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Spilyay Tymoo

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Tribes plan for tourism

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Tourism can be a great source of revenue and jobs, as shown on the reservation most clearly by Kah-Nee-Ta.

The Confederated Tribes are beginning to develop an action plan that will identify ways to ensure long-term sustainable tourism on the reservation.

Kah-Nee-Ta will no doubt play a central role in this plan, but the tribes also are looking for new ideas for improved tourism. Tribal members will be asked to provide their suggestions.

The ideas that meet the principles of sustainable tourism could be included in the action plan.

In developing the plan, the tribes will be working with Rural Development Initiatives Inc., a non-profit organization that helps small Oregon communities with development projects. Sal Sahme, of Warm Springs Business and Economic Development, is a member of the board of Rural Development Initiatives (RDI). He believes the development of a sustainable tourism plan will be a good thing for the tribes.

Timber cannot provide economic stability to the tribes, as was true during years and decades past. So there is a need to further diversify the local economy, said Sahme.

"We've had a decade of downsizing and budget cuts," he said. "Now we're forced to look at other ways to bring jobs to our people. And I think we have to look to tourism as a way of helping the local economy." In working on the tourism plan with RDI, the tribes will have the help of an organization that is at the forefront of sustainable tourism planning, said Sahme. "We have a highly professional and respected organization working with us," he said.

Kathleen Jaworski, executive director of RDI, said her organization will be assisting the tribes in developing a plan that the community members are happy with. RDI, she said, will not dictate what the plan will include.

"RDI is the background facilitator. We won't be determining the results," said Jaworski.

A series of community meetings will guide the development of the plan. An important meeting for community members to attend will be on Thursday, March 25, at the museum, meeting time to be announced.

See **TOURISM** on page 12

A close call in the snowy woods Two men nearly perish; rescuers arrive just in time

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

It was the biggest snowstorm in years and the men were stuck for two days and nights out in the woods with no shelter and nothing to eat. They almost died and they would have died if a rescue team had not arrived just in time.

This near fatal adventure happened shortly after New Years to Leland Thompson Sr. and Chesley Yahtin Jr. "I was getting ready to die there until I heard the snowmobiles,"

said Thompson, 60.

He and Yahtin were almost frost-bitten. Thompson had a body temperature of just 90 degrees. A doctor who examined him said that Thompson would have died if he had spent another three or four hours outside in the snow.

This is an example of how cold they were: When Yahtin was rescued, he was found walking in the snow with just one shoe on. Because of the numbness, he didn't realize that one of his shoes was off.

Thompson and Yahtin are doing well now. Yahtin is already back to work, and Thompson said he is ready to get back on the job.

Both men work at clearing roads. They were on a contract for the mill around New Years. At the time one of the road grading trucks was stuck in the snow about seven miles from Highway 26, in a northern area of the reservation near Mt. Wilson.

Thompson parked his truck near the highway, and they rode in on a Caterpillar tractor. There was a rig called a

skidder, also used on roads, that was also stuck in the snow in the area. The trouble happened when the Cat ran out of diesel. And the grader wouldn't. The radio in the Cat didn't work because the signal was blocked by Mt. Wilson. Yahtin had a cell phone but there was no service in that remote area. It was snowing and the snow on the ground was already deep.

It seemed best to wait for help rather than risk a long walk toward the highway.

See **RESCUE** on page 12

Powwow just around the corner

This year will mark the first time that Sisiley Sasha Scott will serve on the Lincoln's Birthday Powwow Court. Scott, 15, began fancy dancing last year.

Earlier this year she was approached by elders about serving on the powwow court, and Scott agreed.

She takes part in all of the cultural activities of the tribes.

She has been a part of root gatherings all her life. From a very young age she could identify the different kinds of roots.

She also does beadwork on her powwow clothes, and her father is teaching her to make knives with antler handles.

Scott is the daughter of Debra and Francis Scott. She is in her freshman year, attending Madras High School.

She is of Warm Springs, Wasco, Grande Ronde and Sioux ancestry. Scott was born and raised in Warm Springs.

In the photograph at right she is wearing a dress that is 100 years old, made by atwai Lucy Miller and atwai Naomi Wagner. Rosie Tom made the bag.

