

November 2004

## Developers gamble with Valley's future

*Concerned that community will have little say in plans of Chumash and partners, including Fess Parker, coalition launches broad campaign*

Recent property acquisitions by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, plus the tribe's negotiations with Fess Parker to build a \$250-million housing and hotel project, signal that the Chumash and their non-tribal development partners have large-scale development plans for the Santa Ynez Valley.

Rather than purchasing land and applying to develop the property in the same manner as other individuals and businesses, the Chumash and their partners have made it clear that they intend to skirt local and state land-use laws and environmental regulations. By putting land in federal trust, the developers would subvert local decision-making.

In response, a large, diverse coalition has mobilized to uphold the Valley's tradition of sound community planning and hold all developers to the same rules. Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens (SYVCC), a nonprofit organization led by volunteers who live and work in the Valley, is leading the coalition and raising funds for its campaign.

A Chumash spokeswoman recently told KSBY-TV that the tribe is still negotiating with Parker to build the massive project they announced last spring.

"Whether they sign a deal or not, the Valley should be concerned about the lack of local author-



*Ranchland along Highway 246 is among parcels that the Chumash tribe is seeking to buy and exempt from local control. Ity over the development plans of the tribe and their partners," said Curt Moniot, president of SYVCC.*

Property records reveal that the Chumash tribe has acquired a string of off-reservation parcels near its recently expanded casino. The tribe has applied to remove the land from county jurisdiction and exempt it from taxes, zoning laws, building codes and other regulations. Along with the casino, these new acquisitions threaten the rural way of life in the Valley and pose unfair competition to local businesses.

## SYVCC launches fund-raising drive

Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens has embarked on an ambitious fund-raising campaign to support the coalition's efforts to hold all developers, including the Chumash tribe, to the same, fair land-use laws and environmental regulations.

Contributions from community members are funding the work of SYVCC's team of attorneys, lobbyists, environmental scientists and other consultants.

"This is more than a grassroots campaign," said Charles "C.J." Jackson, executive director of the Concerned Citizens group. "We know that our local leaders will have little say on the tribe's development plans—the big decisions will be made in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. We have a first-rate team in place to influence those decisions, but their assistance costs money."

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### A MESSAGE FROM SYVCC PRESIDENT CURT MONIOT

As a land-use planner, I have a lot of experience helping clients comply with the long-established zoning laws of Santa Barbara County and the nationally admired environmental regulations of California. Unfortunately, some of our neighbors are trying to sneak around the rules that have helped preserve the beauty of the Valley. That's not fair.

Fess Parker's potential project with the Chumash tribe woke up the Valley to the potential for developers to partner with Indian tribes and ignore community input and local and state oversight. But the Parker-Chumash project is just one proposal in the tribe's real estate development plan—a plan that shows little regard for the concerns of the community and local government.

Until there is an enforceable agreement regarding development on tribal land, we must stay on alert. Please join us.

### A MESSAGE FROM SYVCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHARLES "C.J." JACKSON

When I look at the list of hundreds of people and organizations that have added their names to our coalition, I am amazed. We are Santa Ynez Valley homeowners and ranchers, businesspeople, conservationists and residents of other areas of Santa Barbara County.

We are not an anti-Indian group, and some of us are developers. What we have in common is a simple belief that everyone should play by the same, fair rules.

Other communities in California and, indeed, throughout the United States are facing the same issues we are, and we are all learning from each other. As leaders of Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens, we have seen our coalition's hard work pay off already. Local, state and federal government are hearing our message, but we must continue to press our case with them. Your support will help us do that.

## *Board adds members, hires consultants to assist coalition*

Leading Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens is a board of directors with diverse experiences and deep roots in Santa Barbara County. Recently expanded to 10 members, the board includes a land-use planner, a third-generation cattle rancher, experienced real estate developers and executives, a financial advisor and an internationally respected equine veterinarian.

Assisting the board of directors is an advisory board of Valley residents who are influential in Santa Barbara, Sacramento and Washington.

SYVCC also sought the advice of expert attorneys, lobbyists, media strategists, environmental scientists and other consultants.

"We took time to find the best," SYVCC Vice President Doug Herthel said.

The consultant team has a winning record navigating all levels and branches of government. Members of the team have worked for the U.S. Senate and Department of the Interior, the mayor of Los Angeles and the *Los Angeles Times*.

