



BAY MILLS NEWS

GNOOZHEKAANING BIDAJIMOWIN

"Serving the Bay Mills Indian Community"

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Onaabeni-giizis Crust on the Snow Moon

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[Front Page](#) • [News](#) • [Opinion](#) • [Entertainment](#) • [Sports](#) • [Education](#) • [Health](#) • [History](#) • [Bulletin](#) • [About Us](#)

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Are you ready for a bare-knuckles brawl?

As most of you know, this year is another election year and it looks like the State of Michigan is gonna have itself a good-ole fashioned, bare-knuckle governor's brawl.

In the Blue corner, weighing all of 100 pounds, is the annoyingly condescending defending champion - Governor Jennifer Granholm. In the Red corner, of course, is the Republican challenger - Mr. Moneybags himself, Dick DeVos.



Dick DeVos is the heir-apparent to his father's multi-billion dollar Amway fortune and daling of west Michigan conservatives.

In a new campaign commercial, Dick DeVos is shown standing in an empty factory bemoaning the loss of jobs for Michigan workers and blaming it on the yahoos in Lansing. He is then heard introducing himself, as he puts on his jacket to "go to work," by saying: "I'm Dick DeVos. I'm a job-maker."

If he were telling the truth, though, he'd really say: "I'm Dick DeVos. I'm a job-killer."

You see, Mr. DeVos has been bankrolling and openly supporting anti-Indian groups in southwest Michigan for years. He is listed as a "supporter" on the website of the group known as "23 is Enough" and has contributed more than \$25,000 of his own money to the organization (to say nothing of the thousands that other members of his family have also contributed).

"23 is Enough," is a group of wealthy west Michigan businessmen and politicians that was established to stop Indian

In the Bay Mills News

News: Students enjoy Ojibwe Charter School's Winter Carnival
News: Churchill visits Bay Mills Cultural Lodge
News: Water quality in the Back Bay looking good

Education: OCS launches "Too Good for Drugs" program
Health: Should you take the diabetes test?
Opinion: Are you ready for a bare-knuckles brawl?

[Also Inside](#)

[Archives](#)

[Front Page](#)

Weather

Advertisements

On My Fishbox

By Bryan Newland

gaming in Michigan (including a Port Huron casino proposal advanced by the Bay Mills Indian Community). This group has thus far been very successful in thwarting the casino proposal of the Gun Lake tribe - a casino that would create hundreds of new jobs for Michigan citizens.

Several years ago, the organization's founders gathered in Grand Rapids at a press conference to announce the formation of the group. Members from several southwest Michigan tribes, including Gun Lake, stood on the sidewalk outside the press conference to pass out flyers. It was there that they were subjected to racial epithets by founding members - well-respected politicians and businessmen - of "23 is Enough" as they entered the building.

If Mr. DeVos wants to invest his money and support in this type of organization, he can count me as one "Injun" (one of the insults hurled at tribal supporters by members of "23 is Enough") who won't be casting a vote for him this November.

"23 is Enough" has also worked in concert with other anti-Indian organizations, such as "Taxpayers of Michigan Against Casinos (TOMAC)," "Michigan Gambling Opposition (MichGO)," and "Citizens Exposing Truth About Casinos (CETAC)."

Each one of these groups, based in west-Michigan, has opposed tribal gaming and, in the process, recognition of tribal sovereignty.

It is likely that all of these groups will support Dick DeVos for governor.

Should Mr. DeVos win the top job in Lansing, he will be in the catbird seat for reelection in 2010. If that happens, it will be Governor Dick DeVos sitting across the table from our tribal council when the time comes to renegotiate our gaming compact. The continuation of gaming as we know it at Bay Mills, would then depend upon his approval.

Anybody want to take that bet?


The Bay Mills Executive Council, along with other tribal councils, needs to request a strongly-worded assurance from Dick DeVos that he recognizes the territorial sovereignty of Indian tribes and that he will renegotiate all existing gaming compacts in "good faith."


If Mr. DeVos cannot give such an assurance, then it will be up to those of us in tribal communities to protect our own job-makers from the yahoos in Lansing and Grand Rapids come November.


Bryan Newland is a Bay Mills Indian Community Member and a student at Michigan State University College of Law in East Lansing. He is the oldest son of Gordon and Vickie Newland of

Bay Mills. He has written columns and letters that have appeared in local, regional, and national publications. You can respond to his column at 517-420-0808 or tikro6@yahoo.com.

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