

## Some Indians switch tribes to escape poverty

(AP) — Charles Leno worked a dead-end job dealing cards at the Chinook Winds casino on the Oregon coast, earning minimum wage and not much in fringe benefits.

He saw little in his future, so he was casting about for a change — and the change he decided on was his tribe.

Last year the 28-year-old moved from the tribe of his mother's ancestry, the Siletz, to his father's tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde — operators of Oregon's most successful casino.

"They help you more here," he said.

As a tribal member, he receives between \$4,000 and \$5,000 a year in per-capita payments. He had hiring priority for a higher-paying job at Spirit Mountain casino. And his newborn son, Future Warrior, receives the same benefits every year in a trust — a solid investment of tens of thousands of dollars by the time the boy turns 18.

American Indians are discovering that one possible route out of poverty is joining a tribe with a successful casino, a transfer that's allowed if they can show they have blood ties to that tribe.

"We're experiencing people enrolling in one tribe, and relinquishing from another," said Lynn Holder, an Indian demographer and director of the University of Washington tribal community partnership program.

"Typically, this happens around the tribes that have been economically stronger and provide more housing and services."

National statistics on switching are not available because of the sovereign nature of tribal governments, according to Bureau of Indian Affairs spokesman Gary Garrison. Tribal officials stress that switching tribes

is a decision not made lightly, and sometimes is done for personal reasons unrelated to casino payouts or job opportunities.

But the movement opens a window on the disparity of wealth among tribes in the 16 years since the passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988.

Bob Tom, 66, a retired powwow announcer, transferred into the Grand Ronde because of benefits from the casino and to gain access to tribal archives listing religious sites of his father's tribe, the Shasta Indians of northern California.

He now has access to documents revealing the location of spirit quest sites, prehistoric circles of boulders where men fasted and performed religious rites.

"It's a lot easier for me to do that at Grand Ronde. They have the archives," he said.

It is not uncommon in the Pacific Northwest for Indians to have ties to more than one tribe. It is the legacy of 19th-century policies that split families and collected multiple bands and tribes onto single reservations — some now close to cities and development, others remote and still grindingly poor.

Tribal officials say even those who change tribes for economic reasons don't make the move frivolously.

Madeline Queahpama-Spino, director of vital statistics at the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs east of Portland, said some people mull the decision for years before filing paperwork to switch.

"It's a very personal decision," she said. And switching is not frowned upon if a person has the heritage to qualify for more than one tribe, she said.

Two members of her tribe have relinquished enrollment this year, she said, including one

*It's a very personal decision... and switching is not frowned upon if a person has the heritage to qualify for more than one tribe.*

**Madeline Queahpama-Spino**  
Vital Statistics Director  
Confederated Tribes  
of Warm Springs

who headed to the affluent Kalispell tribe in Washington, leaving behind the trailer homes and horse pastures of Warm Springs in the high desert.

The Umatilla in eastern Oregon, the Puyallup, Coeur d'Alene and Muckleshoot, all operating relatively successful casinos, also have become magnets for people who wish to transfer, Holder said.

Under the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, tribes set the rules for their own membership. They usually require a one-fourth blood quantum for membership, but the requirement sometimes is as little as one-32nd. Some tribes measure to one-256th.

There are 1.8 million enrolled members in 562 federally recognized tribes in the United States. Yet far more people — 2.5 million — identified themselves as primarily Indian or Alaskan native on the 2000 Census. A total of 4.1 million people reported on that federal form that they have some Indian heritage.

Some people of mixed Indian background from multiple tribes do not qualify for membership in any one tribe, said Gary Garrison of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The bureau offers a generic Indian identity card to such people if they are at least one-quarter Indian.

At the Grand Ronde, a confederation of 26 tribes and bands forced onto a single reservation in the 19th century, the

leadership welcomes all who qualify under its one-quarter blood quantum rule, said tribal spokesman Brent Merrill.

