

Casino smoking ban effort extinguished

American Lung Association backs away from idea

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

An effort to expand Oregon's smoking ban in restaurants and bars to Tribal casinos has been snuffed out by a seemingly unlikely group – the American Lung Association of Oregon.

In late September, Lung Association Executive Director Dana Kaye sent a letter to Gov. Ted Kulongoski withdrawing the demand to expand the prohibition, which took effect in Oregon's restaurants and bars on Jan. 1, 2009.

Kaye said in her letter that the Lung Association wanted to raise the issue and "not demand action" from the state. She said there was

a "misunderstanding" between her and Portland attorney John DiLorenzo, who wrote to Kulongoski calling for action against Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes concerning the smoking ban.

DiLorenzo had contacted the Lung Association, saying he wanted to take on the issue of smoking inside Oregon's nine Native American casinos. He argued that the same rules applying to Oregon bars and taverns should apply inside Tribal casinos.

However, Tribal representatives said that DiLorenzo was misreading state-Tribal gaming compacts and expressed concerns about an

erosion of Tribal sovereignty.

Grand Ronde representatives cited the fact that Spirit Mountain Casino and Lodge are already 61 percent smoke-free and that the Tribe has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on air systems to keep smoking area air as clean as possible.

Kaye apparently did not like DiLorenzo's approach, saying in a letter to him that she was returning a contract sent to the Lung Association's office unsigned.

Kulongoski's spokeswoman, Anna Richter Taylor, said, "The governor's staff and Tribal leadership's staff continue to meet to try to resolve this amicably. And at some point in the near future the

governor will meet directly with Tribal chairs."

"We really haven't changed our position of being responsible providers of entertainment in the valley," Spirit Mountain Casino Chief Executive Officer Rodney Ferguson said.

"Our previous comments acknowledging the fact that the majority — 61 percent — of our property is non-smoking shows our concern for the guest, including the fact of increasing the number of non-smoking guest rooms from 70 percent to 80 percent during the past nine months. This is in addition to the air filtration enhancements installed at the beginning of the year on the casino floor." ■

Donations needed

The Grand Ronde Community Resource Center has a few fundraisers and other projects planned this year and is seeking donations, etc.

• **Community Cookbook:** Looking for your favorite recipe. If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please e-mail it to grcrc@hotmail.com or mail to GRCRC, P.O. Box 55, Grand Ronde, OR 97347. Please include the name of dish, recipe, your name for publication in the cookbook and a phone number to contact you if there are any questions.

• **Food Preservation:** The center is still seeking food dehydrators for its food preservation program. If you have one you'd like to donate, please e-mail or call and leave a message at 503-879-5731.

• **Coupon Program:** The center is looking for food and non-food item coupons for its coupon program. ■

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