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A flight back in time

Computer images show Columbia before the dams

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo staff

You are in an airplane flying above the Columbia River.

The landscape below includes Celilo Falls, the Five-Mile Rapids, and other nearby fishing areas.

In the airplane you can fly up as high as 12,000 feet, or as low to the ground as 1,700 feet.

The landmarks - Miller Island and 18-Mile Island, for instance - can be viewed in great detail.

You can see the detail of the rapids as the water rushes down the falls.

The whole landscape is presented in a computerized program.

The program resembles a video game, one where you control a simulated aircraft with a computer joystick.

This program is unique in that it provides a look back in time, to the days before construction of The Dalles and Bonneville dams.

The river as shown in the computer program no longer exists.

The dams formed large reservoirs where the rapids and free-flowing river used to be.

See FLYOVER on page 10

Gorge casino has support at local gatherings

At least two things were made clear during recent home-base and district meetings regarding gaming expansion.

First, tribal members are overwhelmingly in favor of improving the local job market. And second, they are in favor of increasing revenue for the tribes.

For these two reasons, there is strong support among

many tribal members for the Columbia Gorge casino proposal, said Rudy Clements, chairman of the gaming commission.

After talking with members of the Seekseequa District, Tribal Councilwoman Brenda Scott also said she feels the Gorge casino option has widespread support among the residents there.

"People in the district are

eager to get moving," said Scott. Seekseequa residents held a district meeting on Monday of this week. Earlier in the month, two families held home-base meetings.

"It has been very evident that there is overwhelming support for revenue generation," said Clements.

"The comments have been that we need to go where the money is. That message is

coming from the people themselves." Like Councilwoman Scott, Clements said that many tribal members want to move forward sooner rather than later with the referendum.

The Seekseequa District meeting early this week began with the showing of a gaming expansion video.

The video outlines the financial situation that the tribes are facing. In the video, tribal

officials then discuss the options available to address the situation.

A new source of revenue is needed to replace the diminishing amount of timber revenue, the officials explain. The video then compares the level of income that would be derived from a casino at the Gorge, compared to one on the reservation.

See CASINO on page 10



Powwow at Simnasho



At left, drummers provide music at the recent Lincoln's Birthday Powwow, held the weekend of Feb. 8-10 at the Simnasho Longhouse. The event was a joyful one for the many people who participated. More photos of the powwow are on pages 6 and 10. (The photo above shows a beaded decoration on a dancer's costume.)

Dave McMechan/The Spilyay

Report weighs merits of tribal, IHS partnership

"To me, the most important thing is that this sets a direction for the future." - Garland Brunoe

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Staff

A recent report on the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center presents some interesting news.

Since 1988, the average life expectancy of local residents has increased by several years.

And the number of local people receiving needed medical and dental care has gone up dramatically.

The diabetes program at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center is a major success, the report indicates.

From the year 1993, when the Health and Wellness Center was built, until the year 2000, the number of people visiting the clinic's diabetes program has increased by 300 percent.

Better treatment of diabetes has meant that the number of local people on Dialysis has gone down by 80 percent.

The information is contained in a report developed by the Indian Health Service, and presented recently to Tribal Council.

Some other statistics in the report include the following:

The number of local residents visiting the dentist has increased from 6,815 before the Health and Wellness Center

was built, to 27,524 in the year 2000. That is an increase of over 400 percent.

The number of people receiving pharmacy prescriptions has gone from 74,154 in 1991-93, to 124,257 in 1998-2000, an increase of 68 percent.

Visits to the local optometry service were at 1,579 visits per year during 1998-2000. This service did not exist locally until the new clinic was built in 1993.

Physical therapy is also a service that did not exist in Warm Springs prior to construction of the clinic.

The number of physical therapy visits was nearly 3,000 in 1998-2000.

The average age of death among Warm Springs residents has gone from 44 in the year 1988 (five years before the clinic was built), to 50 in the year 2000. The number is still too far below the national average.

Accidents are the number one cause of death among tribal members. Heart attacks and strokes were the next leading causes of death.

The recent report by the Indian Health Service was completed at the request of the Tribal Council.

A main reason why the Council wanted the IHS report

was to review where the tribes and IHS are in regard to their joint venture.

"We wanted an update on the purpose of the joint venture, how we are doing, and are we on course," said Garland Brunoe, Council vice chairman.

"We were concerned that the joint venture was starting to become weak, and that the parties needed to be reminded what this was intended to accomplish," said Brunoe.

The IHS report addresses some concerns, but more importantly the report can be used for future planning and monitoring of the joint venture, said Brunoe.

"To me, the most important thing is that this sets a direction for the future," he said.

After hearing an overview of the contents of the report, presented by John Heinz of the IHS, Council members indicated they would like to have the IHS officials come back within the next couple of months for further discussion.

Presentation of the report - the condensed version of which is 137 pages long - took most of the day, leaving no time for questions and comments from the Tribal Council members.

In summarizing the findings

of the report, Heinz and his staff determined that the joint venture between the Confederated Tribes and the IHS has been a success.

If there had been no joint venture agreement in the early 1990s, then the tribes health program would likely still be housed in a small and outdated facility.

"Patient dissatisfaction would be at an all-time high, and health status would be at an all time low," the report

states.

Since construction of the Health and Wellness Center in 1993, the tribes' health program has added 2,650 new patients.

The report asks, How could these additional patients have been served if there had been no joint venture?

The IHS report also has recommendations on how the partnership between the tribes and IHS can be improved.

See IHS REPORT on 10



Working at the dental office of the clinic, Lila Martinez makes an appointment for a patient.

Local people featured in series of ads

The Office of National Drug Control Policy is running a series of anti-drug advertisements in Native American newspapers across the U.S.

A number of local residents are featured in the advertisements.

The full-page ads are running in tribal papers such as the Spilyay and the Yakama Nation Review, as well as in Indian Country Today.

The advertisements focus on the need for adults and elders to help young people keep away from drugs.

The first ad is running in this edition of the Spilyay, on page 5. The ad shows Cal Poncho and his young relative Teryl Florendo.

Poncho is a civil engineer technician with the local Bureau of Indian Affairs Road Department.

Poncho said he was more than happy to participate in the anti-drug campaign.

The advertisements, he said, present a positive image of Indian families.

"It's good that something like this can be shown. It's not all bad news," said Poncho.

The ads, he says, "show Indian families going about their daily lives just like everyone else."

See ANTI-DRUG ADS on 10