

Greektown Casino on a roll

Nathan Hurst
The Detroit News

DETROIT — Greektown Casino is set to open its expanded gaming floor on Aug. 29, weeks earlier than originally anticipated.

The opening of the 25,000-square-foot expansion will add about 700 slot machines, bringing Greektown's total to 3,000. The accelerated opening brings the end of construction closer at Greektown, which filed for bankruptcy protection in May and is the last of Detroit's three casinos to open a permanent casino and resort-style hotel.

"Our contractors will now spend the next few months finishing hotel rooms, hallways, the two-story lobby, state-of-the-art meeting space and the rest of the hotel features," Greektown Casino CEO Craig Ghelfi said in a statement. "We continue to move briskly on our construction timeline, with our expanded gaming floor set to open in late August 2008 and the hotel planned to be ready in early 2009."

Rival MGM Grand Detroit opened its new casino-hotel-resort complex in October. MotorCity Casino began debuting its expanded gaming floor last summer, opened its 400-room hotel in November and crews have been putting finishing touches on meeting spaces and new casual dining outlets this summer.

Crews working at the Greektown site reached a major milestone in construction last Wednesday, when they "topped off" the hotel tower soaring 30 stories above the intersection of Monroe and St. Antoine.

Now that the last of the concrete has been poured, construction workers will focus on enclosing the structure, which will be sheathed in blue glass, and turning the building's skeleton into a fully functioning 400-room hotel, expected to open as early as January.

The progress on the \$500 million project comes just months after Greektown's Chapter 11 filing, which was prompted by construction crews at the site threatening to stop working because of months of non-payment.

By filing for bankruptcy protection, Greektown has been able to secure financing to finish the construction while remaining in full operation. The final piece of that financing was put in place in June.

Roger Martin, the Greektown spokesman, said the bankruptcy process has gone "very smoothly," and the casino is on target to exit bankruptcy by the end of next summer. The new opening date of the casino floor -- which will total 100,000 square feet -- was moved up from an anticipated fall opening announced during Greektown's entry into Chapter 11 reorganization.

The opening of Greektown's hotel in January comes just as the nation's gaming industry has started to feel the effects of consumers pulling back on discretionary spending. While combined revenues at Detroit's three casinos have continued to outpace last year's results, major gambling areas such as the Las Vegas Strip and Atlantic City, N.J., have showed softness as high food and fuel prices continue to challenge American families.

Jake Miklojcik, a gambling expert and president of Michigan Consultants in Lansing, said Greektown's opening comes at a time when its rivals -- MGM Grand Detroit and MotorCity Casino -- are still figuring out how to make the most of their new facilities amid the troubled economy.

"We know that the newness factor is big in attracting new customers," Miklojcik said. "And Greektown has a lot to live up to after those other two opening."

Native leaders question police in shooting death

CBC News

CANADA — An undated photo of Craig McDougall from the social networking site Bebo.com.

Manitoba native chiefs are calling for a public inquiry into the Winnipeg Police Service in the wake of the police shooting that killed Craig McDougall over the weekend.

McDougall, 26, was shot by officers who responded to a disturbance call around 5 a.m. Saturday at a house on Simcoe Street, in the city's West End neighbourhood. Police said he had refused repeated demands to drop a knife.

At a press conference Tuesday morning outside the house, family members said police had been called to deal with a fight between two young women, and that officers had arrested McDougall's father.

McDougall had just arrived home and was talking on a cellphone to his girlfriend as the situation unfolded, family members said. The girlfriend heard everything, including the gunshots, they said.

One witness at the news conference insisted there had been no knife, and several others said McDougall posed no danger to police because he had been on one side of a metre-high fence, while the officers were on the other.

"When I saw my son lying on the ground, I wanted to go to him to help him, but I was thrown on the ground and handcuffed," the slain man's father, Brian McDougall, said in a statement read by another family member.

"I was a few inches away from

comforting my son, but I was prevented."

"Would never harm someone" Garden Hill First Nation Chief David Harper described McDougall's death as 'unacceptable' and questioned the use of deadly force.

The family is in "deep mourning" and "shock" over the death of McDougall, described as a "good son" and "a caring person."

"We all loved him. I know my son would never harm someone with authority," the father said in the statement.

