

Donation helps cancer survivors

By Brian Mortensen
Spilyay Tymoo

With as many as 72 Native Americans in the Oregon diagnosed with cancer in the past five years, Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino was given the opportunity to help those who have survived.

The resort donated \$15,000 to the Warm Springs Chapter of the Native People's Circle of Hope, a national coalition of Native American cancer survivors and support groups. The donation came at a luncheon at Kah-Nee-Ta Aug. 17.

"We received a grant of \$1,500 from the Susan G. Komen Foundation, that was only to help breast cancer patients," said Yvonne Iverson, from the Warm Springs Tribal Community Health Clinic. "Resources are tight right now, especially in health care, and we don't usually have the resources. But now that Kah-Nee-Ta has given us money, we can help all cancer patients, not just those with breast cancer."

Iverson said cancer patients often have chemotherapy treatment and then radiation treatments that require transportation to Bend each day. "That's a big cost to the patient and the family," she said.

Indeed, the purpose of the grant is to help defray costs to families, and will be used to support treatment or educational costs not covered by the Indian Health Service or other private insurance.



Brian Mortensen/Spilyay

Warren R. Clements presents Yvonne Iverson, from the Warm Springs Tribal Community Health Clinic, a check for \$15,000 on behalf of the board of directors of Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino, Aug. 17. Shari Marrazzo (left) a Registered Nurse and cancer support group representative at the Warm Springs Clinic, and Apolonia Santos, art and cultural liaison for Kah-Nee-Ta and the Gorge casino, both cancer survivors, also attended the presentation.

Apolonia Santos, a cancer survivor who was present at the luncheon, said there are plans to introduce a cross-cultural dialogue involving 25 traditional Native American doctors and 25 traditional health care professionals, who will discuss traditional healing approaches along with Western medicine approaches to cancer. This will happen through a healing symposium scheduled for late 2006 at Kah-Nee-Ta.

"We wanted to establish an integrated medicine institute here in Warm Springs," she said. "We believe we can be one of the first in the nation. It could be a very positive force within the national arena."

Shari Marrazzo, a Registered Nurse at the Warm Springs Clinic who lives in Metolius, said she is a 28-year cancer survivor. She said that upon her diagnosis, she was given two years to live.

"I started here in 1979," she

said. "One thing I did notice is the word cancer made everybody run."

She said, "I think this (contribution) is very important. I'm excited to see it growing now from the day I started."

In addition to providing the financial support to the survivors, Kah-Nee-Ta also supports early detection efforts by encouraging annual cancer screenings by all of its employees. The resort and casino also provides donations of weekend packages for fund-raising efforts by the cancer survivors.

"One of the things we want to be known for as a tribal organization is that we are a compassionate organization, and that we are a community-serving corporation. We try to look out for all our tribal member," said Warren R. Clements, Kah-Nee-Ta board member.

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Nez Perce buy land held by state since 1859

(AP) - The Nez Perce Tribe has bought nearly 1,000 acres of remote and rugged canyonlands in the former homelands of Chief Joseph that have been held by the state of Oregon since statehood in 1859.

The three parcels along Joseph Creek in Wallowa County in Oregon's northeastern corner increase to more than 11,000 acres the tribe's Precious Lands wildlife habitat area dedicated to providing winter range for the Chesnimus elk herd. The tribe is based in Lapwai, Idaho.

Joseph Creek runs north across the Washington border into the Grande Ronde River near its confluence with the Snake. It is named for Chief Joseph, who took his band of Nez Perce on a famous run for freedom in 1877 after refusing to cede their lands in the Wallowa Valley to the U.S.

He was captured just short of the Canadian border and sent to Fort Leavenworth, in Kansas. His surrender speech has been famously translated to say: "Hear me my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

Totalling 962 acres, the three parcels were purchased from Oregon for a total of \$278,865, said State Lands Board spokesman Monte Turner. Two of the sales were approved by the board last March. The third parcel went before the board last month.

The parcels were granted to Oregon by the federal government at statehood and have been part of the common school fund, but generated little revenue due to their remote and rugged character, said Turner.

They were sold off as part of a statewide program of liquidating lands that produce no significant revenue for the common school fund and using the proceeds for other more profitable investments.

Loren Kronemann, head of the tribe's wildlife mitigation program, said the tribe bought the land with the remainders of a grant from the Bonneville Power Administration.

The original grant was used in 1997 to buy a 10,300-acre ranch that was the first piece of the Precious Lands area. That purchase marked the first land in Oregon owned by the Nez Perce since Chief Joseph and his band were driven out.

BPA, which sells the electricity generated by the federal dams in the Columbia Basin, makes grants for fish and wildlife each year to make up for damage to habitat caused by the dams.

The purchases fill gaps in the Precious Lands wildlife habitat, making it easier to manage. Currently, the tribe is trying to control invasive weeds that diminish grazing for elk.

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