



Tribe reviews casino recommendation

By Don Brown
Staff Writer
Malone Bureau

Opposition to Monticello Raceway casino surfaces

ST. REGIS MOHAWK RESERVATION — President Casinos, Inc. received the highest ranking of the proposals for a casino here.

Last month, the tribe received six proposals for casino management contracts and sent them for review by Anthony Hope, former chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

With President coming out on top, the tribal council will now decide whether it will give its final approval. Then approval is necessary by the National Indian Gaming Commission.

President plans to build a 75,000 square-foot casino north of Route 37, east of Hogansburg. The site had been under construction previously, but stopped when environmental impact studies had not been done.

Joe Gray, the tribe's public relations director, said the company had addressed the impact studies and had touched base with the commission regarding them.

Hope said the company's plan, including financial and environmental aspects have been scrutinized by the commission.

He cited the company's track record in managing gaming operations in other parts of the country including Biloxi, Miss., Davenport, Iowa, and St. Louis, Mo.

He said he chose President first because of their concentration on marketing, a timeline advantage in being the most com-

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A new anti-gambling group warned Thursday that authorizing an Indian casino in Sullivan County would effectively allow casinos to spread throughout the state without New Yorkers ever having a real chance to vote on their legalization.

The Coalition Against Casino Gambling said it suspects Gov. George Pataki is going to sign a compact with Mohawk Indians that will allow a casino at the Monticello Raceway, a harness horse-racing track about 75 miles northwest of New York City.

"There seems to be a danger that he will open it up to the Indians without any referendum," said Lee Karr of Forestburgh, the acting chairman of the group.

But Karr could offer no proof except his suspicions that a deal is imminent between the Pataki administration and any Indian tribe to establish a gambling hall in Monticello or elsewhere in Sullivan

County. There is support in the Catskills Mountain area for such a project among many non-Indian business boosters, a group that Karr said has "browbeat" anti-gamblers into staying silent on the casino issue until now.

Pataki spokesman Chris Chichester said "the notion that there is a deal is fiction." Pataki wants any agreement to "meet the short- and long-term needs of New York," the spokesman said, and he remains concerned that Indian gambling halls and other entertainment facilities provide little or no direct tax revenues to the state.

Oneida Indians currently run the only legal casino in the state, near Utica, and they have also been interested in putting a gambling hall in Sullivan County.

The Mohawks plan to open their first legal casino by next spring on their reservation at Akwesasne, in northern New York and southern Canada.

In the late 1980s to 1990, Akwesasne

Mohawks struggled with the gaming issue. Mohawks who opposed gambling on Mohawk land were against it because it was unregulated. A confrontation resulted, and two men were killed.

However, since the tribe has negotiated a state compact and regulated casinos will be soon a reality, the opposition group has become low key.

Under federal law, the state would have to sign a compact with a tribe before a Sullivan County casino could go forward.

Karr said such an agreement would deprive New Yorkers of the right to vote on legalizing casinos.

A constitutional amendment given initial approval earlier this year by the state Legislature would allow casinos in certain areas of the state, including the Catskills, the Buffalo-Niagara Falls region and around Saratoga Springs. Legislative leaders say they plan to put that amend-

ment before voters statewide in November 1997.

But Joe Dalton of Saratoga Springs, another member of the Coalition Against Casino Gambling, said that if Monticello Raceway becomes a casino, "every harness track in the state is going to demand it."

That would eliminate the chance for a fair fight over the November 1997 referendum, he said.

"It's been sold to everybody that the public is going to have a right to make a decision," he said. "By signing this compact with one of the Indian tribes, that decision is gone."

Members of the anti-gambling group met Thursday in Albany with aides to state Comptroller H. Carl McCall, who has warned that the revenues to the state and the economic benefits of casinos off Indian land would not be as great as proponents say.

ple with NIGC approvals, their advantage in raising capital as a publicly traded company, their casino operation experience and the fact that their proposal takes the tribe out of the gaming management business, Hope wrote in his report to the tribe.

This is the company's first casino venture in conjunction with Native peoples, Gray said.

Chief Norman Tarbell said he is pleased the review process is completed so they can move forward with its long-awaited casino opening.

"I look forward to working with them and opening an eco-

nomically-successful casino to benefit the Mohawk people and our community," he said.

Gray said the most reasonable date for operation would be in mid-1996.