## **New website is up and running**

In addition to this newsletter, the website of Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens will keep you informed about the organization's work on behalf of the Valley. A work in progress, [www.syvconcernedcitizens.com](http://www.syvconcernedcitizens.com) contains explanations of federal Indian regulations, a full list of people and organizations who have added their names to the campaign, ways to contact government officials and instructions for making a financial contribution to SYVCC.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charles "C.J." Jackson  
*Executive Director*

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[WWW.SYVCONCERNEDCITIZENS.COM](http://WWW.SYVCONCERNEDCITIZENS.COM)

# SYVCC campaign relies on contributions

*Continued from p. 1*

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians has prospered tremendously from their casino's success—members of the tribe each receive about \$30,000 every month, the *Los Angeles Times* reported recently. According to the newspaper, the Chumash Casino stands to rake in \$200 million this year. Clearly, the Chumash and development partners like Fess Parker have the means to lobby for approval of their development projects.

"To even the odds, we need this community's help," said Sandy Focht, SYVCC's treasurer and chair of the fund-raising effort. "We welcome contributions of all sizes—one-time gifts and monthly pledges. Anything will help protect the rural character of the beautiful valley that we all share."

Contributions will help:

- ◆ Educate officials in Santa Barbara, Sacramento and Washington, D.C.
- ◆ Reach out to local, state and national media

"TO EVEN THE ODDS,  
WE NEED THIS  
COMMUNITY'S HELP."  
—SANDY FOCHT,  
TREASURER

◆ Legally challenge, if necessary, the development projects of the Chumash tribe and their non-tribal partners, including Fess Parker.

"The Parker-Chumash deal is still on the table, and it has given other developers similar ideas," said Curt Moniot, president of Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens. "If you endorse the ideals of this campaign, please make a financial contribution as well."

SYVCC is a nonprofit 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions to the group are not tax-deductible as charitable donations, but they may be deductible as business expenses. Consult your tax advisor.

**HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE**

Enclosed in this newsletter is an envelope for your contribution, with instructions and a form to complete. We welcome one-time gifts and monthly pledges. Thank you for your support!

## *Bureau of Indian Affairs to visit Santa Barbara County*

**Federal officials will address Board of Supervisors, answer county's questions on Nov. 23**

Accepting an invitation from the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, officials from the Sacramento office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are scheduled to answer questions from the supervisors and community on Tuesday, November 23.

The BIA is a division of the U.S. Department of the Interior and evaluates applications from federally recognized Indian tribes for so-called trust land acquisitions.

Approved applications allow tribes to place land located off their reservations in federal trust, removing it from the jurisdiction (and taxation) of the local government—Santa Barbara County, in this case.

As the Bureau reviews a tribe's application to acquire land in trust, the BIA accepts comments from the local government. Opportunities for public comment, however, are limited.

The trust acquisition process was intended to

help struggling tribes get on their feet—not as a shield for wealthy, self-sufficient tribes and their non-tribal development partners.

In other parts of the United States, state and local governments have struck legally enforceable agreements with Indian tribes that cover environmental issues and the provision of emergency services and utilities, among other issues. Currently, there is no such agreement in place in the Santa Ynez Valley.

"Our coalition has sought the advice of people who have helped craft agreements between tribes and communities in other places, and we are hopeful that such an agreement can be developed in the Valley," Concerned Citizens President Curt Moniot said. "We invite the Santa Ynez Chumash to work cooperatively with our coalition and local officials."

Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens encourages members of the community to attend the county supervisors' meeting on Nov. 23 to learn more about the federal process and show the BIA's representatives that the community supports holding tribal developers to responsible standards.

**SANTA YNEZ VALLEY CONCERNED CITIZENS  
P.O. Box 244 ♦ SANTA YNEZ, CA 93460**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

*Local, state and federal officials, as well as the media, need to hear the Valley's concerns about unchecked development. E-mail, fax and mail letters to the following addresses. For further instructions, and suggestions for the content of your letters, visit [www.syvconcernedcitizens.com](http://www.syvconcernedcitizens.com). Please send a copy of your letter to SYVCC.*

### **BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS**

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### **CALIFORNIA SECRETARY FOR RESOURCES**

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Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1311  
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### **REP. ELTON GALLEGLY**

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### **SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SUPERVISORS**

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