

# Anti-casino foes start campaign

By Dean Rhodes  
*Smoke Signals editor*

WOOD VILLAGE — Opponents of a private casino proposed at the shuttered greyhound park in this East Multnomah County suburb of Portland kicked off their campaign on Monday, Sept. 11, calling the image portrayed in television ads inundating Oregon airwaves “fake.”

During a news conference held near the proposed casino site in Wood Village, the critics warned that “The Grange” would be bigger and more damaging to the community than the “entertainment center” described by its developers.

“This would be the largest casino in the western United States,” said Cynara Lilly, spokeswoman for It’s Still a Bad Idea Committee.

Casino supporters have placed two measures on the Nov. 6 ballot — 82 and 83 — that would amend the Oregon Constitution to allow

privately owned casinos and specifically OK a private casino in Wood Village.

Backers are two wealthy Lake Oswego businessmen and a Canadian investment firm.

In 2010, the same pro-casino coalition was only able to get one amendment on the Oregon ballot — the one specifically allowing a private casino in Wood Village — and Oregon voters rejected the idea by a 68 percent to 32 percent margin.

Casino opponents said that the current advertising campaign is deceptive because the main revenue generator would be a casino.

“They can say whatever they want to,” Lilly said, noting that the ballot language allows up to 3,500 slot machines and 150 table and other games. She said that developers could build a casino and restaurant and not all of the other amenities being promised in TV ads.

“It’s important that voters clearly see that they’re voting on,” Lilly said.

Teresa Bright, who lives three blocks away from the proposed casino site, said, “I think that would wreck my neighborhood.”

Retired Gresham Police Chief Carla Piluso said already bad traffic congestion in the area would be worse and that the casino parking lot would become a magnet for crime. “That’s a rich environment for car break-ins,” she said.

Wood Village does not have a police force and any calls would have to be answered by the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office and nearby local jurisdictions, which includes Gresham.

“The burden on law enforcement is going to be huge,” Piluso said.

In addition, there is only one exit on Interstate 84 for Wood Village and it is already designated a safety corridor because of frequent

accidents with the current level of traffic. Projections say a casino would add an additional 3,000 car trips per day.

Lilly said that the anti-casino side will not be able to match the millions of dollars currently being spent on TV advertising and statewide mailers, but added they will plan to run a serious campaign that will get their message out.

Oregon Tribes, including the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, are opposed to the private casino initiative because it would cannibalize Oregon Lottery funding and have a detrimental effect on Tribal casino revenues.

Tribal casino revenues fund health care, educational scholarships, Elder pensions and governmental operations for Oregon’s nine federally recognized Tribes. ■

*Includes information from The Oregonian.*

# Rogue River was home to Indian bands

ENCAMPMENT continued  
from front page

a cookout with traditional foods and heard great and tragic stories of the Tribe’s past.

Hosts were Taylor and Emily Grimes, owners of Rogue Jet Boat Adventure Center at the newly named Wapiti (Elk) River Park. They have established a relationship with the Tribe as they build stories of the past into their boating adventures.

“We try to educate people by treating our ancestors as people no different than we are today,” said Taylor, a strapping outdoorsman with a heavy hand on the powerboat controls. “They were families, and like a lot of snowbirds who come to the area today because of the gentle winters and pristine natural resources, so did the Native peoples.”

The river park is centered just south of the Rattlesnake Rapids among countless Indian camps, Grimes said. “The Rogue River was home to gobs of Indian bands.”

On Friday night, encampment participants enjoyed a traditional salmon dinner and craft demonstrations by Jordan Mercier and others. Grimes also told stories from the history of the area.

In 1821, he said, when French ex-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

From left, Makai Simmons, 9, Miguel Adams, 11, and David DeMarco, 12, play on plastic chairs in the Rogue River during the Tribal Encampment in Eagle Point on Saturday, Sept. 8.

plorers came through the area, they came down the center of the valley where Native bands lived. Among their diaries, one wrote, “They are quite the wild lot,” and nicknamed them, “the Rogues.”

“It was another 20 years before the Rogues encountered Europeans,” Grimes said.

The 1849-50 gold rush in southern Oregon started the settling of the valley by Europeans, and miners moved north looking to expand the search for gold. Two years of

Grimes said. “If the settlers could start an Indian War, the government would pay them to fight it. And so, in 1856, three dozen miners and settlers raided and killed 30 Indian women and children at Little Butte Creek” just south of the encampment.

Within the week, the Rogues killed 70 white settlers and the war had begun.

On Saturday, during a sunny afternoon, Miguel Adams, 11, David DeMarco, 12, along with Kevin and Robin Simmons’ children — Kaelynn, 11, Makai, 9, Shasta, 7, Seq’hiya, 6, and even Qwinem, 1 — played in the water and on the shore for hours.

They sat in chairs in the river; pulled out a rowboat and paddled up and down along the shore; rolled on the grasslands by the river, and, of course, went for rides in the jet boat.

“Making memories,” said Grimes.

Grimes also is working with the Tribe to develop historical signage along the river to plant the history in solid ground, said Tribal Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor, who organized the weekend event.

“A lot of struggle and family singing happened here,” said Kevin Simmons.

“Blessings on our Tribe,” said Elder Bernadine Shriver. ■

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problems between Europeans and Natives began in 1851.

The Treaty of 1853 was signed above Salmon Rock, downstream from the encampment, and Fort Lane was built in 1854 farther south along the river.

When the gold ran out in 1855, Major J.A. Lupton had an idea,

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Ad created by George Valdez