Sisiley Scott is selling raffle tickets for the Lincoln's Birthday Powwow, which will be next month.

The tickets are \$1 a piece, or 6 for \$5.

You can call 325-1543 to make a purchase.



Sisiley Scott

Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Board helps students to stay in school

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

There are many reasons why students miss school, and some of these causes of truancy can be fairly easily corrected. The key to resolving some of these cases is communication.

Here is an example: The student was missing school because her clothes were wet. It was the middle of winter, and the family had no clothes dryer. The clothes would hang on the line and not dry in time for the student to make it to school.

The problem could have lasted for a long time, but the Warm Springs Truancy Board was made aware of the reason why this student was missing school.

Through the board the family made arrangements to use a dryer at the elementary school, and the problem was resolved.

Other families are without electricity, or without clothes for the child, increasing the likelihood of problem truancy.

The Truancy Board is a way for the community to be involved in improving school attendance, said Butch David, school district liaison for Warm Springs.

The Truancy Board is a kind of last resort before more serious action -- involving courts and fines -- is taken in cases of persistent truancy.

Instead of appearing in court the family of the truant student can meet with the Truancy Board and explain their situation.

See **TRUANCY** on page 12

Smith enjoying move to Kah-Nee-Ta

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Janell Smith had an opportunity to move from an organization that was cutting back on its budget, to one that is growing. The transition has been a good one.

"I don't know if I could have gone through another year of downsizing tribal government," she said.

Smith worked for 16 years in tribal Compensation and Benefits. She held various positions in the department, including most recently the position of manager.

She resigned from the job at the beginning of this month, and now works as the director of human resources for Kah-Nee-Ta Resort and Casino.

At Comp and Benefits, Smith worked closely with tribal government employees of all departments. In recent years -- with departments adopting significant budget cuts -- the work had become especially difficult.



Janell Smith

About that time Margie Tuckta, former Kah-Nee-Ta human resources director, took a new job with the resort. Smith was approached about fill-

ing the vacancy, and she mentioned it to Garland Brunoe, her boss at Comp and Benefits.

"He said it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up," said Smith.

Smith feels good about being a part of the tribal gaming and resort enterprise.

For one thing, she said, the enterprise is preparing for expansion, a much different experience from working in tribal government.

There are other differences, as well. For instance, she said, the resort is clearly a for-profit venture, unlike the tribal government. When tribal employees were given paid leave time because of the snowstorms, the Kah-Nee-Ta employees enjoyed no such luck. Resort workers who couldn't make it in had to take leave without pay.

"You feel bad for them, but the resort is there to make money. That's a mission of the enterprise," said Smith.

Another thing she has noticed about working for the resort.

See **SMITH** on page 12

Chemawa investigation continues

SALEM (AP) -- An investigation into the death of a Chemawa Indian School student has revealed the teenager died of acute alcohol poisoning, officials said.

Autopsy results released Thursday by the FBI showed the student, who was found deceased in a holding cell, had no other intoxicant in her system.

Cindy Gilbert Sohapp, member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, died Dec. 6 after school staff detained her in one of the school's four holding cells for being drunk.

The death was considered accidental, said Beth Anne Steele, a spokeswoman for the FBI.

An investigation into Sohapp's death continues, however.

Two dormitory managers, one security staff member and a school administrator remain on administrative leave.

Nedra Darling of the Bureau of Indian Affairs said earlier this week*

that preliminary numbers showed that attendance at the Salem boarding school has fallen from 413 students at the beginning of the fall school year to 340 after Christmas break.

Web site mentions holding cell

Chemawa Indian School has 13 teachers and almost 60 staff members, according to federal reports.

One Bureau of Indian Affairs officer and four security guards are included as part of the school's staff. They are responsible for patrolling the campus and enforcing the school's drug and alcohol policies, according to Chemawa's Web site.

"Depending on the offense, the violator may be held in the security office's holding facility," the Web site says regarding students who violate the drug and alcohol policies.

Officials have refused to say whether the policy of locking students in the holding cells for alcohol violations had changed since Sohapp's death.