

Leading gubernatorial hopefuls oppose Gorge casino

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

It is increasingly likely that the next governor of Oregon will not be supportive of the Warm Springs Tribe's proposal to build a new casino in Cascade Locks in the Columbia River Gorge.

After recent informational meetings with the Grand Ronde Tribal Council, the leading candidates in both the Republican and Democratic primary races issued statements in opposition to the casino proposal.

This will mean a sharp change in policy in the governor's office. Current Gov. Ted Kulongoski, who is being term-limited out of office, and the Warm Springs signed a compact in 2005 allowing the project to proceed, but the proposal has been stalled since then in the U.S. Department of Interior decision-making process.

Numerous hearings were held by the Department of Interior in Oregon and Washington state in March 2008 regarding the Warm Springs proposal. No decision has been issued.

"It would be very difficult for that proposal to become reality," said Tribal member and Tribal lobbyist Justin Martin to *The Oregonian* about the gubernatorial candidates' stands and their effect on the Warm Springs proposal.

On the Republican side, former Portland Trail Blazer Chris Dudley,

In their own words

"I opposed this proposal as governor and I will continue to oppose it if elected to another term. There are other good alternatives for the Warm Springs Tribe and it is time they avail themselves of a productive alternative to site a facility on their own reservation lands. This issue has gone on for too long and it is time for us all to be a part of putting it behind us."

— John Kitzhaber

"In keeping with my support in only allowing casinos on Tribal lands, I would oppose this specific off-reservation proposal in the Gorge."

— Bill Bradbury

"I am opposed to off-reservation gaming, and to an expansion of gambling in general. While I respect the sovereignty of Oregon's Native American Tribes and the casinos you now operate within reservation boundaries, I do not support off-reservation casinos and specifically oppose an off-reservation casino in Cascade Locks, a private casino in Wood Village, or other projects that would represent a proliferation of gambling in Oregon beyond its current level."

— Chris Dudley

"I support the current policy ... and oppose the Gorge casino."

— Allen Alley

who visited the Grand Ronde Tribal Council on March 31, said through a spokesman that he does not support building a casino at Cascade Locks or in the Columbia River Gorge "under any circumstances."

Allen Alley, who visited with the Grand Ronde Tribal Council on March 24, said that he would oppose a Gorge casino if elected governor.

On the Democratic side, former Secretary of State Bill Bradbury told the Grand Ronde Tribal Council during a March 24 visit that he did not think making an exception for one Tribe under the state's "one casino on reservation land" policy makes sense. He also said he was concerned about allowing Tribes to move closer to population centers, taking good-

paying jobs out of economically depressed rural Oregon.

Former Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, who has a long record of opposing the Gorge casino proposal, said the Warm Springs Tribe has "good alternatives" on its existing reservation — the largest in the state — in north-central Oregon.

Kitzhaber, during his March 31 visit with the Grand Ronde Tribal Council, said he had called Department of Interior staff to let them know that if he is elected governor for a third time, he will not support a Gorge casino.

Martin said the Grand Ronde Tribe has donated \$20,000 to Kitzhaber's campaign, \$2,000 each to Bradbury and Dudley, and \$1,000 to Alley.

Martin said the donations reflect the Tribe's support in the race for governor. The primary election is Tuesday, May 18.

Grand Ronde has long opposed the Warm Springs casino proposal, citing the inequity of abandoning Oregon's "one casino on reservation land" rule, especially after other Tribes have invested heavily in their gaming sites that are not close to major metropolitan areas, such as Portland or Salem.

The Warm Springs Tribe has a casino — Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort — on its reservation in central Oregon just north of Madras and a one-hour drive from state's eighth largest city, Bend. ■

Photo finish



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member and Willamina High School senior Joel Selwyn, left, talks with Tribal member and classmate Halona Butler during his photography show at the Tribal Community Center on Friday, April 30. Selwyn is interested in photography and the show was part of his senior project.

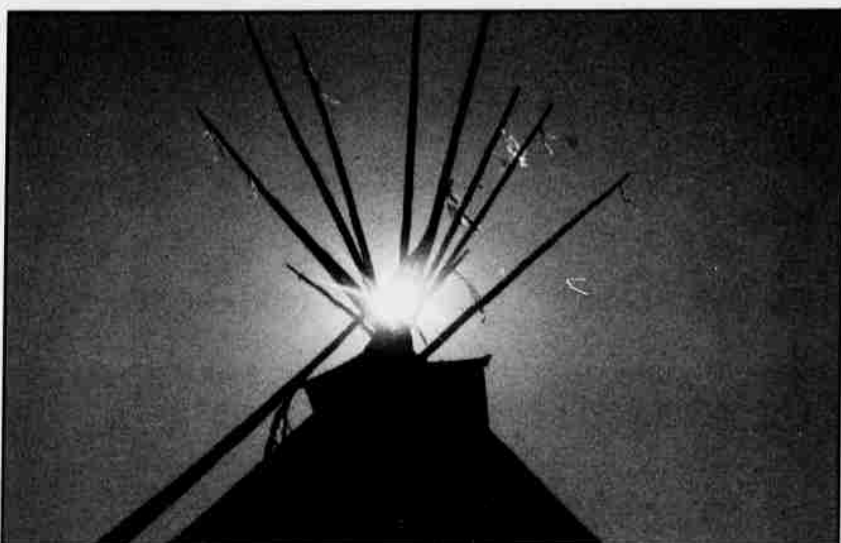


Photo by Joel Selwyn

One of Joel Selwyn's favorite photos that he took at the Grand Ronde Veterans' Powwow in July 2007 was displayed in his show.

United Indians seeking artwork

United Indians of All Tribes Foundation is celebrating its 40th anniversary by seeking submission of artwork exploring the theme of Native American activism and reflecting the story of the foundation's beginning.

In 1970, Bernie Whitebear and other Native American activists made a stand at Fort Lawton military base in a fight for Native rights and recognition.

The criteria for artwork is that it contains an image or reference to Whitebear, keeps in mind the "40th anniversary" theme, is two-dimensional and suitable for use on posters, T-shirts and other promotional materials, and is no larger than 4 feet by 6 feet.

To enter, send an e-mail up of up to five jpegs to charris@unitedindians.org before 5 p.m. Monday, May 31. Each entry should include the number of artistic images sent and the body of the e-mail should include a corresponding list of titles, description of media and techniques, framed size of each piece and name and contact information.

Winner will receive a month-long exhibition in the Sacred Circle Gallery at Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center, plus wide exposure via the foundation's 25th annual Seafair Powwow promotional materials.

For more information, visit the Web site www.unitedindians.org or contact Chrissy Harris at the aforementioned e-mail or call 206-829-2219. ■

Stamp of approval



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, left, and Vice Chair Reyn Leno gift a Pendleton blanket to Grand Ronde Postmaster Phil Burris (Choctaw-Cherokee) as a thank you for his years of service on Monday, May 10. Burris has been at the Grand Ronde post office for eight years. Also there for the presentation were Tribal Council members Steve Bobb Sr., Toby McClary, Chris Mercier, June Sell-Sherer and Valorie Sheker.