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Warm Springs may get new bus system

(AP) — A new bus system could be in place on the Warm Springs reservation by next year, aimed at helping commuters, the poor, seniors and residents with disabilities.

Tribal leaders have been working on the plan for the past two years, spurred by a transit study which found that more than 17 percent of unemployed reservation residents cited lack of transportation as the main reason they couldn't find work. It was the second leading reason given for unemployment, after "unknown reasons."

The tribes are awaiting final approval of a state grant before buying vehicles and putting out bids for contractors, Tribal Social Services Director Gayle Rodgers said.

The proposed service would be a blend of the Dial-a-Ride model and the fixed-route buses usually seen in metro areas, Rodgers said.

From 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., riders could pay a small fee to schedule daily or weekly transportation door-to-door. For the rest of the day, the service would switch to a "checkpoint" system.

Under that arrangement, the bus would stop at several popular destinations in Warm Springs, but have flexibility to pick up passengers who live away from the main route, Rodgers said.

Family sues for teen's death at Chemawa

(AP) — The family of the teenager who died of alcohol poisoning in a boarding school jail cell has filed a \$24 million lawsuit against Interior Secretary Gale Norton, accusing government officials of torture and conspiracy.

The death of Cindy Gilbert Sohappay a little over two years ago resulted in a Senate investigation and claims that Bureau of Indian Affairs officials ignored the risks to children at Indian boarding schools for years.

"The Department of the Interior, and the BIA, even after more than 200 years of disgraceful, arbitrary, capricious and sometimes destructive conduct toward the American Indian people, has changed little," the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit was filed on December 6, the two-year anniversary of the death of Sohappay at the Chemawa Indian School in Salem.

The 16-year-old from Warm Springs had a blood alcohol level of 0.37 percent — nearly five times the legal limit for adults — when her body was found in a holding cell for intoxicated students that was supposed to be checked every 15 minutes.

Investigators found that nobody had checked on Sohappay for more than two hours, despite a video camera monitor that recorded her convulsions and death.

A spokeswoman for Norton in Washington, D.C., declined comment, citing policy against discussing pending lawsuits.

The family referred questions to their lawyer, Foster Glass, in Bend.

Glass said the BIA and the Interior Department have refused his requests for more details about the death, even information that has already been published by newspapers.

See **LAWSUIT** on 13

Law would help huckleberry habitat

By **Dave McMechan**
Spilyay Tymoo

Through a proposed federal law the Confederated Tribes could assert greater direct management of huckleberry habitat in the Mt. Hood National Forest.

The Mt. Hood bill would require the U.S. Forest Service to enter into an agreement with the tribes to ensure healthy stands of huckleberries and other traditional plant species in the forest, which is part of the tribes' Ceded Lands.

Reasonable access to the huckleberries by tribal elders would also be ensured, according to the bill.

Tribal leaders have been strong advocates of the Mt. Hood proposal. "We're concerned for the huckleberries," said Tribal Council

Chairman Ron Suppah.

Part of the problem, said Suppah, is that tribal members over the past several years have had a harder time finding healthy huckleberries in the traditional gathering areas. The hope with the Mt. Hood Bill is for the tribes to assert greater control in management of the huckleberry habitat in the national forest, he said.

The past several years have seen increasing exploitation of huckleberries by non-Indians who sell the berries for profit. As a result, the berries are being commercialized, and the competition is leaving fewer berries for Indians. Timber harvesting practices are also a factor.

Huckleberries are among the most essential traditional foods of the tribes, and for this reason proper management

is also essential. The Mt. Hood bill would help address the issue across 75,000 acres at Mt. Hood.

The bill is sponsored in the Congress by Rep. Greg Walden, Republican of Hood River, and Rep. Earl Blumenauer, Democrat of Portland.

This past fall Walden and Blumenauer toured the forest area that is the subject of the bill. During part of the field trip, they were accompanied by members of the Confederated Tribes. Representatives of the tribes included Evaline Patt, of the Museum at Warm Springs; Louie Pitt, director of Government Affairs; Bobby Brunoe, general manager of Natural Resources; and Jody Calica, secretary-treasurer.

Discussion with the congressmen focused on "first foods" such as the

huckleberries and salmon. The provision in the Mt. Hood bill regarding Native American traditional foods is referred to as "the first foods initiative."

Warm Springs Chief Delvis Heath and Paiute Chief Joe Moses testified on behalf of the tribes at a hearing on the bill in Hood River. "We believe that Mt. Hood is a very special place that deserves special attention, which you have addressed through the balanced approach we see in your legislative concept," said Moses.

Secretary-Treasurer Calica, Chief Operation Officer Lauraina Hintsala, and Louie Pitt of Government Affairs gave testimony on behalf of the tribal interest at a hearing on the bill in Portland.

See **BERRIES** on page 13

Parade and tree brighten up the holidays

With weather in keeping with the Christmas holiday, the second annual Warm Springs Christmas Tree Lighting and Light Parade happened last week.

In the cold temperature the parade drew a smaller turnout in comparison to last year's first-ever event.

With the temperature dropping to as low as 13 degrees F, the parade included one Warm Springs Fire and Safety tanker truck, which carried Santa Claus, one decorated car float, and a Fire and Safety ambulance. The parade and tree lighting were held Dec. 12.