Meantime, site work has begun on the tribe's Seven Stars Casino on Route 37 just past the twin bridges. The site has been cleared and some preparation work is under way.

Gray said the tribe began taking applications for casino work this week and received more than 800. There will be between 400 and 500 people hired, he said.

St. Regis Tribal Council fills vacant seat

ST. REGIS MOHAWK RESERVATION — A former teacher who is one of the framers of the St. Regis Constitution has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the Tribal Council.

Lois Thomas took an oath of office last week, becoming one of the five members of the council, Tribal Council Chairman Philip H. Tarbell said.

The council vacancy arose from the loss of council member Fred White, who died several weeks ago. Under the tribal constitution, the Tribal Council can fill all vacancies until the next election. Thomas will serve until June 1996, when the remaining year of White's term will be placed on the ballot.

"We chose Lois because of her knowledge of the constitution and the community," said Tarbell.

"She has a long history of community service, and her knowledge can be a valuable contribution to the governmental process."

Thomas says she is excited by her opportunity to be part of the Mohawk government. "I'm looking forward to it," she said. "I'm anxious to work with the council."

Thomas taught elementary school for 17 years on the Canadian side of the Akwesasne Territory. She has served as a member of the St. Regis Mohawk Education Committee and a member of the board of directors for the Akwesasne Library and Cultural Center.

A mother of five and grandmother of 14, she has been active with the Hogansburg United Methodist Church and the Girl Scouts.

Officer prosecutes dumping

By SAUL G. FERRER
Staff Writer

SCHUYLER FALLS — Solid Waste Officer Bryan Van Tilburg has seen everything but the kitchen sink dumped on the highways and in the forests of the North Country.

No, wait. He's seen that too. Van Tilburg, a nine-year veteran of the Clinton County Sheriff's Department, is currently the sole member of the county's Solid Waste Enforcement Unit.

The unit was created to enforce county and state illegal dumping laws.

The 37-year-old deputy, labeled everything from "Eco-Cop" to "The Toxic Avenger," has investigated all categories of illegally dumped garbage, from diapers to cars to more exotic cases.

"Oh, I've found all kinds of sex toys and sexual paraphernalia," on the sides of the road, said the deputy.

"I once received a report of the dumping of some videotapes," he said. "They turned out to be some very explicit homemade pornography. How do (solid waste offenders) like these expect to remain anonymous?"

Illegal dumping is an issue in the county due to its rural nature, said Van Tilburg.

"There are a lot of forests and secluded areas where people illegally dump solid waste," he said. "Several of these have become hot spots — areas where people repeatedly dump refuse."

Many local hot spots occur off easy-access, easy-escape dirt roads. One secluded site was only a few hundred feet from the Schuyler Falls landfill.

"What you have are people who're either too lazy or too cheap to dispose of their waste legally," said Van Tilburg, as he



Staff Photo/Saul Ferrer

Solid Waste Officer Bryan Van Tilburg investigates trash found in a wooded area in Schuyler Falls. Here he checks a water-purifier for a serial number.

searched the discarded items for clues potentially leading to the culprits.

"Many discarded items contain serial numbers, names, and other forms of identification as to their original owner," he said. "Most of the time they can lead back to the individual who dumped them."

Those caught can face up to 30 days in jail, community service and several hundred dollars in fines, depending on the severity of the dumping.

However, few receive maximum penalties.

"Over 95 percent of the people I deal with are extremely cooperative and confess to the crime," Van Tilburg said.

With cooperation, most investigations are relatively short, which is fortunate, he said. Time-consuming investigations

can be difficult for a one-person program.

