



**Legislative Commission on
Indian Services/Nine Tribes
Spring Celebration
May 18, 2017
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon**

Edelio Chavez-Gonzalez (left) says he loves to talk about his Tribe and did just that with those who stopped by the Siletz display.

Eva Jurado participates in a Grand Ronde Canoe Family dance.



Photos by Diane Rodriguez

Chinook Winds, continued from page 1



File photo

The Tent in 1995

Nelson Witt and Dietmar Goebel, architect and owner's rep. Frank Ducheneau and Forrest Gerard also worked as our lobbyist in Washington, D.C.

Dee, Frank, Craig Dorsey (Tribal attorney) and I made several trips to Washington, D.C., to lobby to put the land in trust. On the very last day of the session for that year, at 2 a.m., the Senate approved our land in trust for gaming! We were ecstatic, but we knew we had a lot of work ahead of us.

After several meetings with the Lincoln City officials, we were ready to begin the process to establish our gaming center. To begin with, we purchased a sprung structure (these are used in Antarctica and can withstand 120 mile an hour winds).

Our structure was 10,000 square feet. It housed 250 IGT slot machines. We had quarter and \$1 machines. There was a small dining area.

We also had 12 Blackjack tables but to begin with, we were not able to play regular Blackjack. A player had to ante a quarter each hand. That money was used to purchase various prizes – a car, boat, an

RV. At the end of the month, a drawing was held and a lucky winner received the prize.

After a few months, according to our compact with the State of Oregon, we were allowed to play regular Blackjack. Dee, Craig and I were part of the negotiating team with the state to do Class 3 gaming. Brad Darcy from the Gaming Commission negotiated with the state police rep specific to police, security and their rules and regulations.

PCL was selected as the firm to construct our facility. Its representatives were Keith Hendrickson, Andy McCord and Steve Warner. We had a year to complete it.

Unfortunately, that was one of the worse winters for weather. It had a major effect on the construction but we were able to move forward.

A crisis occurred in December when our financial backers were not able to meet their obligations. We had to pay \$2 million or we would have to shut down the operation.

We had already ordered our steel for the framework and without the money we would have to shut down. It would have cost us another \$1 million for start-up costs.



File photo

The permanent building opened in 1996

Luckily, we contacted the Marshall Group and they sent a representative, Steve Erickson, to meet with us. Once he saw the site and believed in our stability, he gave us the \$2 million dollars. A verbal commitment and a handshake sealed the deal and the paperwork followed. Many thanks to Steve.

Members of the Tribal Gaming Commission were Joe Lane, Brad Darcy, Tim Viles, Cy Hill and Mike Fisher. Through attrition, Shawna Gray and Allison Simmons were later hired. Shawna is currently the chairman.

Chinook Winds was built with a Tribal concept. The waterfall depicts the Tribe's Euchre Creek fishing site. The actual rock was taken from the Tribal rock quarry. The trees were also considered to be a part of the forest along with deer and bear.

The chandeliers represent the Siletz baskets that Siletz is known for. Our meeting rooms are also named after Tribes that constitute the confederation. Each councilperson was given an opportunity to name their Tribe for each room. Each one was different, i.e., Tututni, Chetco, etc.

When we decided on a name, Dolly Fisher selected it – Chinook Winds – which are the warm winds. She also named the Play Palace and Arcade. They were part of the facility and later were moved to their own building, where they are today.

The Siletz elders were supportive of our gaming center and they helped overcome the opposition against us. After a year of hard work and overcoming the many pitfalls that occurred, we were able to open our door!

We were sorry to see our "tent" with its happy memories go, but we were also glad to have our casino at last!

Many people helped make it happen and it has benefitted the Tribe, Lincoln City, the community and various charitable organizations throughout the state.

Other council people in later years, in the '90s like Rosemary Landis, Bud Lane, Clifford Case, Pat Morrell, Denise Peterson and Mike Darcy, were also supportive.

Congratulations to everyone involved and those whose name were not mentioned – we are forever grateful.