

Spilyay Tymoo

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The Early Childhood Education Center was the scene of a great Halloween party Oct. 29. Dozens of young people wore costumes, as adults volunteered to handed out the treats. At right, young Felicia Conner gets ready in her princess costume.



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Gathering on 2005 budget

A General Council meeting is set for Wednesday, Nov. 17 at the Simnasho Longhouse. The focus of discussion is the 2005 tribal budget. Dinner is at 6 p.m. with the meeting to begin at 7.

The following day, the Tribal Council is scheduled to review the proposed 2005 budget, and the public comments on the proposal. So far there have been district meetings and one General Council meeting on the upcoming budget.

The Council values public input during the budgeting process, in determining the appropriation for 2005:

"Tribal Council needs your input before Council makes final decisions and takes action to approve a final budget plan for 2005," said Council Chairman Ron Suppah in his budget-notice letter to tribal members. The letter states that tribal government will continue to try and balance the essential community needs with the revenue base. "We know the importance of essential services to each tribal member, and are working to make every effort to minimize impacts on services and tribal member employment, and to fairly distribute any budget cuts."

Tribes and governor close to casino agreement, reports say

News sources in The Dalles and Portland indicate that negotiations to place a tribal casino in the Columbia Gorge may be nearing a positive conclusion.

According to the *Portland Tribune*, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Gov. Ted Kulongoski are nearing agreement on a deal that would allow construction of a resort and casino at Cascade Locks.

In late October, Kulongoski told an audience made up of local officials in The Dalles that negotiations are "coming closer to fruition."

Details of the ongoing negotiations are confidential, but Marian Hammond, a spokesperson for the governor, assured reporters the discussions are going well.

On October 29, The Dalles *Chronicle* quoted Kulongoski as saying, "The tribes need another revenue source, this casino is a major revenue source that they desperately need."

The Confederated Tribes have been talking with representatives from the governor's office as part of an ongoing effort to build a casino in the Columbia Gorge.

The tribes own property in Cascade Locks and Hood River, and experts say the most lucrative site would be the one closest to Portland. Unfortunately, tribal lands in Cascade Locks suitable for a casino are not in trust status, requiring approval from the governor in order to build.

The tribes and the city of Cascade

"His main concern in the negotiations is that the casino would be in the best interest of the public. He has said that he does not believe a casino in Hood River would be in the best interests of the community."

Len Bergstein
Tribal consultant

Locks both stand to make a considerable amount of money if a casino is built in Cascade Locks.

And both parties are anxious for a settlement, because both entities have been hard hit by the state and the region's ailing economies.

Terms are confidential

Tribal consultant Len Bergstein says Kulongoski has assigned several of his top staff members to work on the agreement, indicating a great deal of importance has been placed on this issue.

Bergstein also believes there are efforts being made to conclude the negotiations in the foreseeable future.

"I think everybody has an interest in getting this done before the end of the year," said Bergstein.

State officials have acknowledged the importance of a Gorge casino in rebuilding the tribal economy, but they also recognize the need to locate any

significant new structures in such a way as to lessen visual and environmental impacts.

Cascade Locks is located in the heart of a nationally designated scenic area.

The governor "recognizes the economic benefit that the casino would have to the tribes," said spokesperson Hammond.

"His main concern in the negotiations is that the casino would be in the best interest of the public. He has said that he does not believe a casino in Hood River would be in the best interests of the community."

Residents in Hood River have been vocal in their opposition to a casino there, but Cascade Locks has welcomed the tribes with open arms.

Specific terms of the negotiations remain confidential, but sources from both parties agree the process is moving forward.

When a final agreement is reached, the two parties will make a joint announcement.

The Kah-Nee-Ta Resort casino's earnings are small compared to the business that a casino in Cascade Locks would do.

The Warm Springs tribes opened the casino at Kah-Nee-Ta in 1995.

In 1998, the casino earned \$2.9 million and provided 70 jobs.

With a casino at the Gorge, Kah-Nee-Ta would no longer operate a full casino, but would instead have bingo and class 2 games.

Keeping the tribes rolling

Vehicle Pool mechanics maintain a fleet of 97 tribal automobiles

By Brian Mortensen
Spilyay Tymoo

From the cars that tribal employees might drive to Portland, to emergency vehicles, to garbage trucks, someone has to keep them all running. Keith Moody and his staff at the Warm Springs Vehicle Pool do just that.