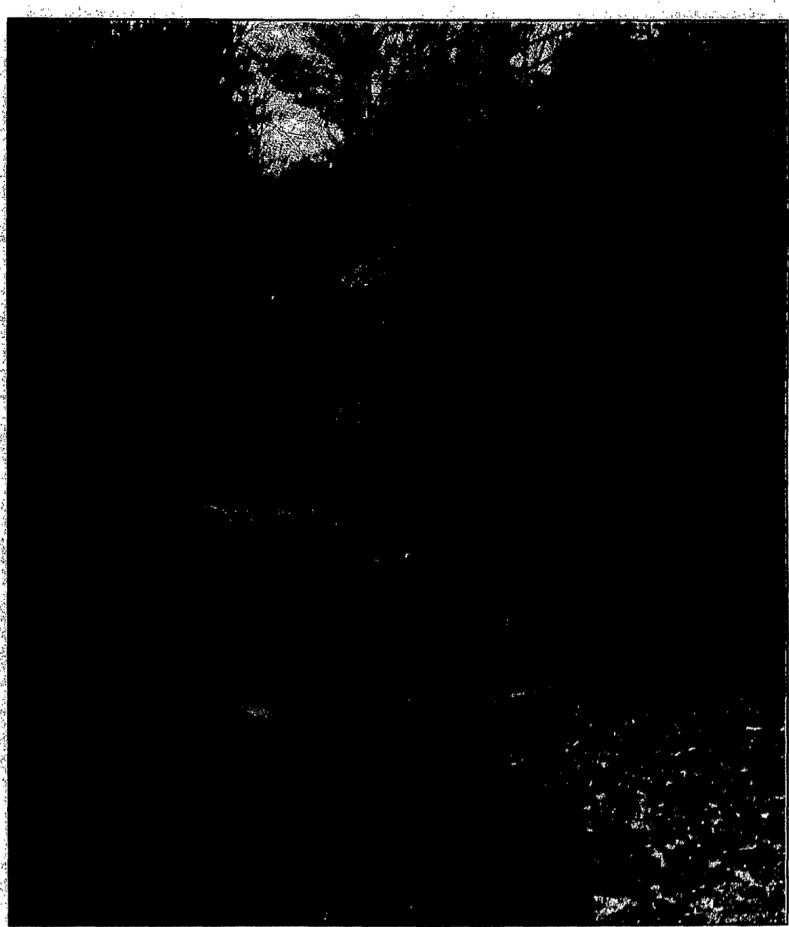
"Right now, I'm it," he said. The program has been in existence three years and is still evolving as he continues to flesh out new aspects of his assignment.

"I'm constantly self-evaluating the unit and seeing how it can be expanded or reined," said Van Tilburg, who is also responsible for standard deputy duties. "With more personnel we could branch out and help prevent these violations."

He would like to see the program going into schools and educating children.

"You want to reach them there, when they're young," he said. "Before they grow into a pattern."

"After all, if their parents are doing it and don't care, why should the children?"



Staff Photo/Mary Thill

A peaceful spot on the Jackrabbit Trail.

Ski Touring Council improves trail

KEENE — Started 10 years ago as a 12-mile route between Keene and Lake Placid, the Jackrabbit Trail has grown to 33 miles.

It now includes Saranac Lake, Lake Clear and Paul Smiths as points along the trail.

The trail has been built and maintained by the Adirondack Ski Touring Council.

For the coming season, cross-country skiers will be able to use a new approach to McKenzie Pond near Saranac Lake. It avoids the former steep drop into the wetland bordering on McKenzie Pond Outlet.

Bypassing this hill involved cutting .6 mile of new trail and the construction of a bridge over McKenzie Pond Outlet.

State Department of Environmental Conservation crews cleared the line of the new trail and built the bridge, but final smoothing and grading of the trail for skiing will be left to the Touring Council.

The council plans weekend work parties for 9 a.m., Nov. 4 and 11, with participants meeting at the Jackrabbit Trail on McKenzie Pond Road.

The council's Trail Committee, working with ad hoc groups of volunteers, will clear blowdown and perform any work necessary to prepare the remainder of the Jackrabbit Trail for ski season.

Anyone interested in receiving the council newsletter or signing up for the work parties can contact ASTC by writing to P.O. Box 843, Lake Placid, N.Y. 12946 or by calling 523-1365.

How to reach us in Essex County

The Press-Republican's Central Essex Bureau staff writer, Alison Calkins, has taken another job out of the area. Residents who would like to speak to a reporter may now call our Ticonderoga bureau at 585-4070. For information about advertising or circulation, call the Plattsburgh office at 1-800-288-7323.



Staff Photo/Lohr McKinstry

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: Working on disaster drill "victims" in the emergency room at Moses-Ludington Hospital are physicians' assistant Daniel Padula and nurse Lorraine Freeman, while Theodore Stanfield of Ticonderoga Emergency Squad (center) monitors the results. The drill simulated a two-vehicle crash on Wicker Street in Ticonderoga, and 15 patients were transported to the hospital.