

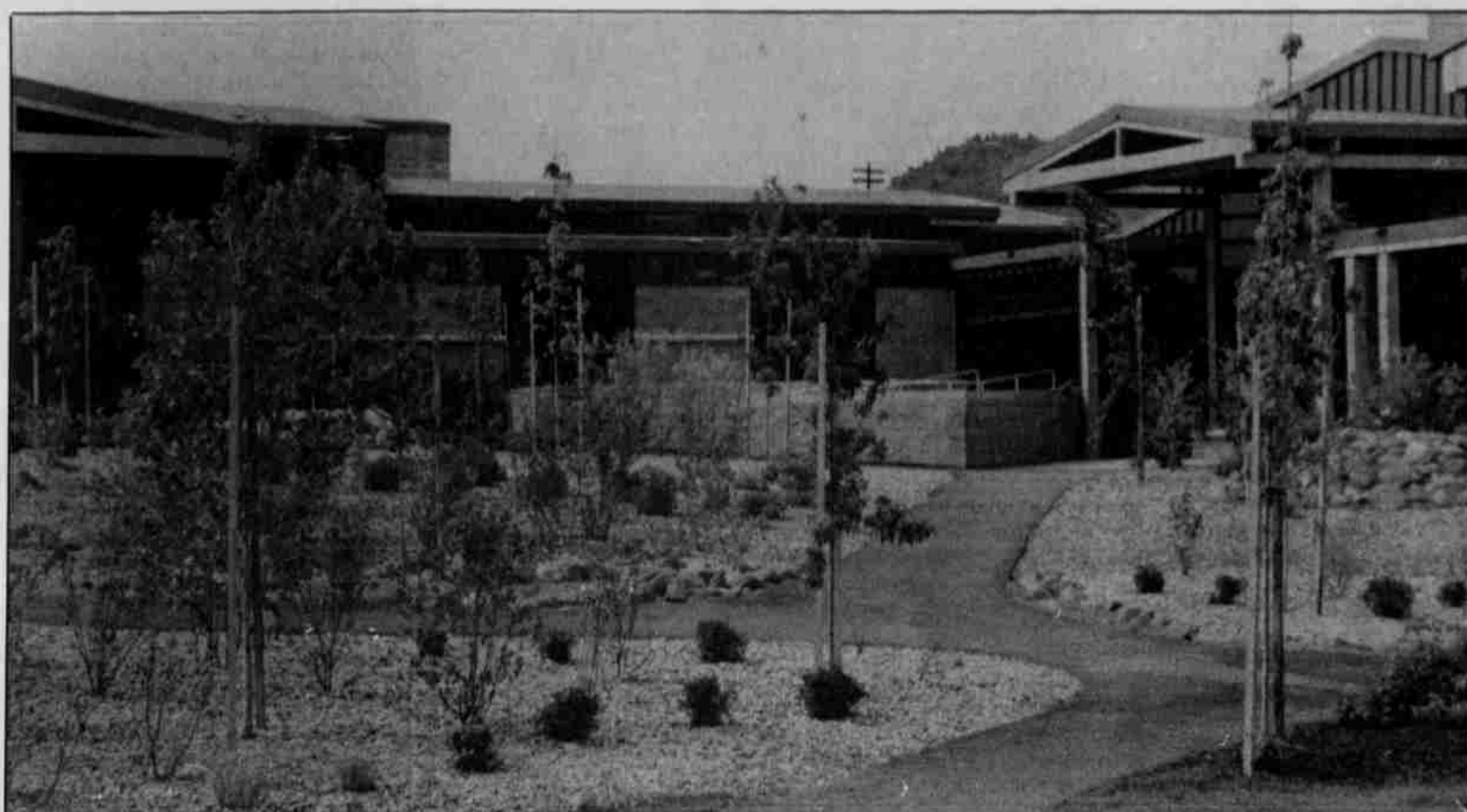
New Learning Center offers ample room, modern facilities, learning atmosphere for children



The new Early Childhood Education Center is located south of the Agency Longhouse near what was once the Warm Springs landfill.



A faulty sidewalk will be replaced before the Center opens.



The area behind the Center has been landscaped and includes intertwining asphalt paths.

Come Monday, May 18, Warm Springs children attending Day Care programs will have a brand new place to call their day-time home. After 13 months of construction, the new Early Childhood Education Center is ready to open its doors to Warm Springs' youngest citizens.

There are currently about 250 children enrolled in the child care programs that come under the umbrella of Early Childhood Education. The new facility will have room for a total of 460. Building design allows for future expansion to be done easily.

With an increase in the number of children served, so must the staff grow. By September, 10 additional teachers' aides will be on board, as will be two day-time janitors.

The Day Care and Head Start/Day Care programs shut down May 7 so that supplies and equipment could be packed for moving. All should be moved into the new building by May 15. The Latchkey and Head Start programs, currently housed in the Presbyterian Church and Community Center, respectively, will move after school lets out in June.

The 46,000 square foot building is situated on what was previously the Warm Springs landfill and faces Mt. Jefferson. The area in back of the building is meticulously landscaped and includes asphalt walkways that lead to still-empty playground areas.

The playground areas are being planned and developed by the Parent Club. State lottery, federal Head Start and Parent Club fund raising monies will be used to build the playgrounds that may cost up to \$45,000.

The building features 28 classrooms, all of which are in "pods", separating children by age groups. Twelve classrooms are set aside for preschool age children (three and four year olds). The infant care center, which will accommodate up to 98 children, will have 10 classrooms for children between the ages of six weeks and three years. The after school pod will serve up to 90 children in its six classrooms. The building also features an ultra-modern kitchen, meeting rooms, administrative offices, teacher work areas, locker rooms, staff lounge and staff lunch room.

Total cost of the facility is just under \$5 million. Through referendum in May 1989, tribal voters appropriated \$1.125 million and authorized that the Tribe borrow up to \$3.375 million to complete the project. Several Oregon corporations, including First Interstate Bank, U.S. Bank, Pacific Corp and Portland General Electric, have donated funds totalling \$66,000. Regional strategy lottery funds totalled \$206,929.

Grand opening and building dedication is scheduled for Wednesday, June 24. All community members are encouraged to visit the center and see for themselves Warm Springs' newest investment in the future.



Geraldine Lillie rests among the boxes packed at the Day Care Center.



The halls of learning for Warm Springs children will open May 18.