

A look back at tribal news of 2004

(The following is a month-by-month account of some of the news events that occurred on the reservation during the past year.)

January

The year 2004 began with the reservation covered in snow. The winter storm that hit the area a year ago was the worst in recent memory.

Road conditions were treacherous and, tragically, two lives were lost in Warm Springs as a result of the snow - one person died in a car accident, and one person died from exposure.

Because of the weather, for several days schools were closed down, and work days for tribal employees were canceled, delayed and cut short. In a near-fatal incident, two men working in the woods clearing roads were stuck in their rigs for two nights and days with nothing to eat. They almost died, and they would have died if a rescue team had not arrived just in time. In other news from January 2004:

Tribal Councilman Raymond Tsumpti became the new general manager of the Warm Springs Public Safety Branch. There had been no permanent Public Safety general manager for the past few years.

An overflow crowd attended Tribal Council Chairman Garland Brunoe's Community Round Table meeting. The meeting focused on the *Oregonian* newspaper articles on Warm Springs. The crowd filled the Tribal Room and spilled out into the hall at High Lookkee Lodge.

Later in the month Tribal Councilman Zane Jackson resigned his position on the Council. Jackson, 80, had served longer than any other elected member on Council. He resigned just three months before completing his 33rd year on Tribal Council. He cited health reasons as the basis for his decision to resign.

February

Oregon lawmakers, upset over the death of a student at the Chemawa Indian School in Salem, were probing the school's safety policies and pressing federal regulators for more information. Sen. Ron Wyden's office called the BIA and sent letters to Indian Health Services seeking information about the safety and use of the school's holding cells, where drunk students were once placed to sober up. Sixteen-year-old Cindy Gilbert Sohappay died in one of those cells on Dec. 6, 2003. Other news from February:

For several years - at least since the late 1980s - tribal and school district officials have discussed the need for a new elementary school at Warm Springs. A few years ago - in 2001, when tribal members approved an \$8 million elementary school construction plan - it seemed as if a new school were close at hand. After passage

of the 2001 referendum, there was talk that a new elementary school would "be open by the fall of 2003," according to a news account at the time. But 2003 began with the project still in negotiation between the tribes and the school district. Funding and budgets have caused the delay. Elsewhere:

Eagle-Tech Systems became a new tribal enterprise, providing the technical services that it previously provided as the Office of Information Systems (OIS). Eagle Tech System (ETS) promotes a technical work force and infrastructure in Warm Springs through the Community Telecommunications Center and contracting opportunities, said Lloyd Phillips, general manager of ETS. This change from tribal department to enterprise makes ETS eligible for government contracts while limiting the tribes' liability, said Phillips.

March

Voting members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in March elected the Twenty-Third Tribal Council of the tribes.

Candidates elected from the Agency District were Garland Brunoe, Stanley "Buck" Smith Sr., and Rita Squiemphen.

Candidates elected from the Simnasho District were Earl Squiemphen, Ron Suppah, and Raymond Tsumpti.

Candidates elected from the Seekseequa District were Reuben Henry, and Carol Wewa. In other election news:

Leona Ike is seeking the Democratic nomination for Position 3 on the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners. Ike is the only candidate seeking the Democratic nomination for this position. The three-member county board of commissioners sets governmental policies and laws of Jefferson County. Ike would be the first Native American to serve on the county board. The primary election is in May. Elsewhere:

Leaders of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have written to Gov. Ted Kulongoski, asking him to start negotiations on the building of a Columbia River casino. In the letter, Garland Brunoe, chairman of the Tribal Council, explains that the confederation has the right to build on casino-eligible trust land just east of Hood River, which residents oppose.

The other option, he writes, is to build on nonreservation land in nearby Cascade Locks, which would require the governor's approval. The Confederated Tribes had been planning to develop a new casino since before Gov. John Kitzhaber left office in January 2003.

Additionally, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission denounced the Bonneville Power Administration's proposal to cut salmon-protective measures at The Dalles, Bonneville, John Day and Ice Harbor dams. The commis-



Young dancer prepares for competition at the 2004 Lincoln's Birthday Powwow.

sion says the BPA plan to cut summer spill over the dams could kill 140,000 fish.

April

The Confederated Tribes publicly unveiled their conceptual designs for a casino - should one be built - in Cascade Locks. The 500,000 square foot building would cover 25 acres in the existing industrial park east of town. It was deliberately engineered to blend with the surrounding viewscape, according to tribal officials. The plan was accomplished by recreating the long-and-low look of a tribal fishing village. The facade of the structure is broken up with varied angles and concave entrances that feature basalt rock, natural wood and waterfalls. (See the drawings at upper right.) Elsewhere in the news:

It is not hard to know Olney Patt Sr. as a tribal leader. A strong and principled man, he worked tirelessly for his people. This month the tribes marked his 90th birthday with a special celebration in honor of Patt's life and accomplishments.