The casino is helping the tribe recover from decades of withering poverty and a steady exodus of ambitious young people.

Until it regained recognition in 1983, the tribe's holdings had dwindled to seven acres occupied by the tribal cemetery. Tribal members left the area looking for work, sometimes settling on other reservations and starting families.

Most who remained eked out a living as loggers, until the casino arrived in 1995.

It was an overnight success. The parking lot off Oregon Route 18 is a panoramic expanse of recreational vehicles and cars, full even on weekdays. The casino nets roughly \$65 million annually.

That success, Merrill said, has helped rebuild the Grand Ronde tribe from between 600 to 900 members when it regained federal recognition in 1983, to more than 5,000 today, including tribal members returning from other reservations.

"It's no different than leaving logging to work for an up and coming industry with better pay and benefits," said Tom, the former powwow announcer. "This tribe is doing a fabulous job."

### Pioneer Rock & Monument

Markers  
Monuments  
Inscriptions  
Stone cleaning  
Stone Repair



Bob & Kris Rising  
P.O. Box 348  
201 Crafton Road  
Goldendale, WA 98620  
509-773-4702

## FEEDER SALE

### June 23rd

#### Butcher Sales July 7th & Aug. 4th

Buyer Reps. from Northwest,  
California, and Midwest!

Computerized System Ring Scale

Central Oregon Livestock Auction  
541-475-3851

Trent Stewart  
480-5540

Clay Tanler  
419-6060



24 NE Plum  
Madras  
475-7560

## Museum exhibit features Native artwork from the Pacific Rim

An exhibit opens this month at the Museum at Warm Springs featuring works by 71 artists from 38 nations.

The indigenous cultures represented at the exhibit are among those of the Pacific Rim, including Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, Tlingit-Haida, Onondaga, Santa Clara Pueblo, Nez Perce, Maori, among others.

This cultural exchange exhibit will be unveiled on June 19 at the museum. There will be an opening reception with traditional dancing from 11 a.m. till 3 p.m.

The exhibit is called,

"Hiteemkiliilsix, Within the Circle of the Rim," and contains works of carving, weaving, pottery, painting and printmaking.

"Hiteemkiliilsix" is a Nez Perce term referring to "being within the circle."

The exhibit will be on display at the museum through September 6, in the Changing Exhibits Gallery.

The show is a reflection of these words by Skokomish tribal member and artist Bruce Subiyay Miller:

"Why is art important to those who are artists? Because it allows us to sing without a

song, to give our true spirit into something we create out of something nature has given us...

That is important at a time when many of us have lost our languages, our customs, and many of the things we look upon as comprising a complete culture. We still have our artwork."

Artwork by Miller is included in the upcoming exhibit. After leaving Warm Springs in September, the exhibit will travel to Pacific Rim country of New Zealand.

*The Spilyay reaches more tribal member households than any other newspaper in Oregon.*

### Summer at Boys & Girls Club begins next week

The Warm Springs Boys & Girls Club begins Monday, June 14, and ends on Aug. 13. The regular club hours are Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. till 5:30 p.m.

The club is also offering "early bird" hours for children that would like to come to club before the regular time. The early bird time begins at 7:30 a.m.

Children must be 6 years and older to attend the Boys & Girls Club. Annual cost is \$10 per member.

Cost of using the early bird hours is \$5 per day; \$25 per week; or \$225 for the summer. Call June, Allee or Binky at 553-3161 for information. Or stop by the club at 1122 Wasco St., next to the kindergarten modular.

### Eck, Elliott & Anderson LLP



Attorneys at Law  
42 NW Greeley Ave  
Bend, OR 97701  
541-383-3755  
Personal Injury Lawyers

## Sentry

SUPERMARKETS

Serious about service



#6500

## Erickson's

561 SW 4th Street, Madras  
475-3637

### Eberhard Ice Cream Assorted flavors 2 for \$5.00

Good thru June 24, 2004