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News from the Warm Springs Indian Reservati



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PO BOX 870 WARM SPRINGS, OREGON 97761

MAY 10, 1989



Early Childhood Education Center...

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Eligible tribal member voters are being asked to approve the proposed Early Childhood Education Center in a referendum vote Tuesday, May 16. The referendum, if approved, will appropriate \$1,125,000 from tribal funds for the project. Another \$3,375,000 million will come from loans and grants.

The need for a centralized childrens' education and care center in Warm Springs has never been more apparent than now. Programs are disjointed and classrooms are overcrowded. There's "no room at the inn" for more children now, for there are 144 on the waiting lists. The gas spill last spring closed the Head Start program at the Community Center for two months. Classes did not resume until September. Methane gas leaks and flooding have closed the Day Care Center a number of times.

The new facility, if approved, will more than double the current space available. It will accomodate approximately 460 children, including

the 217 children enrolled in the five programs now as well as the 144 on the waiting lists and an additional 100.

The Early Childhood Education programs currently employ 61 people, 53 of whom are full-time while the remaining are part-time and on-call workers. The new facility will create 10 new jobs.

According to program director Julie Mitchell, there is a possibility of increasing federal funding with the increase in size of facility and the number of children served. Total operating budget for 1989 is \$1,110,835 with the federal government chipping in approximately \$220,000 of that amount. "This is a big program in Warm Springs," said Mitchell. Also included with the Early Childhood Education is the early intervention program that is state funded in the amount of \$85,173. Serving 49 children, this program employs one full-time person and three contracted specialists.

The ECE will be the first step toward building a Community Learning Center. It will include 24 classrooms and separate kitchen and maintenance buildings. It will be located just north of the old landfill site, south of the Agency Longhouse. Also to eventually be included in the Center will be the elementary school, kindergarten, Culture and Heritage, Adult Education, OSU Extension, COCC and a community library.

The Early Childhood Education Center has been in the talking stages for the last 10 years. Warm Springs is expecting over 130 newborns this year thus creating an even greater demand on the existing facilities. Program staff and administrators are hoping that voters will make children their number one priority and approve the upcoming referendum.

Be sure to vote on Tuesday, May 16. Polls at the Community Center will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.