

Restructuring going well at Ventures

Maren Cohn
Warm Springs Ventures

The team that is restructuring the Warm Springs Economic Development Corporation has made rapid strides forward in recent months. The restructuring team includes board chairman Ken Smith, secretary-treasurer Ray Potter, board member and tribal Secretary-Treasurer Jody Calica, along with new chief financial officer Jeff Anspach.

The restructuring has allowed the corporation, Warm Springs Ventures, to turn former losses around, and acquire new energy and focus.

Ventures' recent activities span four major areas: The creation of a new board and the hiring of Anspach; the restructuring of Cort Software; the movement of GeoVisions, Engineering and Eagle Tech Systems under its supervision; and close work with all entities to enhance their profitability.

In addition Ventures is about to launch an important opinion research project aimed at helping determine tribal member views on a wide array of economic issues.

"The community may think it's business as usual here at Ventures," says Anspach, "but that's

not the case. The company is coming out of a dramatic shake-up that replaced both board and management. We've got a new vision and we're excited about creating more sources of revenue for the tribes."

Anspach's approach involves much greater pursuit of off-reservation revenue streams. The transfer of GeoVisions and Eagle-Tech under Ventures' supervision, for instance, will enable the two companies to chase revenue in a much wider sphere.

"GeoVisions and Eagle-Tech employ many talented people," says Anspach. "They know what they're doing and their skills are in high demand. We plan to capitalize on that opportunity."

Other factors have also contributed to the impression that things are hopping at Ventures' Plaza headquarters. The Cort restructuring accounts for a significant portion of this activity. "It's all I worked on for my first six weeks," says Anspach. "Cort is now cash-flow positive and on the verge of profitability."

Other projects are also in the works. Plans for a new Community Tech Center are well underway for an opening later this year. In other areas, Ventures has taken over supervision of the Tribes' environmental field

crews through its Construction Enterprise, while also focusing on the growth of Kibak Tile.

"Kibak is one of our success stories," says Anspach. "It doubled its revenues over the past three years and became profitable in 2005 for the first time in a while." Indicators point to another strong year for Kibak, with an order backlog currently triple what it was at the same point last year.

Articles on these and other aspects of Ventures' activities will be appearing in the next few issues of the *Spilyay*.

The Tribal Council formed Ventures in February 2001, charging the company to identify economic opportunities, advise the tribes on land and resource use and other business matters, invest in profitable enterprises, and increase tribal employment. Ventures initially struggled to fulfill its mission. In the first four years of its existence, it funded significant losses in its subsidiary operations.

"Ventures earned suspicion rather than respect from tribal members," says board member Jody Calica, who worked hard to improve the quality of financial information that Ventures collected and made available to

the Tribal Council.

In May 2005, the Tribal Council hired Hamstreet & Associates, a Portland business consulting and turnaround firm, to assess Ventures and recommend its future course. Pursuant to its report, the Council decided, in July, 2005, to restructure the company.

"Restructuring Ventures made much more sense financially than letting it go on as it was or liquidating it," says Calica. "The need for an economic development agency of some kind is even greater now than it was in 2001. We need a non-political entity to keep pace with the speed of business and increase jobs on the reservation."

Despite its losses, present Ventures leaders agree that the company did make some good initial investments.

"But they weren't paying off," says Shirley Dunn, a principal with Hamstreet & Associates, who served as interim CFO until Anspach took over last October.

"We felt that changes in leadership, reduction in overhead, and renewed focus would enable Ventures to become what it was meant to be—a strong economic resource for the Confederated Tribes."

Museum on normal hours

The Museum at Warm Springs has returned to normal hours of operation.

The museum is now open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

During the winter months the museum re-

mains closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The longer hours of operation are from March through October.

For more information about the museum, call (541) 553-3331.

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Coastal casino plans expansion

(AP) — The last Oregon tribe to build a casino says it is planning to build a much larger facility on the land it owns near Florence on the central Oregon coast.

Bob Garcia, an economic development director for the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw tribes, said site work and financial studies are complete for the new facility. It is projected to be 70,000 square feet, nearly four times the size of the existing casino, which opened to considerable local opposition in 2004.

It will be on the same 100-acre parcel as the original.

He said it also will feature a three-star hotel and a 20,000-square-foot administration office.

It was not clear when construction would start. Garcia said more information may be available in late spring.

The existing casino is the

town's largest employer, with 210 workers and an annual payroll of about \$6 million.

Opponents of the existing facility formed People Against A Casino Town and fought to block it, saying they feared it would bring traffic, bad elements and other problems to their quiet seaside town increasingly favored by retirees.

It is the closest casino to Eugene, Oregon's third-largest city.

Casino opponents argued that the Oregon Constitution prohibits casino gambling, preventing the state from signing a gaming compact with the tribal confederation.

The Oregon Supreme Court unanimously dismissed the argument by opponents.

Tribes are not subject to state law and many have signed agreements with states to open casinos under the 1988 federal Indian Gaming Act.

