Written by Administrator Friday, 24 December 2010 11:53 -

STEPHANIE RICE; THE COLUMBIAN, VANCOUVER, WASH. | • Published December 24, 2010

- <u>0</u>

comments

Cowlitz Tribe Chairman William Iyall returned to his office Thursday afternoon from an employee Christmas party and on the fax machine was a gift from the Bureau of Indian Affairs: Official confirmation that the tribe's application to establish a 152-acre reservation near La Center had been accepted.

"It was exactly what we had requested," Iyall said.

The tribe applied in 2002 to establish the reservation with the goal of putting a \$510 million casino-hotel complex on it.

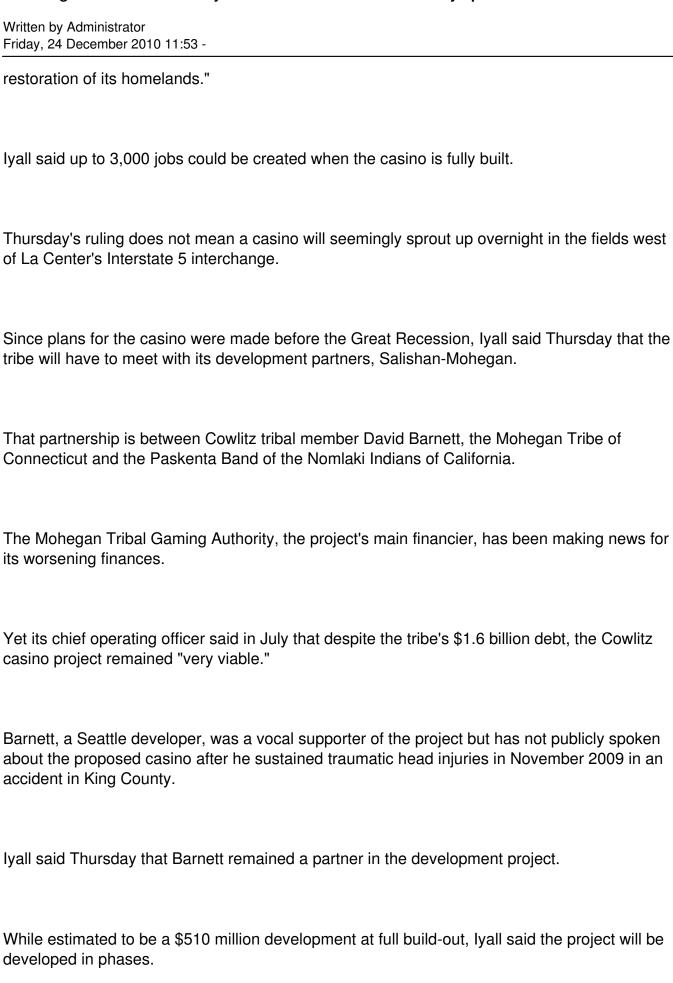
While the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act prohibits gaming on lands that were acquired in trust after it was enacted in 1988, the Cowlitz Tribe qualified under one of three exceptions to that rule.

Specifically, the Cowlitz qualified under the "equal footing" exception, which is directed at landless tribes such as the Cowlitz, which has 3,700 members but no established reservation.

"The news for the Cowlitz people is that we do have the potential for equal footing ... and will be able to provide other services that other tribes enjoy," Iyall said. "Now we have a huge opportunity."

In a statement released by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk said: "This project will allow the Cowlitz Tribe to create hundreds of jobs and invest in other forms of economic development. It will also allow the Tribe to begin the

Federal government clears way for Cowlitz tribal casino - The Olympian



Federal government clears way for Cowlitz tribal casino - The Olympian

Written by Administrator Friday, 24 December 2010 11:53 -

"It will be scaled to meet the market conditions," Iyall said.

Not taking into consideration any future legal challenges that could delay the project, lyall predicted that it would be two years before construction started on whatever ends up being the first phase of the development.

Under Thursday's ruling from the BIA, the tribe can conduct Class III gaming, which includes card games, slot machines, dog and horse racing, jai alai and all other types of casino gaming.

One possible complicating factor for the tribe's application had been a Supreme Court decision blocking tribes not under federal jurisdiction prior to 1934 from taking land into trust.

Congress has been debating reversing that decision with what's been called the "Carcieri fix," named after the court case.

The Cowlitz Tribe was federally recognized in 2000.

According to the Department of Interior, the Cowlitz Tribe's application to have the Clark County land placed into trust was filed under the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act.

"We worked very closely with our attorneys in the Office of the Solicitor on the Cowlitz Tribe's land-into-trust application and determined that it clearly satisfied the law," Echo Hawk said. "We will continue our work to process other pending applications."

Also Thursday, the Department of Interior rejected a gaming application for the Redding Rancheria, a federally recognized tribe in California that wanted land placed into trust in Shasta County.

Federal government clears way for Cowlitz tribal casino - The Olympian

Written by Administrator Friday, 24 December 2010 11:53 -

Powered by WizardRSS | Work At Home Jobs

Source: http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&usg=AFQjCNGJV8-MuXP6d GQWXdOBgLymgPTnqA&url=http://www.theolympian.com/2010/12/24/1485032/federal-g overnment-clears-way.html