half an hour or more.

The Halls of

Congress — Tribal Council members Reyn Leno (back to camera, left) and Angie Blackwell, Tribal Attorney Rob Greene and Public Affairs consultant Justin Martin met in the hallway of the Nation's Capitol with Oregon State Representative Earl Blumenauer (in bow tie) and staff Danny Ly. Grand Ronde leaders were explaining their opposition to a casino project in the Columbia River Gorge to Oregon's elected officials. This statue of Chief Washakie of Wyoming territory was the only visible tribute to Native Americans at the capitol.



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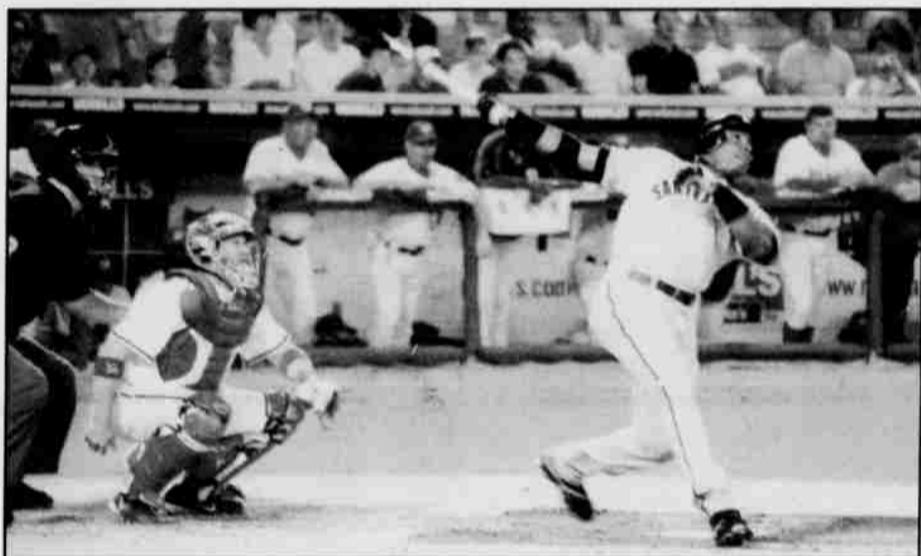
Grand Ronde Tribal Council members made the point that Cascade Locks is part of the historical and ceded lands of Grand Ronde — specifically the people of the Kalapuya, the Clackamas and the Molalla. Grand Ronde officials believe that they should be consulted and brought into the planning process early on if another Tribes wishes to encroach on the Tribes traditional lands. Grand Ronde officials said they believe such an amendment to the current IGRA language would benefit all Tribes in Oregon and throughout the country.

Blackwell, Leno and Giffen took turns filling in officials about the past and present situations that Grand Ronde Tribal members face in regards to culture and economic status. Some of the differences between the two Tribes current situations are stark — Warm Springs was never terminated and has lived on their land from time immemorial. Grand Ronde Tribes were terminated in 1954 and relocated

throughout the country by misguided government policy toward relocation. Warm Springs' Tribal members live on 750,000 acres of land and enjoy many economic development opportunities like wind and hydro power. Grand Ronde has a 9,811 acre reservation that consists of timber land.

Warm Springs' officials have tried to move their casino operations to what they consider to be the more lucrative Columbia River Gorge since 1998. Warm Springs' officials initially sought permission to develop the land they own in Hood River but faced opposition not only from their own Tribal members but the people of Hood River as well.

Ties between the two Tribes run deep. Early efforts by Grand Ronde people to achieve recognition of their federal status were supported by Warm Springs' leaders and the current chairwoman of the Grand Ronde Tribe — Cheryl Kennedy lived on the Warm Springs Reservation as a child. The connection of the Tribal people is one of the main reasons Grand Ronde officials want Oregon's leaders to understand their opposition to a Gorge casino. The opposition is based on the fairness, or lack of fairness, in the current policy of Oregon Governor Kulongoski not problems between the Tribes. ■



Number 707 — The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde offered to build a baseball stadium in 2004 in hopes to lure the then-Montreal Expos to Portland. Governor Ted Kulongoski turned down the Tribe's proposal to bring Major League Baseball to Oregon and the team instead went to Washington D.C. and became the Nationals. This season, the Nationals first in the nation's capitol, brought superstar baseball players like the San Francisco Giant's controversial homerun slugger Barry Bonds to town on a regular basis and boosted the city's economy. Bonds, pictured here hitting career homerun number 707, led his team to a 5-1 victory over the Washington Nationals on Wednesday, September 21.

Rumor Brings Crowd To Mid-Week Tribal Council Meeting

■ Unsigned letter warning of per-capita and Elder pension cuts is debunked.

By Ron Karten

A Tribal Council meeting was held on Wednesday, September 28, at the Governance Building's Council Chambers. The moveable wall at the back of the chambers was opened and the

crowd of more than 150 spilled out across the atrium.

Here are the highlights:

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl Kennedy called the meeting to order. Tribal Elder and council member Wesley "Buddy" West offered the invocation.

"I want all of our Tribal members to know that we're aware that this information was circulated about the Tribal Council's intent to reduce the Elders' Pension Plan and to reduce per capita; and when we looked at it, it was surprising because the Tribal Council has not even discussed the 2006

budget," said Kennedy.

Department managers will present their budgets to Tribal Council beginning October 14, said Kennedy. After that, the Tribal Council will formulate a budget that will be presented to the general membership for their comment scheduled November 6 at the General Council meeting. Comments will be accepted through December 15 when the Tribal Council will vote on the budget.

"No action has been taken," she said, "and none has been discussed."

Tribal members described the problems caused by meth addiction in the community, and potential solutions. At the time of the meeting, the Tribe was awaiting word on a nearly \$600,000 grant to be split between the two years of a proposed program for addressing the meth problem in the community. That grant has been approved.

Tribal Elder Betty Bly said that if employees get a cost-of-living raise each year, then Tribal Elders also ought to

get an annual cost-of-living raise.

Another Tribal member said that many casino employees do not get annual cost-of-living raises, and even after 10 years, they do not get financial bonuses but only "a piece of paper" saying thank you.

There was a complaint about entries on a website concerning Tribal activities; and another about Tribal Council member Chris Mercier's tape recording the meeting. A number of people expressed their disappointment that more Tribal members are not hired for casino and governance positions.

Tribal members questioned Community Fund grants to the Polk County Sheriff's office when it is not adequately serving the Tribal community. Tribal Council member Angie Blackwell said that the Community Board is planning to reduce funding for the Polk County Sheriff in the years ahead while also forging closer ties with the Yamhill County Sheriff's office. ■



Sign Of The Times — After a rumor went around the community about per-capita and Elder pension cuts, Tribal Elder Marcia Bolton displayed this sign in the front of her house. "They (Tribal Council) don't have a right to touch that money," said Bolton. "It belongs to the Tribal membership."