

## LOCAL BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS SAY “NO” TO CASINO



Vancouver Business Journal

Friday, 23 June 2006



### *A business park will draw business and increase median salaries*

**Ginger Metcalf**  
is the executive director of Identity Clark County.

The boards of three prominent business organizations have taken a position to oppose the proposed Cowlitz large scale casino-resort project in La Center - Identity Clark County, Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce and Battle Ground Chamber of Commerce. A common theme runs through each organization's announcement and that theme reflects the social fabric of our community. We have put great effort into transforming our image from one of being a small, blue collar, bedroom community with little identity to one that is a major partner in a greater metropolitan region, home to Washington's high tech industry and superior schools, where an emerging renaissance is taking place with significant public and private investment being attracted.

The Identity Clark County (ICC) Board of Directors chose to support the creation of a business park over the proposed large scale casino-resort at the La Center junction for the following reasons.

The business park supports the goals of Clark County's Growth Management Plan that has been debated over the last 15 years and accepted as the preferred alternative for Clark County's growth and economic development compatible with the creation of the Discovery Corridor.

The impact of large scale casino-induced traffic on the already congested I-5 Bridge and the I-5 corridor is not acceptable and would be detrimental to the movement of goods and services throughout the region.

No amount of mitigation from a large scale casino, and the negative implications associated with gambling, can address the adverse impacts to Clark County as an appealing community and location to attract family wage producing business and retain existing desirable business.

Employers look at several factors when considering relocation to, or expansion of, their business in Clark County, including the quality of public schools, quality of life and recreational opportunities, workforce availability and skill sets and who the largest employers in the region are. It's difficult to believe that any future WaferTechs or Hewlett Packards would be impressed with "casino" leading the list of large employers in Clark County.

Revenues generated from any large scale casino will affect most all Clark County business by converting substantial local consumption spending to gaming expenditures, the profit from which will be exported out of Clark County. The development of a business park however would generate the purchasing of local supplies by many individual businesses with substantial profits being retained in Clark County. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, estimated business park annual wages of \$49,000 far exceed the proposed large scale casino wages of \$28,000. Which are better for our community? It doesn't take an Alan Greenspan to answer that question.

*Any large scale casino is incompatible with the social, environmental and economic values of this community and it is our responsibility to preserve those values for the generations of the future.*