



# Spilyay Tymo

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## Gangs an ongoing risk for tribal youth

By Dave McMechan  
Spilyay Tymo

Tribal Council heard a report recently from the Public Safety Branch regarding gangs that are active on the reservation.

Branch officials said the Police Department, with cooperation from other departments of the tribes, has made significant progress over the past year in trying to address the problem.

The problem still exists, though, and is a threat to tribal youth. As part of the presentation to Council, Public Safety provided the following statistics to show the importance of youth gang prevention:

Ninety percent of active gang members are arrested by the age of 18.

Ninety-five percent of active gang members do not finish high school.

Sixty percent of gang members are either incarcerated or dead by the age of 24. In Warm Springs, 60 percent of gang members are juveniles, some as young as 12 to 14 years old. Gangs are known to be active in the middle and high schools.

There are an estimated 75 individuals who are active in gangs on the reservation, according to the Public Safety report. "Gangs exist for one reason: to commit crimes," an officer of the Police Department told Council.

Parents should be aware of warning signs that indicate a child may be associating with a gang, the officer said. Some warning signs include:

Loss of interest in school; and a change in the manner of the child's speech. The child may begin dressing differently, emphasizing a particular color, usually blue, red or black. Gang

members often get tattoos indicating their particular affiliation. Graffiti is another sign that a gang is active in a particular neighborhood.

Public Safety officials emphasize that the Police Department by itself cannot address the problem: "We cannot arrest our way out of this," an officer said.

Experience shows that a family's intervention works better than anything else in keeping a youth out of a gang.

Parents should be aware that a major recruitment time for gangs are the hours after school and before the parents get home from work. This fact underscores the importance of organized after-school activities and youth clubs.

As part of the presentation to Council, Police Chief Carman Smith and officers displayed some of the weap-

ons - knives and brass knuckles, for example - seized from gang members.

Following the presentation, Paiute Chief Joe Moses asked whether the tribes might take action to exclude non-tribal member gang members from the reservation. Public Safety Branch director Raymond Tsumpti said that many of the non-tribal member gang members have been excluded.

Councilman Wendell Jim suggested that the tribes might consider disenrolling members who are determined to be persistent gang members who are determined to be a threat to tribal youth.

Councilman Jim also said the tribes should develop a long-term plan for eradicating gangs from the reservation.

## 2 sentenced for shooting

Victor Becerra Jr. and Daniel Arce were sentenced recently to federal prison terms, according to the Warm Springs Police Department.

Becerra, 26, was sentenced to 45 months in prison. Arce, 19, was sentenced to 29 months, according to the police report.

The incident involved a shooting in Warm Springs in February of 2007.

The state Department of Justice said last week that Becerra Jr. and Arce pleaded each guilty to a charge of assault resulting in serious bodily injury.

## Indian Park road closed for improvements

The road to Indian Park will be closed beginning September 4 to accommodate improvements at the campground.

The project is mandated by the Pelton-Round Butte license granted to the Confederated Tribes and Portland General Electric by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Improvements at Indian Park will include renovation of several campsites, development of a larger swim beach, a new boat ramp and moorage dock, removal of unnecessary roads, bank stabilization, placement of a water tank, and new outhouses.

Portions of the road leading into the park will also be improved.

The road will be reopened when the project is completed.

## Back to School Barbecue Aug. 28

The annual Back to School Barbecue and school supplies giveaway is scheduled for Thursday, August 28.

The barbecue and supplies giveaway will be from 4 to 7 p.m. on the lawn behind the Family Resource Center on the campus.

## Feasts open berry season



Connie Daniels and Kate Jackson prepare the salmon.



At HeHe during the recent Huckleberry Feast, Rosalind Sampson, Alliyah Moran, Brittany Craig and Felcianna Conner (from left) prepare eels.

## New 509-J superintendent shares views with Council

By Leslie Mitts  
Spilyay Tymo

School District 509-J Superintendent Rick Molitar met with Tribal Council last week.

Molitar joined 509-J as superintendent in July.

Part of the discussion with Tribal Council involved the current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) ratings for the school district.

Currently the majority of schools in the 509-J district, including Warm Springs Elementary, are listed as not meeting AYP criteria.

The federal Adequate Yearly Progress ratings measure whether schools are attaining standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act.

Performance is determined in the areas of attendance, math, reading and graduation rates; and schools are scored in nine subgroups. The subgroups include ratings for students by race and

various other areas.

Metolius and Westside Elementary Schools are the only schools in the 509-J school district that met AYP standards.

However, these findings are preliminary and the school district may file an appeal by Aug. 21. After that, the final AYP report will be issued on Sept. 4.

### Warm Springs Elementary

Because this is the third strike against Warm Springs Elementary, Molitar said, it could mean changes at the school as part of a school improvement plan.

However, what those changes could be has not yet been determined. According to Molitar, "I don't know if they are going to be visible, drastic actions at the school."

While Warm Springs Elementary previously did not meet AYP standards when it came to attendance rates, Molitar said, this year they fell short of the mathematics standards.

*"Hope is what we have to have and what we have to make available."*

Rick Molitar

In Molitar's opinion, however, it is unfair to compare the schools in the 509-J district to schools that don't face similar challenges.

"It didn't account for 509-J and what we do have available for our students," Molitar said of the AYP report. "And what we provide, I think, is a good education."

He hopes to create a positive partnership with the tribes in order to help solve the problems the school district is facing, Molitar said. And, he added, hope is key.

"Hope is what we have to have and what we have to make available,"

Molitar said.

As part of his new job with the district, Molitar added, he wants to make a focus on improving instruction and academic achievement his number one goal.

### District finances

When it comes to the district's financial difficulties, Molitar said, "I see there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

Molitar moved to the area from Eastern Washington, where he worked for seven years and had managed a district with financial problems much like the 509-J school district.

After resolving problems in that district, Molitar said, he was vacationing in Central Oregon with his wife and two children and became interested in the area.

His children will begin attending local schools this fall: Molitar's 11-year-old son will attend Jefferson County

Middle School, while his 10-year-old daughter will go to Buff Elementary School.

Part of the appeal of moving to Madras was the diversity, Molitar said. "I want my children to grow up in a diverse culture," Molitar explained.

Molitar's wife is also an educator and will be working as a part-time professor for George Fox University.

Previously Molitar worked as a teacher in science and math, and his hobbies include fishing, he said.

As for the school district, Molitar said, he feels the community is ready to work with administration to remedy any problems they might be facing.

"I'm very excited about what brought me here and all of the challenges that lie ahead of us," Molitar said. He also hopes that parents will strive to communicate their concerns to the school district.

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