

## Remington Park OK despite parent troubles

By Janice Francis-Smith  
Oklahoma Journal Record

OKLAHOMA CITY — Remington Park will do fine regardless of whatever financial woes affect its parent company, Magna Entertainment Corp., track officials said Thursday. The Oklahoma City racetrack may be sold off to pay down Magna’s debt, but Remington Park has the strength to continue operating as a stand-alone facility, said General Manager Scott Wells. “The announcement the Shawnee Tribe made last year has created some uncertainty, but we remain confident Remington Park will do well,” Greg Scoggins, national director of regulatory affairs for Remington Park owner MEC, told members of the Oklahoma Horse Racing Commission on Thursday. The tribe had announced its intent to build a casino and resort within two miles of Remington Park.

Several state officials, including Gov. Brad Henry and members of the commission, have voiced their opposition to the location of the proposed project, fearing tribal gaming would lure customers away from the racetrack. Track officials credit the passage of State Question 712, which allowed Remington Park to offer casino-style games under certain limitations, with saving the track and the horse racing industry in Oklahoma City.

But the proposed tribal casino is not the main problem leading to the possible sale of Remington Park, which MEC has noted as one of its best-performing properties. June’s announcement of Aurora, Ontario-based MEC’s poor second quarter – a \$21 million loss – followed a string of losses for the company. The interest on the substantial amount of debt the company has accrued is dragging down the company’s financial performance. Though MEC has seen some financial improvement since 2007, the \$16 million debt financing payment plus a \$5 million write-down make this year’s numbers look even worse, he said.

“We are actively pursuing the debt reduction strategy,” said Scoggins. On Tuesday, MEC announced it was selling off excess real estate in Florida for \$16.5 million cash. On Wednesday, MEC announced it would extend the maturity dates for a few of its major loans and the due date for its \$100 million repayment requirement for its Gulfstream Park project. In 2006, the commission approved MEC’s request to make Remington Part the guarantor of a loan to its sister corporation, Florida’s Gulfstream Park Racing Association, and to raise Remington park’s guarantor ceiling from \$20 million to \$45 million.

Frank Stronach, MEC’s chairman and chief executive officer, said Remington Park was one of the few racetracks owned by the company that showed significant financial improvement last year, increasing its slot revenues by 17 percent compared to the same quarter last year.

Commission Chairman Gene Bledsoe asked why the company would want to sell off the properties that are doing well instead of the ones that are struggling. Properties that are doing well are easier to sell, said Scoggins.

So far, no one has made an offer on Remington Park that MEC has been willing to take.

“I can’t say we’re in active negotiations,” said Scoggins. “The bids we’ve received we don’t feel are accurate to the true value of Remington Park. If somebody comes up with an amount that is appropriate, we may consider that.”

The Shawnee Tribe has not offered to purchase Remington Park, Wells confirmed after the commission meeting. Remington Park operated as a stand-alone facility before it was purchased by MEC in 1999, and the track is today in a good position to keep going as a stand-alone once again if sold.

## OK of resolution about casino a possibility

Tim Rohwer  
Daily Nonpareil

COUNCIL BLUFF, Iowa — The Carter Lake City Council called for an open and direct communication with the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska to obtain more information about their proposed Carter Lake casino before taking action on it.

The council - minus one member - unanimously approved the resolution aimed particularly at the Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors at a special meeting Wednesday afternoon.

“(The resolution) is that all entities involved, Pottawattamie County and the State of Iowa, continue to look at the issue and visit with the tribe,” Mayor Russ Kramer said after the meeting. “All we’re asking is to visit with the Ponca tribe.”

The resolution said, “The City Council of the City of Carter Lake believes that it is in the best interest of the citizens of Carter Lake, Pottawat-

tamie County and the State of Iowa to obtain full and complete information concerning the proposal of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska’s to have a gaming business in the City of Carter Lake;

“That all of the government entities in the State of Iowa that may be impacted by the proposal of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska should have direct and open communication with the Tribe concerning the proposed project before making any decisions or taking any action concerning the merits of the project.”

The resolution was a statement aimed primarily at the county’s Board of Supervisors, according to Kramer, in the hope of delaying a vote that could possibly be against the casino.

The board on Wednesday morning did delay, again, a vote on where it stands on the casino, this time until Sept. 3. On Monday, the board had delayed a vote until Aug. 25.

Monday’s meeting seemed

heavy-handed toward opposition of the proposed project as County Attorney Matt Wilber spent a majority of the meeting discussing possible legal action against the project.

Bob Mundt, president of the Council Bluffs Area Chamber of Commerce, told supervisors that a coalition of Council Bluffs business leaders is encouraging the county to join a Nebraska lawsuit opposing the tribe’s plan.

Supervisor Loren Knauss, however, said he wanted to meet with all parities involved in this issue before taking any stand.

Knauss was pleased by Wednesday’s action by Carter Lake officials.

“That’s a good idea. I’ve been saying that from the start,” he said. “I’m happy they made a decision. I now know where they stand. This means as a governing body, this is their decision as opposed to individual feelings on the side.”

The new voting date of

Sept. 3 for the board may still be way too soon to gather all the needed information, Knauss said.

“I don’t think Sept. 3 may be enough time. There’s so many different players involved.”

Knauss said he would like to take organized trips to other communities that have casinos run by Native Americans to see how they’re doing.

“That’s a trip I would like to take with Carter Lake officials,” he said.

His search for information, however, is not focused on economic benefits if a casino is built.