The parade began in the parking lot across from Warm Springs Elementary School, then traveled east on Wasco, turning south on Warm Springs then south on Paiute Street in front of the post office and market, turning south on Hollywood and ending at the Community Center.

Hot dogs and hamburgers were barbecued on the Community Center lawn but taken inside for any-



Nalani Brisbois, 7, speaks with Santa Claus about potential Christmas presents.

one to enjoy and warm up with hot chocolate.

Holiday, as Santa, sat at one end

of the Community Center, where children could sit on his lap and petition him for gifts this Christmas. OSU

Extension 4-H and the Warm Springs Recreation Department teamed up once again to sponsor the event.

Just as was done last year after the parade, those assembled sang Christmas carols with the help of Rick Ribeiro, pastor of the Warm Springs Presbyterian Church.

This year, though, instead of gathering around the lit Christmas tree on the Community Center lawn, the group sang carols inside where it was warm.

"It was too cold to sing around the tree, but the food was barbecued outside while everyone was inside," said Carol Allison, of the Recreation Department.

Organizers were Arlene Boileau and Minnie Tulalakus from 4-H.

Also: Carol Allison, Andy Leonard, Austin Greene, Sena Wolfe, Jermaine Tuckta, Tearon McDonald, Preston Tom, and Brutus Baez of the Warm Springs Recreation Department.

— by **Brian Mortensen**

Members discuss casino, Council budget

By **Brian Mortensen**
Spilyay Tymoo

A group of just under 50 tribal members met recently to discuss the tribal gaming enterprise, treaty rights, and Tribal Council travel costs. The meeting, attended by two Council members, happened Dec. 8 at the Agency Longhouse.

Members who spoke at the meeting expressed concern over the cost and delay in construction of the Cascade Locks casino. Some at the meeting said that Tribal Council should not only listen to the wishes of members, but should listen and respond.

"We've talked about these dollar issues. What I have to say is that I don't think we should have a big question mark over our heads," Roland Kalama said. "I think we should start making some demands, and start putting them on paper."

Kalama said, "Our (tribal) organizational chart, which most of you have looked at, shows on top that we are the head of the Tribal Council. Then after the people is the Council."

He said a new casino should be closer to home, on the reservation along Highway 26. "What's the difference between the freeway along the Columbia and our own highway

here — what will probably turn into a freeway in probably 10 years anyway," said Kalama.

On this point, at other meetings on gaming, tribal officials have said that no other potential casino site on reservation would generate enough revenue to make such a venture worthwhile.

Other sites on the reservation would generate only as much, or just slightly more than Indian Head Casino at Kah-Nee-Ta, according to a study commissioned by the tribes. (See *gaming piece on page 4.*)

Casino, travel documents

Two documents were handed out at the Dec. 8 gathering. One document was headed, "Memorandum Agreement with Cascade Locks," that included 13 alleged allowances the tribes have agreed to pay the city of Cascade Locks after the casino is built.

The other document was a 14-page summary apparently accounting for travel-related expenses for each of the 11 members of the Tribal Council as of Sept. 30 of this year.

Wilson Wewa, a Seekseequa District resident who works at the Seniors Program, alluded to the casino-related sheet, saying the document indicates the tribes will be giving Cascade Locks "a blank check" for infrastructure improvements.

Regarding the travel-expense docu-

ment, Wewa said the tribes had spent half a million dollars on Council travel through August.

"And there've been tribal programs that have been cut, and we're having to make cuts in order to survive as a tribe," he said. "We want the Tribal Council to make cuts, too."

Floyd Calica, who works for the gaming committee, said that Warm Springs, as represented by Tribal Council, must represent itself at the national level.

"Council members need to be at the table representing the tribes," said Calica. "We need to be there for our water, our fish and our law enforcement."

He added that he has always been able to gain the ear of his local representatives in Tribal Council, and that they have been willing to discuss, on a one-to-one level, the nature of their travels.

Regarding the use of funds from the McQuinn timber blowdown lawsuit, Calica likened the Tribal Council's current position to that of the Tribal Council that faced the decision regarding the settlement money from the inundation of Celilo Falls. The question then, as now, was whether to invest the money toward the future, or pay it as per capita.

In hindsight, he said, "We are thankful for some of the unpopular decisions that were made back then."

"...I think we're looking at revenues never imagined. We're looking at revenue in excess of \$100 million to the tribes."

Floyd Calica

(Speaking about the Gorge casino proposal)

Calica conceded that the process toward construction of the casino was going "very slowly," yet he was confident in that the process would still be completed by 2007, and that legislation on the floor of Congress prohibiting off-reservation Indian casinos would include a grandfather provision allowing the tribes to build at Cascade Locks.

"Everyone has made mention of debt service, and we're looking at seven or eight years of debt service," Calica said. "What kind of revenues are we looking at beyond that? I think we're looking at revenues never imagined. We're looking at revenues of in excess of \$100 million to the tribes."

Tribal Council members Rita Squiemphen and Carolyn Wewa attended the meeting, as did Paul Young, Bureau of Indian Affairs Superintendent at Warm Springs.