

WILDHORSE: 32-lane bowling alley will serve public and league play

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may seem like overkill for a resort 300 miles from any large metro area, George is quick to note that the old courtyard rooms (built in 1996) will be demolished and the net increase will be 115 rooms. That means the overall number of rooms will be 416.

George wouldn't talk about occupancy rates but said every weekend all current 301 hotel rooms have been sold out and many more rooms would have been sold if they'd been available. Regional opportunities, including more conferences and conventions — even large bowling tournaments — could draw more people to the hotel.

Toward one of those goals, two more key parts of expansion to draw more patrons are a new multi-events center and a powwow/

outdoor arena for concerts to be located where the courtyard now stands.

And outdoor swimming pool will connect to the multi-events center and face a stage in the new outdoor arena.

Bowling alley

The idea for a 32-lane bowling alley has been tossed around for two or three years after Pendleton's bowling alley closed up shop.

When Pendleton's alley closed, then-BOT treasurer Aaron Hines — an avid bowler — suggested an alley at Wildhorse.

George said he and others visited several casinos that have successful bowling alleys. Those casinos were attracting large tournaments with people who tended to gamble as well.

The bowling alley visits actually led to the entire expansion project, George said.

The new bowling alley

at Wildhorse likely will be configured with two sets of 16 lanes for the public and league play during weekdays.

And, George said, Wildhorse wants to offer "high quality" tournaments for bowlers from across the region. Some tribal bowling alleys have been successful in drawing larger Professional Bowling Association tournaments.

Restaurants, cineplex and gaming

Three restaurants, including some kind of franchise, will be located in a small food court. George said Wildhorse has "reached out to a couple" franchises already. He named a handful of well-known fast food hamburger and noodle outfits.

A fourth restaurant will serve patrons of the bowling alley and the movie theater.

And the fifth eatery will

be a sit-down affair overlooking the swimming pool. It will have a breakfast, lunch and dinner menu.

The theater changes are straightforward: Add four more screens so more movies can be offered.

However, George said, they will be "more elegant." The state-of-the-art theaters will accommodate audiences of approximately 120.

Of course, all this new stuff is designed to bring more people to the casino to spend more money gambling.

The expansion will reconfigure the floor to add 300 more slot machines, which will bring the total to 1,500. Another half dozen table games will bring the total to 20 in the pit.

To date, George said, the previous four expansions have been "very successful" and Wildhorse "expects to have the same success."

Parking

Where are all these people going to park?

Well, the current pavement isn't going to spread across the landscape.

"We want to quit building surface and start building up," George said. "Otherwise it'll be nothing but blacktop."

Instead, a parking garage for customers and staff is planned at the site of the current pow wow grounds to the south of the cineplex.

"The design will match the casino building," George said. "It's not going to be like a standard concrete parking garage. It will blend in with the rest of the property."

Timeline

The BOT resolution authorized Wildhorse to negotiate with Thalden Boyd Emery Architects for design development, construction drawings and to develop final costs and to begin developing request for proposals for

the construction project and general contractor.

The current Wells Fargo loan, approved in May 2014, funded the first phase of the expansion and refinanced the Nixyaawii Governance Center and the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute. Wildhorse is paying \$6.7 million a year on that debt, which comes due in May 2019 with a balloon payment of \$7.7 million.

"By the time we negotiate the new loan, Wildhorse's old loan will be close to being paid off," George said. "This new loan should not impact the current distribution to the CTUIR and should be repaid within seven years when the expansion project is completed ready for full operation."

If everything goes smoothly, George said, construction could begin in the summer of 2018 and finish in 2020.

LAWS: Senate Bill 327 restores recreational immunity to cities

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disabilities and the LGBTQ community — during social studies after House Bill 2845, which directs the Department of Education to write statewide "ethnic studies standards" for K-12 social studies curriculum, with the help of a diverse advisory group. The department will also develop more financial literacy curriculum thanks to the passage of House Bill 2229.

• Juniors and seniors in high school will be able to register to vote thanks to Senate Bill 802, which lowered the voter registration age to 16 starting in January. The actual voting age, however, remains at 18.

• If you forget to pay your child's lunch bill, don't worry about "lunch shaming." House Bill 3454 bans schools from making students do extra chores, throwing away their lunch or otherwise publicly identifying them as having an overdue balance on their lunch accounts. Instead, schools are directed to work directly with parents on settling the bill.

• Worried about police interviewing your child while they are at school? House Bill 3242 requires law enforcement to record interviews with minors when investigating a felony.

• School volunteers with direct and unsupervised contact with students will also have to undergo a background check first thanks to House Bill 2992.

Everywhere else

• Hermiston can finally move forward on building a new skate park after Senate Bill 327 restored recreational immunity to cities and other property owners who offer up their property for free recreational use by the public. The law removes the threat of lawsuits that has been hanging over cities since the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that a jogger injured in a hole in a city park could sue the worker who left it unattended.

• 20-year-old smokers

will have trouble getting their cigarettes after Senate Bill 754, which raises the minimum age for smoking and buying tobacco products from 18 to 21 starting in January.

• Planning a wedding but not the religious type? House Bill 2113 allows a secular institution "that occupies a place in the lives of the organization's members parallel to that filled by a church or particular religious authority" to perform marriages starting Jan. 1.

• Cans and bottles have been worth a 10 cent deposit — twice what they used to be — since House Bill 2746 passed in April.

• Teens and young adults who have hesitated to report a sexual assault because there was under-aged drinking involved are now being given immunity from being prosecuted for drinking if the drinking only came to light because someone contacted law enforcement or emergency medical services to report a sexual assault. The victim will also be protected from such prosecution, even if they were not the one to report the assault.

• If you've decided the time has come for a vasectomy, you no longer have to wait for a physician. House Bill 2103 permits nurse practitioners to perform vasectomies starting Jan. 1, making Oregon the third state in the country to do so.

Not passed yet

• Grand jury proceedings will be required to be recorded if Senate Bill 505, which was passed by the Senate but not yet by the House, passes.

• The House has not yet passed Senate Bill 1050, which would require lifetime imprisonment without the possibility of parole for repeat sex offenders who have been convicted of first degree rape or sodomy before.

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