The four-person mechanic staff at the Vehicle Pool garage works on the tribal fleet of 97 automobiles.

The vehicles range in size and in use, from Ford Focuses to the garbage trucks, to four-wheel drives and high-performance automobiles like police cars and ambulances. Some of the engines run on gasoline, others on diesel. The number and variety of automobiles keep Moody and his staff very busy.

"We're all-around mechanics - anything that comes through the door, any day," said Moody. "We'll be working on a fuel pump one day, tearing out a rear axle the next, and then work on clutches and transmissions."

Moody is a certified journeyman mechanic, as is Vehicle Pool mechanic Ernel Scott. Moody also has an Associate of Applied Sciences degree in automotive technology.

Another on the staff, Levi Herkshan, will receive Auto Service Excellence (ASE) certification Nov. 18. Gordon Scott, a young mechanic who is a college student, also has an associate's degree in automotive technology.

Moody says working on a fleet of vehicles with so many different demands requires a sort of assembly-line approach.

"We do a good job for people, but if you were doing a clutch at home and you finished it, you'd be like, 'All right!'" he said. "But here, it's 'Good job, but move it out of the way and let's get the next one.'"

If you see uniformity in the vehicles in the tribes' Vehicle Pool, it's because they're all Fords. Moody said this gives his mechanics a point of reference with every vehicle they work on, whether a Ford or some other model.

"It makes it a lot easier for my guys to learn," he said. "Once you learn this one system and the way it's designed, then you can associate it with another vehicle, and how that's supposed to work compared to a Ford."

While every department needs its vehicles as soon as possible, public safety vehicles - ambulances, police cars and fire trucks - always take precedence. But Moody and his staff work hard to keep all the tribes' vehicles on the road. "I give my guys hats-off," said Moody.

In addition to the mechanical work, the Vehicle Pool provides tires, fuel and credit cards for use by tribal employees. The Vehicle Pool also stands by with 24-hour, on-call service.

When tribal vehicles are used off the reservation, travel authorization is issued to whoever uses the check-out vehicle. The travel authorization helps the vehicle pool staff keep tabs on location of the vehicles. The mechanics, after all, might have to go where the vehicle ends up, if it gets stranded.

"We provide vehicle users with the necessary phone numbers of who to call, when they're on travel," said Moody. "We'll have it towed to a place where we can talk to other mechanics. And if need be, we'll send our mechanic out to wherever they are. I've been on calls when I've actually been out of state," he said.

The Vehicle Pool has a trailer it can use to tow disabled vehicles back to the garage, located at the Industrial Park. The Vehicle Pool can even send out another vehicle to replace a car downed in the midst of a road trip.



Keith Moody, Warm Springs Tribes Vehicle Pool Manager, watches while mechanic Ernel Scott works on a four-wheel drive at the Vehicle Pool Garage.

The Vehicle Pool also provides fuel to the fire hall and substation in Simnasho, as well as the new building at Seekseequa.

Moody said that all vehicles of the Warm Springs Vehicle Pool fleet are running, but that wasn't the case when he started four years ago.

"We always provide employment for summer youth. We also train individuals who want to pursue a career in mechanics."

Keith Moody

"When I first got here, there were 27 vehicles broken down," he said. "We got them cleaned up and running to where they're safe."

Moody was an apprentice at the Vehicle Pool in the 1980s. He then held a number of different positions before returning to the Vehicle Pool four years ago. He is a certified nurse's assistant, and was a community health representative (CHR) for the tribes.

After a stint in the military, he worked in the fisheries area of natural resources.

"And I worked my way up," he said. "I worked mechanic-ing around, did my own thing. Then they needed somebody here, and they had a job advertisement. I was working as a CHR at the time. I've been here ever since, and it's been four years."

Moody also has his own garage at his home in Simnasho. He rebuilds Ford Mustangs as a hobby.

While the mechanics work on the cars in the garage, Graeline Spino serves as the Vehicle Pool office manager.

The Vehicle Pool receives its entire inventory of parts from local businesses, including Miller Ford and Napa Auto Parts in Madras, as well as Les Schwab Tire Center in Madras.

Earlier this year, Moody taught a class in mechanical systems, for beginners or people considering automotive work as a profession.

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