

Another chance at bat

League to run team for '09 until new owners found

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The bid to keep professional baseball alive in Ottawa is going into extra innings.

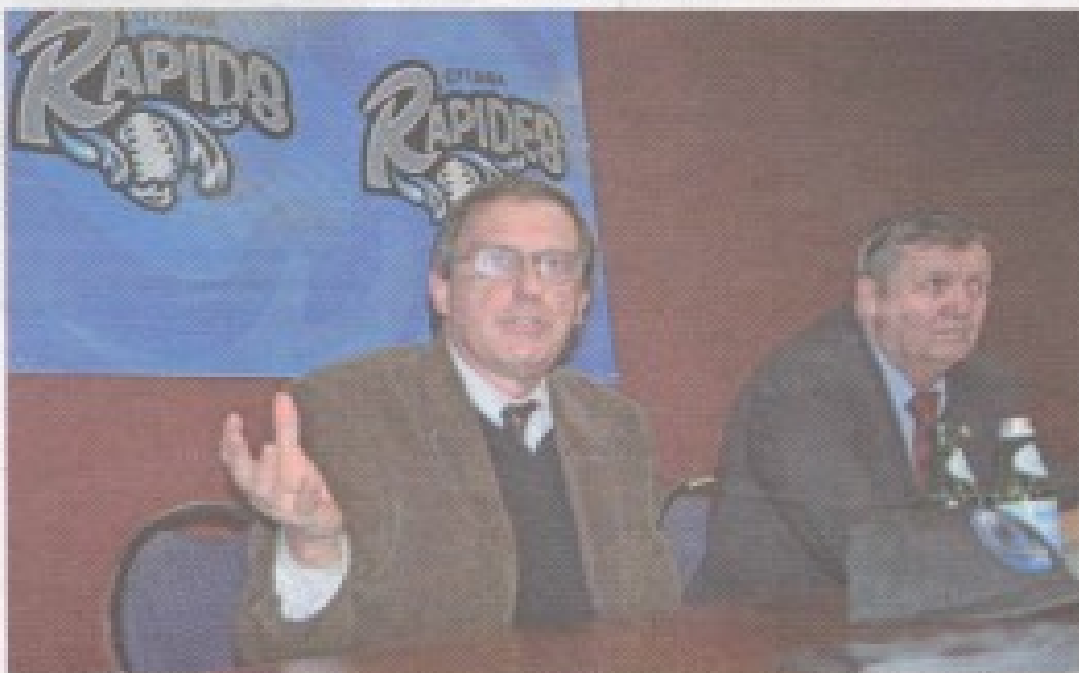
With a plan to make baseball here "family-friendly and family-oriented," the Canadian-American Association of Professional Baseball announced yesterday the league would operate a team for the 2009 season until new owners are found.

The former Ottawa Rapids team was dissolved when it declared bankruptcy at the end of September after only one season. But Can-Am commissioner Miles Wolff has confidence that baseball can survive, and even thrive, in Ottawa.

"We're not going to fold up our tent and run away."

Local operators "are the preference," but the league — which has a lease with the city for Ottawa Stadium for the next year — is committed, even if they don't find ownership in time for 2009.

The last game of the season in September drew more than 5,000 fans, leading Coun. Bob Mon-



Can-Am League commissioner Miles Wolff and city councillor Bob Monette announced during a press conference that an Ottawa baseball team will return for the 2009 season.

Ownership

• The fees for whoever eventually owns the baseball

team would be \$750,000 next season.

ette to believe that people in Ottawa "are excited about baseball."

After the game, players signed autographs on the field, he added. "That shows there is interest in Ottawa," he said.

Wolff believes that "at

least half" of the players from the inaugural season will return, and said players elsewhere in the league have expressed interest in coming here.

"Ottawa has the best field ... and the best amenities, which make it

easier to attract players. I still believe this is the best baseball stadium in all of Canada."

Many of the details still have to be looked at, including a name for the team.

"There's a good awareness now for the name Rapids. It would be great to keep it, but there might be reasons we can't."

"I think if we do this right, this could be very successful."