



Spilyay Tymoo

P.O. Box 870
Warm Springs, OR 97761

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Casino ambassadors preparing for EIS

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

The tribal Cascade Locks casino ambassadors are preparing for the release of the final casino Environmental Impact Study, which is expected to be published in the Federal Register this spring.

The ambassadors will be making presentations around the community on the significance of the public release of the EIS.

Once the EIS is released to the public, community members are encouraged to submit their written comments regarding the EIS to the Bureau of Indian Affairs during a 30-day public comment period.

No formal hearings will be held re-

garding the document, which serves as an evaluation of the environmental effects of the proposed Cascade Locks casino and several alternatives, and also serves as a recommendation to the Interior Department as to the "preferred alternative" for the casino project.

The alternatives

The alternatives studied in the draft EIS, which was subject last year to extensive public review and comment, are:

The no-action alternative;

The proposed Cascade Locks Resort and Casino project, which initiated the EIS process;

The Hood River trust land alternative;

And the Warm Springs-Highway 26 alternative.

In its comments on the draft EIS, the tribes urged the BIA to identify the Cascade Locks site as the "preferred alternative" in the final EIS.

The tribes support this alternative because it is the one that best meets the critical financial needs with a minimum of environmental impacts.

A summary of the proposed resort and casino states:

Initial plans for the destination resort and casino include an approximately 90,000-square-foot gaming casino, 250-room hotel, meeting and convention facility, spa and fitness center, retail shops, cultural and interpretive center, child program center (short-term daycare facility), and a variety of

dining options.

The resort and casino building would be located entirely on the 25-acre fee-to-trust parcel in the Port of Cascade Locks Industrial Park.

Parking would be provided for approximately 3,700 vehicles in a 3-story garage and in surface lots.

Operation of the proposed resort and casino would require a staff of approximately 1,700.

The tribes have operated a casino since 1995, when Indian Head casino opened at Kah-Nee-Ta.

In the late 1990s, the tribes began investigating the possibility of establishing a larger gaming facility at a new location to increase tribal revenues, in order to meet needs and promote tribal self-sufficiency.

Chairman honored by BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration has presented Tribal Council Chairman Ron Suppah with one of the agency's highest honors, as part of the BPA's Excellence Awards program.

Chairman Suppah received the Exceptional Public Service Award for his leadership and support during the development of the Columbia Basin Fish Accords.

In presenting the award, BPA administrator Steve Wright said that Suppah motivated all parties to come together around a common plan that would put fish on a path toward recovery.

The landmark Accords evolved from Suppah's vision of a federal-tribal partnership that would restore salmon in the Columbia River Basin, said Wright.

The BPA and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs—with four other tribes, two states and two other federal agencies—signed the Accords in 2008.

The result, said Wright, is the historic agreements that invest dollars and resources toward on-the-ground projects, such as habitat improvements, that will directly benefit fish.

As a result of the Accords, BPA will provide approximately \$933 million of guaranteed funding over 10 years for these projects.

Chairman Suppah's advocacy on behalf of the Accords has enhanced fish and wildlife recovery efforts throughout the region, said Wright.

Spring has officially arrived, but the snow on Mt. Hood is still good for skiing—just ask Soraya Mendez (left) and Kalan Wolfe.

Soraya and Kalan recently enjoyed a day of skiing and snowboarding at Mt. Hood Meadows. They were among the local youth who attended Tribal Ski Day, hosted by Meadows.

The Fifth Annual Tribal Ski Days saw record participation among tribal youth and adults. The groups of skiers and snowboarders traveled from Warm Springs to Mt. Hood Meadows in buses provided by the ski resort. Meadows also supplied chair lift tickets, ski and snowboard equipment, lessons from professional ski and snowboard instructors, and lunch. (More ski day pictures on page 8.)



Greg Leo photo.

Two-year recovery reunites family

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Dorothy Kalama has her children living with her again for the first time in two years.

During these past two years, her life has changed almost completely. The changes were necessary, for herself and for her children.

For a long time Kalama, 36, was caught in a destructive cycle. She was drinking and using drugs, and living in a relationship of domestic violence.

About every six months, she would lose custody of her children and then get them back, only to lose custody again.

A lot of the time in those days, her oldest daughter would take care of the younger children.

Things changed two years ago.

"My oldest daughter had to call the police, because my children were being neglected," she said.

Kalama was arrested and the children were taken into protective custody. As her court date arrived, "I was thinking I would talk my way out of it the way I had in the past," she said.

But the court hearing went differently this time.

Before Kalama even had a chance



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Dorothy Kalama now works at the Family Resource Center.

to speak, a Children's Protective Services (CPS) worker read from the reports her children had made.

Hearing those reports was a first step toward recovery. "It was a wake-up call," said Kalama. "I pled guilty to all the charges and was sentenced to a year in jail."

While serving her jail time, Kalama began working the recovery programs

that are available in the jail. She met with church groups, and drug, alcohol and domestic violence counselors. "I honestly worked the programs—that was the difference this time," she says.

"Before, I wasn't ready to stop using. This time I listened to what my kids had to say."

Kalama was able to get her name on the furlough list, and the court re-

duced her sentence to six months in jail, followed by probation.

She was released in August of 2007. She had no vehicle, as her car had been wrecked while she was in jail. And her house had been ransacked. Pots, pans, beads—everything of value had been stolen. "I almost lost my house, and I had worked hard to get it," she said.

Kalama faced the setbacks soberly and with one goal in mind. "All I really wanted was to have my kids back," she said.

And there was hope: "After everything I had done, I realized my children still loved me and had faith in me. They didn't give up on me," she says.

But regaining custody of the children was going to be difficult this time. Her CPS worker, Elizabeth Hisatake, saw that Kalama had a history of losing and regaining custody of the children over and over again. And Hisatake wanted things to be different this time.

The CPS plan called for Kalama to regain custody of her children one at a time, starting with the oldest. The purpose of this was for Kalama to regain the trust of each child individually.

See RECOVERY on page 7

Big Brothers Big Sisters now in Warm Springs

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Oregon now has a program on the reservation.

Nancy Diaz, Jefferson County coordinator of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Oregon, is working in Warm Springs on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Her hours are from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and her office is upstairs in the Education building.

For more information, Diaz can be reached at her cell number, (541) 280-5793.

Youth who participate in Big Brothers Big Sisters are usually between the ages of 6 and 15, said Diaz.

Youth served by the program come from a variety of backgrounds, she said. Often they come from a one-parent family, said Diaz.

The mentors must be at least 18, and must complete the application process, including a background check.

Big Brothers Big Sisters asks for a one-year commitment from the mentors, who dedicate at least six hours per month.

Clinic hours

The Warm Springs Indian Health Services Clinic is now open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, the clinic is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.