Chief David Harper of the Garden Hill First Nation described McDougall's death as "unacceptable" and questioned the use of deadly force.

"We just [saw] this past weekend a man carrying a knife [in one hand] and a head in the other hand, and he is still alive today," he said, referring to the police capture of a suspect in the brutal stabbing death of a Winnipeg man on a Greyhound bus last Thursday.

The family wants "healing and closure," the father's statement said, "but before we do that, we need the truth to come out."

Native leaders are hiring a private investigator to probe the shooting, and have retained Don Worme to represent the family's interests, they said.

Worme represented the family of Neil Stonechild at the public inquiry into his death. The inquiry concluded Stonechild had been in police custody before being found frozen to death on the outskirts of Saskatoon in 1990. He also represented the family of Matthew Dumas earlier this year at an inquest into the 18-year-old Winnipegger's

death by police gunfire in 2005.

In addition to a public inquiry into the conduct of the Winnipeg police, native leaders called on the provincial government to establish an aboriginal police commission, an aboriginal justice college to train native workers in the justice system, and an independent police complaints agency to replace the current Law Enforcement Review Agency.

The government should also create a permanent special investigations unit, including First Nations representatives, to investigate cases such as McDougall's shooting, they said.

The chiefs vowed to hold "further legal and political actions," and said they will file formal complaints to Manitoba's Human Rights Commission and the United Nations.

Police Act under review Manitoba Justice Minister Dave Chomiak said he sees no need at the moment to order an investigation into the Winnipeg Police Service .

Chomiak acknowledged a 150-year legacy of bad relations between police and aboriginal people in Manitoba, and said changes to the system will take time.

Changes stemming from a review of the Police Act that is currently underway are expected in the next year, he said. That process may deal with some of the concerns raised by native leaders, he said.

In the meantime, the justice minister said he has full confidence in the Winnipeg police force, and trusts that two investigations currently underway — into Saturday's shooting and the July death of a teenager who was jolt-

ed with a police stun gun — will uncover the full truth.

Taser also deployed Craig McDougall was killed by police responding to a disturbance call on Simcoe Street in Winnipeg's West End neighbourhood.

Police said earlier this week that McDougall had refused to comply with demands to put down a knife. A stun gun was also used on him, but failed to subdue him, police said.

Const. Jacqueline Chaput, a police spokeswoman, couldn't say how many times McDougall was asked to put down the knife.

"Officers have to make split-second decisions in these types of incidents," she said Sunday. "They felt that they had to protect themselves. They had to protect the people around them, the public. And at that point, they had to escalate to a higher level of force."

"Our officers don't make the choice to use their firearms lightly. If they chose to in this instance, it's because they were forced to," she added.

An external police agency will review the investigation into the shooting and at least two officers will be on administrative leave during the investigation, Chaput said.

Saturday's shooting is the second recent confrontation between Winnipeg police and an aboriginal male that resulted in a death. Michael Langan, 17, died after police jolted him with a Taser in late July.

Nephew of J.J. Harper McDougall was the nephew of J.J. Harper, who was killed in March 1988 by a Winnipeg police officer who mistook him for a suspect in a car theft.

Immigration



Associated Press

In this Aug. 23, 2007, file photo, a person walks into the Kaweah Indian Nation Inc.'s National Office headquarters building in Wichita, Kan. The tribe, which was denied federal recognition in 1984, is at the center of a multistate federal investigation into an alleged scam to sell to undocumented workers tribal memberships under the promise it would protect them from deportation.

Paugussett tribal chief dies at 92

By Michael Gannon
Norwich Bulletin colchester

COLCHESTER, Conn. — The chief of the Golden Hill Paugussett Indian Tribe, which has reservation land in Colchester and Trumbull, died Sunday.

Aurelius H. Piper Sr., who also went by the name of Chief Big Eagle, died of natural causes at the tribe's quarter-acre reservation in Trumbull, according to a statement released by the tribe.

He was 92, and had been named chief in 1959. The Paugussetts also have 106 acres in Colchester on Stanavage Road. Residents at the reservation could not be reached for comment Monday.

Piper was a World War II veteran, taking part in the invasion of North Africa. He also owned and operated a long-distance trucking company for more than 40 years.

