



# Cowlitz Casino Resort

*A Unique Opportunity for Southwest Washington*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What you should know about the Cowlitz Casino Resort

- It will bring to Clark County a new clean industry with 3,000 new family-wage jobs with full benefits including medical.
- It will pay for government services (like police and fire), reimburse local governments in lieu of taxes, and fund educational projects throughout Clark County.
- It will pay to improve roads and the I-5 interchange and mitigate other environmental impacts.
- It will reverse the stream of recreational dollars that now flows from Clark County into Oregon.
- It will benefit the people of the Cowlitz Tribe by funding scholarships for its young people and providing health care and housing for its elders.
- It will present new opportunities for top-quality entertainment, fine dining, and exciting shopping.

### Answers to Your Questions

**Q: How will the Casino Resort affect area shops and restaurants?**

**A:** The Casino Resort will draw thousands of new visitors from throughout the metropolitan region who normally shop south of the Columbia River. The promise of top-quality entertainment, fine dining, and exciting shopping opportunities will bring these customers to Clark County. The Tribe is committed to marketing jointly with other local businesses to make sure that everyone can benefit.

**Q: How will the Casino Resort affect other area businesses?**

**A:** The fear is that the offerings of the Casino Resort will be more desirable to the consumer than those of some locally owned businesses, and that those businesses will languish and close. While it is true that the Casino Resort's direct competition might be hurt, other local businesses most likely would benefit from the revenue generated by the Casino Resort. According to a study conducted through Governor's

Office of Indian Affairs in 1997<sup>1</sup>, tribal enterprises spent \$865 million for supplies, equipment and services; they paid \$51.3 million in federal employment/payroll-related taxes and \$5.3 million in state employment/payroll-related taxes; and contributed \$1 billion to the state's overall economy.

**Q: How will the Casino Resort affect traffic flow on I-5 and surrounding roads?**

**A:** Streets nearest the project will be impacted by casino visitors. To help mitigate traffic, the Tribe will pay to improve the I-5 interchange at 319th Street and other surrounding roads. Casino Resort visitors will arrive throughout the day and evening, not just during rush hour, so traffic will not be concentrated at certain times. Attracting visitors from the metropolitan region is a longtime economic goal for our area and the casino resort meets that goal while also providing family-wage jobs with full medical benefits and an influx of money into our local economy.

<sup>1</sup> Veronica E. Tiller and Robert A. Chase, "Economic Contributions of Indian Tribes to the Economy of Washington State," 1997. Accessed at <http://www.goia.wa.gov/images/pdf/iacbook.pdf>.

**Q: Will the Casino Resort cause increased social problems such as addiction, bankruptcies, and white-collar crime?**

**A:** There are conflicting reports from across the country on whether gaming operations cause increased social problems. According to Ohio University criminologists, the incidence of crime near casinos has not been demonstrated to be different than at other tourist attractions<sup>2</sup>. The Cowlitz Tribe is committed to paying its own way for police and fire protection for the Casino Resort and to using top-of-the-line security systems within and around its facility to protect guests and neighbors. The Tribe also acknowledges the tragedy of problem gaming and has agreed to contribute to state and county programs to aid problem gamblers.

**Q: Who would profit from the Casino Resort?**

**A:** First and foremost, the Cowlitz Tribe will benefit from the profits generated at its casino resort and is charged with distribution of those profits to its members. Getting an enterprise like the Casino Resort up and running is a big job. That's why the Tribe signed a 7-year contract with the Salishan-Mohegan partnership. The contract says that during the start-up, the Cowlitz will get 76% of the revenues while the management agreement with the Salishan Mohegan is in place. After seven years, the Tribe can collect 100% of the revenues if it is prepared to manage the Casino Resort itself.

**Q: How will the Casino Resort affect the Discovery Corridor envisioned by the Port of Ridgefield and others?**

**A:** The Casino Resort will help jump-start the Discovery Corridor by bringing in infrastructure for the first time, which will make the area more appealing and economically viable to other businesses. Right now, the area doesn't have the sewers and other expensive infrastructure that is needed to attract businesses that would prefer to avoid such costs. Furthermore, Washington's tribal casinos are magnets for other businesses because they themselves require goods and services. For instance, the corridor north of Marysville, home to the Tulalip Casino, is one of the state's most vibrant economic corridors.

**Q: How many jobs and what kind of salaries will the Casino Resort offer?**

**A:** The Casino Resort will offer about 3,000 people the opportunity to support themselves and their families in a wide variety of positions from service to management. The average salary is estimated at \$28,000 plus full benefits including medical. Don't forget that many Casino Resort employees will receive generous tips on top of their base salary and benefits. For example, card dealers near Everett who were paid a modest wage earned more than \$42,000 per year when tips were included.

**Q: Where will the Casino Resort find 3,000 employees?**

**A:** The majority of our employees will come from the Portland metropolitan region. As most of you know, Clark County's unemployment rate continues to be higher than the statewide average. (In January 2006, it was 5.7%, while the state was 5.3%.) Clark County needs a larger job base. Last year, several hundred people stood in line in the rain hoping to get one of 200 available jobs at the Vancouver Hilton. Giving people the chance to work at a job with benefits so they can support themselves and their families is a worthwhile goal that is consistent with the long-term economic health of Clark County. The Casino Resort is proud to offer these opportunities.

**Q: Aren't leisure and hospitality workers in demand in Southwest Washington? How will you find enough qualified, willing workers?**

**A:** If this is true, it means that we will have to offer competitive wages and benefits to our future leisure and hospitality employees. We are already planning to do that. We also plan to offer positions in technical support, accounting, management, and other administrative functions.

<sup>2</sup> William Miller, PhD and Martin Schwartz, PhD. "Casino Gambling and Street Crime" Annals of the American Academy, March 1998," AAPSS, 556.