

Hunt Coracci promoted to senior VP, Consumer Loans at Bank of Clark County



Hunt Coracci

Hunt Coracci, who joined the Bank of Clark County as relationship manager for commercial accounts, has been promoted to senior vice president and commercial loan officer, reports **Mike Worthy**, president of the bank.

Coracci has been in the banking profession for more than 30 years and has held various positions in south-west Washington, Portland and Connecticut. Coracci is a graduate of Nichols College, Dudley, Mass., and attended the National Commercial Lending School at the University of Oklahoma.

Tribal leader asks for meeting with La Center city officials

Cowlitz Indian Tribal chair **John Barnett**, last night speaking to an invited and mostly partisan crowd at the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay, said, "I ask La Center to meet with us. Time is running out."

The immediate and most vocal opposition to the prospect of an Indian casino on I-5, just up the road from La Center, the only town in Clark County where gambling is permitted (card only, such as black jack and poker), has come from the owners of the card room "casinos" in the town, who claim a casino will all but devastate their business—an estimated gross of \$8 to \$10 million a year. Card room gambling is the principal source of revenue for the bucolic east fork of the Lewis River community, and the card room owners are not

without community support in opposing the proposed Cowlitz development

What the Cowlitz propose for 152 acres they own just east of the interstate highway between La Center and Ridgefield is a 160,000 square-foot casino, larger by half than any other in the northwest, 210,000 square feet of restaurant and retail space, convention and entertainment facilities of up to 150,000 square feet, a 250-room hotel, tribal government offices and a tribal cultural center, up to two dozen tribal housing units, and parking structures for about 8,500 vehicles.

Last night's session was set up by the JD White Company, which currently is involved in the public communications aspect of the project.

The tribe and Clark County last March signed a memorandum of agreement that spells out how the tribe would indemnify county and local governmental agencies for development costs and how the tribe would provide governmental support in lieu of taxes, which it is not otherwise required to pay. In addition, the memorandum with the county provides that 2 percent of gaming revenues would be turned over to the county for other purposes, including art and education.

Other agreements are being pursued with other agencies, notably the Ridgefield School District, Vancouver, Ridgefield and Battle Ground.

And huge it would be. Casino employment alone would be in the 4-to-5,000 range, by far becoming the largest employer in the county.

Nothing will happen, however, until the Bureau of Indian Affairs determines whether the Cowlitz, which gained official tribal status in 2000, can turn their Clark County property into an Indian reservation. That process has begun. A scoping meeting on an Environmental Impact Statement has already been held. Tribal officials believe that the draft of the Environmental Impact Statement will be ready by mid-summer.

What's given the Cowlitz a kick-start is a recent agreement with the successful Mohegan Tribe to finance and manage the project. Mohegan officials have been in Clark County with the Cowlitz, making presentations most of the week, and they participated in last night's presentation.

The Mohegan Sun Casino, in Uncasville, Conn., grosses over a billion dollars a year.

Barnett explains thusly what the casino development will mean to the 3,000 members of the tribe: "In addition to employment opportunities, the casino will provide economic and social benefits for the Cowlitz people. Proceeds will be used to endow scholarships for the young and provide health care and prescription drug benefits for our growing number of elders. The added resources will help us preserve our culture and language, while protecting ancestral lands and the environment."

"The Cowlitz Tribe has been in Clark County since time immemorial," Barnett said concluding the presentation. "We intend to stay. You have my word that we will be good neighbors."

News briefs

First Friday Art Walk in Camas is this evening. Fitzgerald's Fine Wines offering wine tasting at 228 NE Fourth Avenue. 🎷 *Quartet for the End of Time*, a musical and multi-media depiction of War II Nazi concentration camps, is being presented at 3 p.m. Sunday by Bravo! Vancouver in St. Joseph Catholic Church, 400 S Andresen Road. General admission is \$12.00. For further information, call **696-4407**.

Friday headlines at home and from around the world:

[Voting by dead people isn't always a scam--Seattle Times, Jonathan Martin and David Heath](#)

[Construction of 112th Avenue off-ramp from I-205 will begin a year from now--Columbian, Jeffrey Mize](#)

[Staff Sgt. Wayne Calkins Jr. home on leave, plans marriage, but has to go back to Iraq first--Columbian, **Dean Baker**](#)
[La Center council is raising property tax over fears of loss of gambling revenue--Columbian, **Margaret Ellis**](#)
[Vancouver in-fill plan fills a niche for housing--Oregonian, **Bill Stewart**](#)
["Not One Damn Dime Day" silent protest of Iraq war coming January 20--Columbian, **Gregg Herrington**](#)
[Firehouse Glass Gallery scaling back--Columbian, **Jonathan Nelson**](#)
[Bush rejects growing pessimism on U.S. foreign policy--Washington Post, **William Branigin**](#)

Friday on the air

Clark County Commissioners (12/7)—3:30 p.m. CVTV
Vancouver Symphony Orchestra: West Meets East—5 p.m. CVTV
Portland Winter Hawks at Saskatoon (live)—5 p.m. KUPL
Pearl Harbor Day Observance—6:30 p.m. CVTV
Miami at the Portland Blazers (live)—7 p.m. KGW-TV, KXL, KRMZ
Animal Control Hearings (12/9)—7:30 p.m. CVTV
Telecommunications Commission (12/1)—8:30 p.m. CVTV
Bravo! Vancouver: Handel's Messiah—10:30 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

.**Lisa Sparks** evoking Town Tabloid history. ☞ **John Hagensen** and **Joe Melroy** comparing notes. ☞ **Bruce Wiseman** promoting three firs. ☞ **Vern Veysey** sharing a good notion. ☞ **Gary Adkins** commenting on real progress. ☞ **Mark Bowyer** being definitive. ☞ **Bridget Schwarz** providing cover. ☞ **Friday**, gloomy and rainy, 44. **Saturday**, cloudy with showers, 45. **Sunday**, gray, mostly light rain, 45.