Survivors include his wife, Marsha Conte Piper, and seven children.

A traditional memorial mourning walk will take place at 11 a.m. Thursday beginning at the Nicols farm cemetery in Trumbull.

Piper was named Chief of the Century by the Florida Chapter of the White Buffalo Society for his work "in furthering Native American causes in Connecticut, across the country and abroad."

He also was involved with a number of international groups aimed at addressing American Indian rights cases.

The Golden Hill Paugussetts, who have been recognized by the State of Connecticut for more than 300 years, have sought federal recognition from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs since 1982. They were last denied federal recognition in 2004.

The Colchester site was the center of controversy over an attempt to build a casino there in 1990. Piper's son, Kenneth Piper, also known as Moonface Bear, began clearing the property, resulting in the state arguing only federally recognized tribes are permitted to construct casinos.

Kenneth Piper was involved in an armed standoff at the reservation in 1993 with state officials regarding the tax-free sale of cigarettes.

A spokesman for the tribe said Monday that Piper's son, Aurelius H. Piper Jr., also known as Chief Quiet Hawk, will assume chieftainship.

Traditional food lovers preparing

By Clifton Adcock
Tulsa World

TULSA, Okla. — Sure, it's easy to praise traditional American Indian food — it's just hard to say anything with a mouthful of fried pork.

Just the mention of poke salad greens, grape dumplings, kanuchi or tash-labona is likely to bring a fond memory or two back to many Oklahoma tribal members.

Traditional American Indian food is thriving at small tribal gatherings and hog frys throughout Oklahoma. And even more people will be able to try it at the Choctaw and Cherokee national holidays.

Both holidays happen over Labor Day weekend and will feature traditional food demonstrations or cookoffs.

"A lot of people drop by there, buy a plate and sample the traditional food," said Lou Slagle, director of the Cherokee National Holiday, which is hosting the traditional foods cookoff.

Traditional Choctaw and

Cherokee foods use meats ranging from pork and venison to crawdads, and vegetables such as wild onions and corn.

A Cherokee favorite is kanuchi, a hickory nut soup served with rice or hominy.

The dish is prepared by grinding hickory nuts, forming them into a ball, placing the ball into boiling water and straining it to remove the shells. The mixture is then poured over rice or hominy, said Lula Elk, a Cherokee traditional cook from Keys.

"It has a unique nutty flavor," Elk said. "It's real good."

On Thursday, several tribal members gathered at the Cherokee National Cultural Center near Tahlequah for a hog fry with pinto beans, fried potatoes, fried pork and, of course, fry bread.

"It's a labor of love on a lot of this," said LeAnne Dreadfulwater, who was at Thursday's cookout. "If you want to cook it, you cook a lot of it. Cherokees don't need a lot of reasons to have a cookout."

Almost all of the food was prepared in a large cauldron over an open fire, tended by Slagle, Elk and other cooks who began the process early in the morning to finish by noon. It's hard work, but it's better than working inside in a hot kitchen.

"I just enjoy cooking outside; it's a lot cooler for me to cook outside," Elk said. "Plus, the food tastes better when cooked on a wood cookstove."

Most recipes have been passed down from generation to generation.

Charlie Shell of Greasy learned to prepare fried crawdads from his mother.

"The hardest part is catching them," Shell said.

"You don't want to lose them (the recipes), and they're good."

Lorraine Blaine, a traditional Choctaw cook from Durant, said her favorite dish is tash-labona, a mixture of cracked corn and pork.

"It's hard to find the corn," Blaine said. "You can usually find it in small town, old-time

grocery stores. Tash-labona is what people look for at an Indian gathering. It's a favorite of all Choctaws."

Making traditional foods is worth the time, Blaine said.

"If I'm going to have it for Sunday, I usually start the night before," Blaine said. "It keeps you awake because you keep smelling the corn and it makes you want to get up and get a bowl of it."

Although recipes and tastes vary between tribes, the importance of preserving those dishes and passing on the knowledge to future generations cuts across tribal lines.

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chad Smith, who attended Thursday's hog fry, said, "The expressions of culture are not only games, tools and weapons but how you eat and socialize."

Blaine agreed.

"To keep them alive, you have to teach your siblings and children and have to prepare so that when the elders leave, they pick it up," she said.