Only land owned by tribes prior to 1988 qualified for casino development — but there were exceptions for tribes that recently took land into trust because of cultural ties, ties the tribes in Florence say go back centuries.

Initially the tribes had planned to build the larger casino with the hotel and convention center but scaled those plans back, citing competition from the eight other tribal casinos in the state.

Alan Burns, who was mayor during the initial controversy, said the tribes had been talking about the expansion for years.

"They have been pretty up front about everything," he said. "They were very clear that someday they would make a destination resort out of the Three Rivers Casino area."

Despite early local opposition, he said, residents voted heavily in favor of the city working with the tribes in a 2005 referendum.

Report: 'Ancient One' deliberately buried

(AP) — Kennewick Man was laid to rest alongside a river more than 9,000 years ago, buried by people, a leading forensic scientist says.

The skeleton, one of the oldest and most complete ever found in North America, has been under close analysis since courts sided with researchers in a legal battle with some Indian tribes in the Northwest who wanted the remains found near the Columbia River reburied

without study.

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs did not object to the scientific study of Kennewick Man, known also as 'the Ancient One.'

Douglas Owsley, an anthropologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, discussed the scientific findings during a meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences in Seattle.

Researchers have disagreed

over whether Kennewick Man was buried by other people or swept up in a flood and encased in sediment.

Owsley concluded the man was deliberately buried, between two and three feet deep, his body placed in the grave, head slightly higher than feet, hands placed at his sides.

The location was riverside, with the body parallel to the river and head pointing upstream.

Raffle

For Teri Jo and Amanda Yazzie to go to Holland with the Team USA Volleyball Team.

Raffle items include Blazers tickets, 15" LCD TV, MP3 player, portable DVD player, \$25 in gas at DMJ, and many other items! See Percy Yazzie, Teri Jo Yazzie, Amanda Yazzie, Rita Squiemphen or Val Squiemphen for your tickets. Drawing to be held Sunday, April 16 at the Yazzie Youth Basketball Tourney.

Please support the girls!

March Madness Feeder Sale - March 22nd

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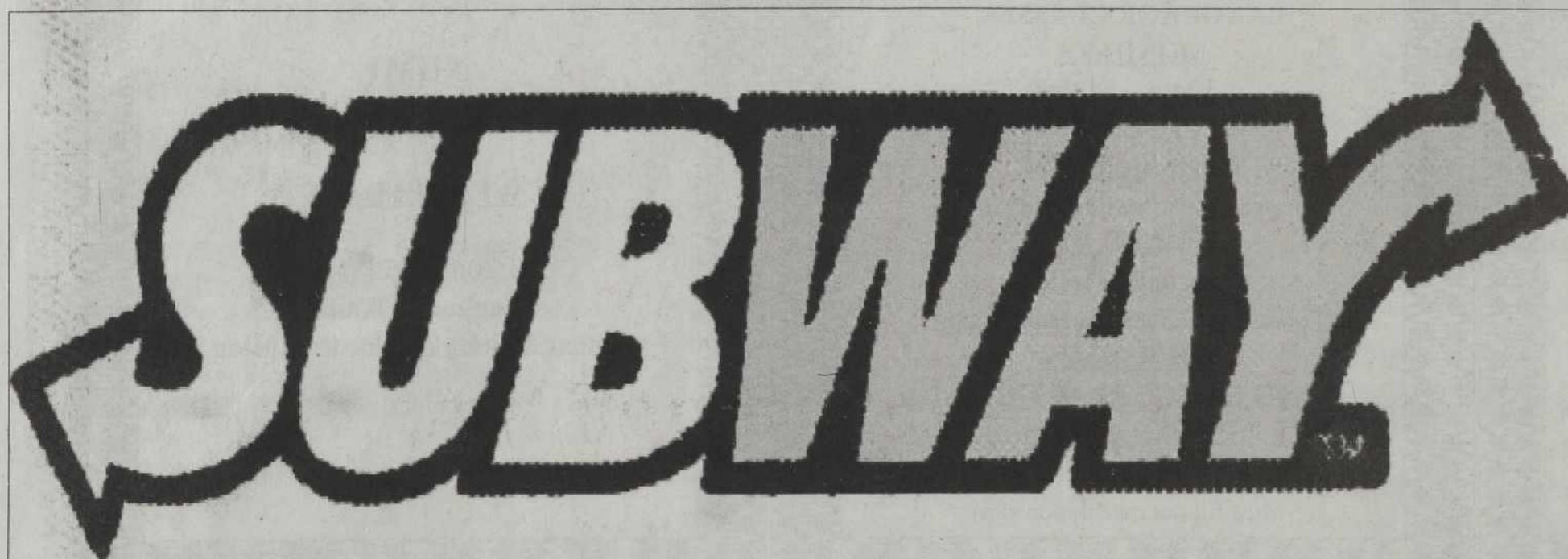
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