The Confederated Tribes may be able to gain an advantage in bidding on many types of government contracts. Warm Springs Ventures, the tribes' business development corporation, is looking into it.

May

Taking office this month, the Twenty-third Tribal Council appointed a new secretary-treasurer and a new chief operations officer. This is

traditionally the first order of business for the new Council, along with appointing a new Council chairman and vice-chairman. The new secretary-treasurer is Jody Calica. The new chief operations officer is Lauraina Hintsala. Calica will be in Idaho for the next couple of weeks, as he has been working as the superintendent of the Northern Idaho BIA Agency. He is finishing up his work there before moving back to Warm Springs. Calica was nominated for the position of secretary-treasurer by Patute Chief Joe Moses and then was approved by vote of the Council.

Hintsala was nominated for the chief operations officer position by newly-elected Councilman Reuben Henry. The nomination was then approved by Council vote. Hintsala had been working as the tribal member recruitment and development manager for Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino. She has worked in several departments of the tribes, including Higher Education and Human Services, over the past 24 years. This experience would help in serving as the new chief operations officer, said Hintsala. "It's been in my career path for several years," she said of the COO position. "But I didn't realize it until it happened. It's a big job, but I'm enjoying it." In other news this month:

Many parents and young people of the Warm Springs community were happy to hear that the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Oregon were reopening the Warm Springs club. The club is opening in partnership with Warm Springs Elementary School, and club activities are housed at the elementary school.

There was a large turnout of people at the Agency Longhouse on a Saturday afternoon this month. There were memorials in the morning,

and then a lunch. A meeting regarding the future of the Wasco Chieftainship had also been scheduled for the afternoon, but the meeting was canceled. Chief Nelson Wallutat had to attend a service for a friend at Grand Ronde. In other news:

Russ Alger retired this month as director of the Warm Springs Indian Health Services clinic. Alger had been with IHS in Warm Springs for the past 21 years. During that time, health care on the reservation has seen great improvement. And this:

Julie Quaid has joined the Jefferson County 509-J School District Board of Directors. Quaid works for the Warm Springs Education Branch.

June

Charlene Moody has made a lot of people proud - her family and friends, the Simnasho community, the whole Confederated Tribes. Moody is among the very best high school girls track and field athletes in Oregon. At the recent 2004 OSA Oregon Track and Field Championships, Moody won first place in the shot put competition. She threw the eight-pound ball 38 feet, one and a quarter inches. The throw was impressive because it was raining. The class 4A-3A state track and field championships were held in Eugene. Several thousand people were in attendance, despite the rain. In other news:

A highway improvement project will correct the sharp turn on the U.S. 26 Pelton grade between Warm Springs and Madras. The construction work began last week and was expected to be completed in three months. Cost of the project is \$1.3 million, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation. Elsewhere:

The Housing Authority building was broken into, and between 150 and 200 keys to the Housing units were stolen. All of the locks on the tribal, low-rent and seniors units had to be changed. In other news:

Members of the new Tribal Council heard comments on a wide variety of subjects at the General Council meeting this month. Some of the more heart-felt comments came during discussion of the Summer Youth Work program. Summer Youth is a tribal program administered by Workforce Development, which is under the tribal Education Branch. This year, Summer Youth has a standard for eligibility based on student grade-point average. The idea has been around for a while, and it was implemented this year. The standard requires students to have at least a 2.0 grade point average in school to be eligible for summer youth work. Marcia Minthorn said the standard discriminates against children who may be in the most need of help from the tribes.

July

Warm Springs was the scene this month of a rare gathering. At the gathering were individuals and organizations that often disagree, and at times strongly disagree over issues involving natural resources. The gathering in Warm Springs was rare because all those present were in agreement on an important natural resource issue.

"We had these governments, private utilities, and fish and river people coming together to celebrate," said Jim Manion, general manager of Warm Springs Power Enterprises. "You don't see that very often."

The purpose of the meeting - held on the grounds of the Museum at Warm Springs - was to celebrate the signing of an agreement for the long-term management of the Pelton-Round Butte Hydroelectric project. The Confederated Tribes and Portland General Electric are co-owners of the dams, which are licensed for operation by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Over the past few years, the tribes and PGE have been working with government agencies and other interested parties toward a 50-year renewal of the FERC license. The gathering last week demonstrated that all the parties now agree on the important issues regarding future operation of the dams. The agreement is a final major step toward the granting of a new license.

