

Statehouse gives plan another look

By David Kibbe
Cape Cod Times

BOSTON — The contentious issue of whether to expand gambling in Massachusetts could be back on the Statehouse’s agenda this summer, driven by the Mashpee Wampanoag’s effort to build an American Indian casino in Middleboro.

The House seemingly dealt casinos a fatal blow in March, defeating Gov. Deval Patrick’s plan for three commercial casinos by a lopsided vote of 108-46.

The tribe’s spokesman, Scott Ferson, would only say this week that the tribe would initiate compact discussions with the state “at the appropriate time.”

Sources inside and outside state government expect it to be soon, well ahead of a federal ruling on whether the tribe can take land into federal trust for a casino in Middleboro.

Clyde Barrow, who has studied national gambling trends as the director of the Center for Policy Analysis at UMass Dartmouth, predicted the tribe would begin formal discussions in as soon as 30 days.

Barrow said he has not talked to the tribal leaders or Patrick administration officials about a timeline. But there are advantages to both sides to negotiate a compact before the tribe has land in trust, he said.

Regional monopoly?
“If the governor signals his willingness to negotiate a compact, I think that actually helps the tribe’s case to get land into trust in Middleboro,” Barrow said. “It signals the state’s acceptance of it.”

He the state could “offer the tribe a regional monopoly in exchange for a share of the revenues.”

“From the state’s perspective, it certainly makes sense,” Barrow said.

Barrow speculated that Patrick would then refile his casino legislation to allow a compact for a Mashpee Wampanoag casino in Southeastern Massachusetts and two commercial casinos, one in Boston and one in western Massachusetts.

Kofi Jones, a spokeswoman for the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, asserted in a statement last week that the tribe “will have rights to open a casino on any federally recognized land, and it is in the best interests of the commonwealth for the administration to remain in active conversations with respect to their plans.”

Not a ‘done deal’
Casinofacts.org, which is fighting the proposed Middleboro casino, countered that the governor’s office and the tribe were engaging in political spin. “The governor continues to fan the flames of casino inevitability in order to increase his chances of legalizing gambling in the commonwealth,” the group said in a statement. “But despite these efforts, a Middleboro casino is still anything but a done deal.”

The group pointed to a number of obstacles, including a federal review of the tribe’s land in trust application that could take years, and the acknowledgement that legislative approval would be required for a gambling compact for a full-fledged, Class III casino.

The tribe has said it could open a Class II “bingo slots” casino without state approval, though it prefers a compact for a Class III casino.

Casinofacts.org doubts a limited casino would be competitive with nearby Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun or satisfy the tribe’s investors.

The Patrick administration said its casino plan would have generated more than \$400 million annually for transportation projects and property tax relief, while critics have pointed to social costs and a drain on other businesses, including tourism.

For now, anyway, the looming vote on slot machines appears to be the last word on gambling before the legislative session ends July 31.

A tribal college with an ‘Edge’

By Mary Annette Pember
Diverse Issues in
Higher Education

FAIRFAX, Va. — Dr. Henrietta Mann, Cheyenne, and Dr. John Hays, president of Southwestern Oklahoma State University at the inauguration ceremony this spring in which Mann was named president of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College.

Although 39 federally recognized American Indian tribes are headquartered in the state of Oklahoma, it comes as some surprise that there were no tribal colleges in the state until this century. During the past eight years, however, tribal colleges have been cropping up throughout the state, including the Comanche Nation College, the College of the Muscogee Nation, the Pawnee Nation College and most recently the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College (CATC) is located on the campus of the Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) in the city of Weatherford. Like the other tribal colleges in Oklahoma, CATC has an academic relationship with its sponsor-

ing college as it pursues independent accreditation. CATC opened its doors in 2006 with fewer than 20 students in the “old” science building on the SWOSU campus. The tribal college’s students are dually enrolled at SWOSU and subject to its rules and requirements.

The tiny college, which Cheyenne and Arapaho chief Lawrence Hart admits has a lot of “ifs” associated with its survival, has a definite edge. That edge comes in the form of Dr. Henrietta Mann, newly inaugurated college president. Mann, of the Cheyenne tribe, is a well-known powerhouse in Indian education circles. A native of Hammon, Okla., Mann earned a bachelor’s at SWOSU. Mann also holds the first endowed chair in Native American studies at Montana State University. She is also the author of Cheyenne-Arapaho Education, 1871-1982.

Mann began serving on the board of CATC regents at its inception in 2003 before agreeing to serve as interim president when the college opened. This past April she was formally inaugurated as the college’s first president.

CATC, she says, will teach

Cheyenne and Arapaho history through the voices of its people. She maintains that this will help give Indian students a strong sense of who they are as they gain an understanding of Cheyenne and Arapaho culture, values and language.

“Our culture has sustained us for a long time; that’s why it’s so important for Indian people to know who they are,” she says. “It’s been my self-appointed task to help ensure that American Indian young people learn these lessons.”

The emergence of tribal colleges reflects a growing movement towards self-determination and sovereignty by tribes says Carrie Billy, Navajo, deputy director of the American Indians in Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).

“Tribes want to deliver their stories from their perspectives,” she notes.