“It’s a legal issue,” Knauss said.

Kramer and others believe a casino will bring more money to the community.

“We thought it could offer some good economic impact for Carter Lake,” he told the council at the meeting.

Afterward, Kramer said this proposed project could create 2,000 new jobs and encourage

new development like hotels and restaurants in the surrounding area.

“It’s about money. That’s the reason why the Ponca Tribe wants to build, and the reason I as mayor like it,” Kramer said.

Though he hasn’t seen any plans, Kramer thought the casino could be as large as Horseshoe Casino in Council Bluffs. He added that from talks with tribal officials, they would take care of police, fire and infrastructure needs.

Not everybody in town is keen on the idea, some council members said during the meeting.

“I feel a majority of citizens aren’t interested in gaming, though depending what the package is, that could change,” Councilman Ed Aldmeyer said.

Kramer said five people have expressed their concerns to him, but “20 fold in numbers” support the plan.

“I believe I have heard more against it,” Aldmeyer responded.

## Debate is over; why keep at it?

Louis Gray  
Grand Forks Herald

TULSA, Okla. — I read the recent column which calls for some closure to the Fighting Sioux nickname debate (“N.D. lets nickname settlement fall by wayside,” Page D2, Aug. 17).

The thing is, it really isn’t a debate worth waging on the part of the Lakota people.

Why would they sit down and talk about something insulting and inaccurate, something that every significant mental health board has declared is harmful and should be retired? Of course they wouldn’t. What possible argument do you make to someone who is insulted by your behavior? “See it my way, because you have no right to be insulted.”

Well, that is just silly and, of course, insulting. Not only is it wrong to have any Indian nickname or logo, but also it’s hard to have a rational discussion with people who back up their claims of honoring Indian people by being racist. They hurl racial slurs at Indians who don’t want to be insulted. Seems to me they are making the argument for change, not retention.

It should be noted that the Sports Illustrated poll has been roundly dismissed as being faulty and obviously made up.

Certainly, there are Indians who support the use of Indians as mascots. But, their support is based on being subjected to the largest system of institutional racism in this nation’s history: the misuse and inappropriate use of the Indian image.

There is no honor offered to the Sioux people through this insulting practice, and there never will be. The job of promoting and using the Lakota name and image is the business of the Lakota people.

## Group seeks Native status

Pacific Daily News

HAGATNA, Guam — The Chamorro Tribe is hosting education meetings at 6:30 p.m. every Saturday in Dededo.

“One of the most important things that we can garner as a Native American tribe is true U.S. citizenship,” said Frank J. Schacher, chairman of the Chamorro Tribe, in a news release.

Schacher said that since Guam won’t become a state, the only other way to get constitutional citizenship is to become registered as a Native American tribe.

“The Indian Naturalization Act would automatically naturalize us, thereby making us legal constitutional citizens of the United States and affording us all protections and rights under the Constitution of the United States,” Schacher said.

## Same-sex marriage OK



Associated Press

The Coquille Indian Tribe, based on the southern Oregon coast, recently adopted a law recognizing same-sex marriage, and its first such wedding is set for next spring. Oregon voters amended the state constitution in 2004 to prohibit gay marriage. But as a federally recognized sovereign nation, the tribe is not bound by the Oregon Constitution. Kitzen, left, and Jeni Branting are the first couple to receive this recognition and the same tribal spouse benefits. They are recognized as domestic partners in Washington and will be married in the Plankhouse (the building behind them) on the Coquille reservation next May. They were photographed Aug.15, in Coos Bay, Ore.

## Tribe says yes to lesbian marriage

By Winston Ross  
The Register-Guard

COQUILLE, Ore. — They met when Kitzen Doyle was 14 and Jeni Branting was two years older. Jeni is the only person Kitzen has ever dated. They were engaged in 2001, and Doyle legally changed her last name to Branting in 2005.

Someday, even if it wasn’t recognized by the state or the

federal government, the two had planned to marry.

Now, thanks to a historic decision by the Coquille Indian Tribe, the two will wed next May and their status as a married couple will be recognized by the tribal government. The Coquille is the first tribe in the nation to officially sanction same-sex marriage.

On the surface, the tribe’s decision applies only to the benefits and rights afforded

its members. Jeni Branting, now 27, isn’t a tribe member at this point, so she doesn’t have access to the health care programs and other opportunities afforded to members. But once the two are married, that will change, and they’ll both be fully recognized Coquille Indians.

The tribe, like eight other federally recognized governments in Oregon, are sovereign nations, exempted from

some local and state laws and permitted, for example, to build casinos, even though the state constitution generally prevents anyone from operating a casino.

Tribes’ distinctive legal status raises questions about what rights apply in this case, says Wayne Shammel, an attorney with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians.

Read more in Thursday’s Register-Guard.

## Consent decree signed in hate-crime case

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) —Five people accused of threatening and assaulting a group of Native Americans in eastern Maine have been ordered to stay away from the victims as part of a consent decree.

According to Attorney

General Steve Rowe, four men and a juvenile last August allegedly drove up to five Native Americans in Baileyville. The Indians -- four teenagers and a 20-year-old -- were from the nearby Passamaquoddy Tribe reservation.

The defendants are accused of getting out of their car armed with two-by-fours, sticks and pipes, yelling racial epithets and assaulting some of the Indians.

The state filed a complaint charging the men

with violating Maine’s Civil Rights Act.

Under the consent decree, the defendants did not admit to the charges but will face prosecution if they come into contact with the victims or violate the Civil Rights Act.