Among those in attendance at the signing ceremony were representatives of the Confederated Tribes and PGE; federal agencies including the Forest Service, the BIA and BLM, the National Marine Fisheries, and the Fish and Wildlife Services.

Tribal leaders opposed a plan by the

Bonneville Power Administration to reduce the amount of water spilled over the Columbia and Snake River dams this summer. The opposition came from leaders of all the tribes of the Columbia Basin. Of the BPA plan, Ron Suppah, Council Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, said, "It's like they have deaf ears. They're willing to sacrifice the fish for financial benefit."

Staff members at the Chemawa Indian School would not be charged in the death of Cindy Gilbert Sohappay, who was 16 when she died of acute alcohol poisoning. Involuntary manslaughter charges were considered against workers who had contact with Sohappay on the night she died last December, said Bill Williams, an assistant U.S. attorney in Portland. Williams said there was not enough evidence to charge the workers, who left Sohappay alone in a cell for three hours at the Salem boarding school run by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Construction started this month on a new gymnasium at the Warm Springs Elementary School. A construction contractor has been hired, and the timeframe for completion is around December, said school board member Jeff Sanders. The project has an estimated cost of \$1.3 million.

During a visit to Kah-Nee-Ta, Gov. Ted Kulongoski said the Confederated Tribes and the state are making progress in their discussions to establish a new tribal casino, but he would not comment on its probable location. "I'm confident we're going in the right direction," said Kulongoski. "We would both like to see it happen sooner rather than later, but we want to make sure we do it right."

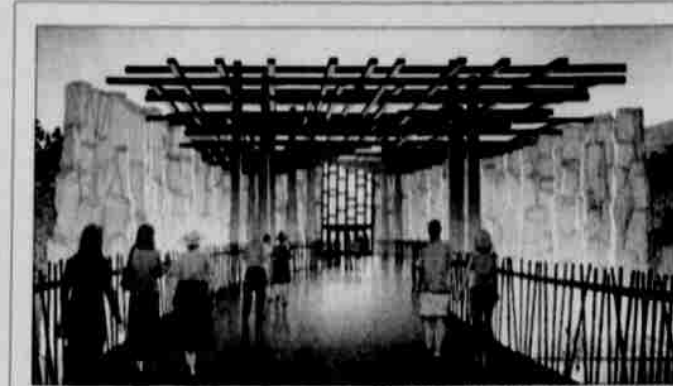
August

Tribal fishermen have traded salmon along the shores of the Columbia River for many years. Now, they're hoping to expand their market.

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission is exploring the feasibility of building a \$8.6 million fish-processing and retail center that would include 500 jobs and allow the tribes to sell more of their wild catch directly to stores and the public, instead of to other processors. "Tribal fishermen have always been victimized by low prices," said Olney Patt Jr., executive director of the inter-tribal fish commission. "If they have a way to process the fish, and have a value-added product, that may increase the profit." In other news:

Jim Soules, a police veteran who started his career in Warm Springs, was named Chief of Police for the Warm Springs Police Department. Chief Operations Officer Lauraina Hintsala and Secretary-Treasurer Charles Calica made the announcement in a joint statement. Elsewhere:

The GeoVisions mobile command center trailer is becoming a regular sight at wildfires in the region and beyond. During a wild-land fire, the center produces high technology mapping



The Gorge casino plan was again a focus of news attention during 2004. These are conceptual drawings of the proposed casino. The drawing at left shows the main entrance; and below, a view of the overall structure.



and other data, maintaining an almost up-to-the-minute report on the progress of the blaze. High tech mapping is an essential service of GeoVisions, but the tribal enterprise has grown into other fields as well.

For instance, before this month's Log Springs Fire began, a GeoVisions work crew completed a wildfire fuels reduction project in the Simnasho area. This project helped prevent the Log Springs fire from traveling into the Simnasho community. GeoVisions worked with Tribal Forestry on this project.

The enterprise also had a line crew out on the Log Springs fire, which burned about 10 days on the north part of the reservation. GeoVisions also has an archeology survey crew. In other news:

The Warm Springs Tribal Gaming Enterprise Board of Directors has selected Garland Brunoe as general manager of Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino. Brunoe is a current Tribal Council member, and director of the tribes' Compensation and Benefits managed care program. In the past, Brunoe also served as a general manager of Kah-Nee-Ta.

The long-awaited Bear Drive housing project is back on track. When complete, the project would add 25 new housing units to the reservation. The Bear Drive development is federally funded through Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and was first proposed in 2002. (Review of the rest of 2004 is in the next edition of the Spilyay Tymoo.)

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