Mann agrees and points out that the tribal membership directed its leaders to create a tribal college. As the tribe began looking at such social problems in their community as drug and alcohol abuse, they noted that these problems often went hand in hand with low self-esteem and lack of

tribal pride and identity. In order to address this, the tribe began searching for ways to teach culture and language to their young people, eventually creating a language curriculum that was very successful. Thus, the genesis of the college was related to language preservation efforts by the tribe, reports Hart, a member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes.

The membership also felt that many of their high school students were not being actively recruited to enter higher education. The college symbolizes the tribe’s determination to preserve its culture and language as well as its commitment to instilling its younger members with a strong sense of pride and tribal identity, says Hart.

CATC relies on tribal government for funding and on SWOSU for administrative support and facilities.

According to Hart, SWOSU President John Hays has been very amenable to having the college on campus. Hays describes the relationship between CATC and SWOSU as a win-win situation.

“We find that if Indian stu-

dents are uncomfortable on campus, they often drop out and go home, never to return,” he says.

Anything that supports students, helps them feel more welcome and helps them get their degrees is good for the community and the university, he affirms. He also notes that those students looking to go beyond an associate degree will transfer easily to SWOSU.

Student Minoma Littlehawk, Cheyenne, says CATC helped her find her niche in museum studies. “I had no idea how much this experience would open up the world for me,” she says.

As enrollment continues to grow — 30 fulltime and 63 part-time students are enrolled this semester — Mann looks forward to offering the college’s first associate degree program in the near future. However, a great deal of groundwork lies ahead.

The college’s eligibility to receive federal funds through the Tribally Controlled Community College and Assistance Act and its membership in AIHEC require that it become a fully functional, autonomous entity.

Cardrooms object to casino study

By Jeffrey Mize
The Columbian

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Federal officials must immediately withdraw the final study for the Cowlitz casino and issue a revised document that reflects current conditions, an attorney representing La Center’s four cardrooms demanded Thursday.

Guy Martin, an attorney with the Perkins Coie in Washington, D.C., said the document, released May 30, fails to account for a recent decision by a state hearings board that caused the 152-acre site to revert to farmland.

The casino’s final environmental impact statement also does nothing to address “scathing criticism” by local governments after reviewing the May 2006 draft study, Martin wrote in a letter to George Skibine, acting assistant Interior secretary for Indian affairs.

The letter doesn’t say what the cardrooms will do if their “demand for withdrawal” is ignored.

La Center’s cardrooms have been some of the most vocal opponents to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe’s plans to build a \$510 million casino complex west of La Center. The mini-casinos represent four of the six top-grossing cardrooms in Washington, and their owners fear that a much larger tribal casino closer to Interstate 5 will kill their profitable businesses. The La Center cardrooms had gross receipts of \$34.8 million last year, according to city records.

Oil taxes



Associated Press

Gov. John Hoeven, left, and Three Affiliated Tribes Chairman Marcus Wells Jr., sign a new tax and regulatory agreement that they believe will help increase oil and gas production on the Fort Berthold reservation, Tuesday, June 10.

Tribe to run hotel

By Richard Ryman
Green Bay Press-Gazette

BELLEVUE — Oneida Airport Hotel Corp. was selected to manage the Guest House Hotel & Suites Green Bay now under construction in Millennium Park Development, 2612 Decuria Lane, Bellevue.

The 80-room extended-stay hotel is scheduled to open in October. It is owned by Settle Inn LLC of Hendersonville, Tenn.

Oneida Airport Hotel Corp., a tribally chartered corporation of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, owns and manages the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center and the Wingate by Wyndham hotel, both in Ashwaubenon.

Tribe pulling plug on Akela bingo machines

By Diana M. Alba
Las Cruces Sun-News

LAS CRUCES — The Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma plans to remove its electronic bingo machines this week from a yet-unopened casino in Akela.

Jeff Houser, tribal chairman, said the Fort Sill Apaches had leased the machines from a second Oklahoma tribe, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. But that tribe had deferred the lease payments until June 10 to give the Fort Sill tribe time for its casino to open.

Last month, the federal government indicated it would deny the tribe gaming authorization.

Houser said Citizen Potawatomi Nation wanted the machines back.

“The deadline wasn’t met, so we’re returning them,” said Houser in a phone interview Friday.

The Fort Sill Apache Tribe has about 50 slot-machine-like bingo machines at its Akela trust land, located east of Deming.

Denis Flöge, manager of the Apache Homelands Casino, said the machines were scheduled to be shipped out last week, but that date has been pushed back.

“The machines will be out this week,” he said.

Houser said the tribe still is pursuing a gaming operation.

The tribe stirred con-

tention in late February after attempts to start gaming on its Akela trust land came to light. New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson protested the move and threatened to block access to the site if the tribe went ahead with the move.

Richardson’s office couldn’t be reached Friday for comment.

The tribe was seeking permission for gaming from the National Indian Gaming Commission. An attorney for that agency wrote an opinion last month indicating the tribe didn’t have legal grounds to open the casino.

The tribe, however, contends it should be granted permission

because of terms in a 2007 settlement agreement that involved the federal government. The Fort Sill Apache Tribe has filed an action in federal court in Oklahoma, asking that the terms be enforced.

Members of the Fort Sill tribe are descendants of the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches, who once roamed southwestern New Mexico, southeastern Arizona and northern Mexico. According to the tribe’s Web site, some 400 tribal members were removed from reservations in the 1880s and sent to Florida as prisoners. They were moved again in 1890 to the Fort Sill military post in Oklahoma.