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No cuts in proposed 2010 tribal budget

Tribal Council has approved a proposed 2010 budget for the Confederated Tribes.

The budget proposal, posted at various locations, will be the topic of upcoming district meetings.

An issue facing Council this year in developing the budget proposal was a reduced projection in revenue from Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises.

The reduction was due to a decrease in power prices, said Ray Potter, the tribes' chief financial officer.

The budget projection for next year looked good up until a few months ago, when the power market dropped, Potter said.

The expected decrease in revenue from Power and Water Enterprises is

significant: The \$12.5 million projected revenue of 2009 is reduced to \$7.5 million, a \$5 million reduction.

Tribal timber revenue is also projected to decrease significantly: The \$2.5 million projected timber revenue of 2009 is reduced to \$1.5 million in 2010.

The total tribal enterprise dividend for 2010 is projected at \$9,665,000, compared to the \$14,665,000 projected for the current year.

Still, the 2010 posted budget calls for no cuts of existing tribal jobs.

The budget proposal does, however, call for use of the revenue reserve, or rainy day fund.

The 2010 budget is based on the 2009 budget, with the goal being to maintain expenditures at roughly the

present level.

An exception is in Education services, for which a \$195,000 increase is proposed. The increase is needed for the tribes to fund additional teacher positions and program operation of the childcare portion of the Head Start program.

To help offset this cost, the budget calls for a \$95,000 decrease in capital projects, and a \$100,000 decrease in the contribution to the senior pension fund.

Earlier this fall, Potter, treasury controller Michelle Stacona, secretary-treasurer Jody Calica and chief operations officer Gerald Smith met with department directors and general managers.

The discussion at the time was of a possible 33 percent budget cut for all

departments, to reflect the 33 percent reduction in projected tribal revenue.

The departments were asked to submit a 2010 budget that includes a one-third budget cut.

After reviewing the impacts of such a reduction, Tribal Council has proposed a "hold the line budget" based on the current year expenditures.

Still, the budget process this year has yielded good ideas that may be revisited in the future, such as funding some positions with non-tribal dollars.

Members should be receiving a budget mailing this week or next week. (*The budget is reprinted on page 10.*)

Bond issue to save millions

The federal Stimulus program has provided the Confederated Tribes with the opportunity to save as much as \$20 million in debt interest.

The tribes now have IRS approval to borrow money for the fish passage project at Round Butte dam, and for improvements to Indian Park.

Through the Stimulus program, the expenditures for the project can be financed with tax exempt bonds, said Ray Potter, tribal chief financial officer.

The opportunity is available to tribal organizations for purposes of public benefit, such as the fish passage project and the Indian Park project, Potter said.

Through the financing with the Tribal Economic Development Bonds, the tribes can expect to pay off the bonds with a potential savings of \$20 million in interest, he said.

Most of the debt involved in the transaction is for the fish passage facility at Round Butte, which was a requirement of the federal relicensing of the dams. The tribes are paying for a third of the roughly \$100 million project, with co-owner Portland General Electric paying the rest.

The tribes will conduct a public hearing on the refinancing at noon on Friday, Oct. 23 at the Credit Enterprise building. (*A public notice of the hearing is on page 10.*)

Palomar proposal going to Council

The team studying a possible natural gas pipeline project on the reservation has sent its environmental assessment of the alternative to Tribal Council.

Council will evaluate the project based on the assessment, and tribal member input. Council will also consider the terms of the offer from Palomar, the company that is planning to build the pipeline.

The team appointed by Council to study the project conducted public hearings earlier this year, and has forwarded the comments to Council.

The environmental assessment does not include a recommendation regarding whether or not to approve the construction of the natural gas line across the reservation.

Palomar is planning construction of 217 miles of pipeline in Oregon.

The company's preferred route is to the north of the Warm Springs Reservation. A possible alternative route across the reservation would avoid an overhead crossing of the lower Deschutes River.

With this alternative, the line would run between a point at the northwestern boundary of the reservation near North Pinhead Butte and a site on the eastern boundary just south of Pelton Reregulating Dam.



The Madras High School White Buffalo varsity football squad features these local youth: (front row from left) Theron Spino, Douglas Brisbois and Kenny VanPelt; (back row from left) manager Raylene Jones, RedSky Suppah, Tyrell Smith, Martin Smith-Meannealy, Spencer Ellsbury and assistant coach Butch David.

New era for health care under commission

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoc

The newly formed Joint Health Commission that oversees health care on the reservation met for the first time last week.

The commission is a cooperative effort between the Confederated Tribes and Indian Health Services.

The two parties saw their relationship deteriorate in recent years, and the tribes in 2007 filed a lawsuit against IHS.

Through federal mediation, the two sides agreed to form the Joint Health Commission as the oversight body of health care services on the reservation.

The Joint Health Commission is an extension of the joint venture relationship that has existed between the tribes and IHS since the tribes built the Warm Springs Health and Wellness clinic about a dozen years ago.

During its first years, the joint ven-

ture was a model for health care providers in Indian country, said Tribal Council Vice Chairwoman Aurolyn Stwyer-Pinkham.

The relationship over time, though, became contentious. For instance, in 2006 the tribes appropriated \$500,000 for health care, and Tribal Council was concerned about the use of the money, said Stwyer-Pinkham.

The lawsuit, followed by the federal dispute resolution, began a short time later. The best solution to the dispute, both sides agreed, would be the formation of the Joint Health Commission.

The commission will meet four times a year. Its purpose is to "plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the delivery of health care services provided by the tribe and by the IHS on the reservation." The commission members are:

Tribal secretary-treasurer Charles Calica; Heather Crow-Martinez, direc-

tor of Best Care Mental Health and Addiction Services; and Caroline Cruz, general manager of the tribal Human Services Branch.

Dr. Leland Bud Beamer, emergency room physician at Mountain View Hospital; James Diegel, president and chief executive officer of Cascade Healthcare Community; Carol Prevost, chief executive officer, Warm Springs IHS service unit; and Dr. Stephen "Miles" Rudd, clinical director, Warm Springs IHS service unit.

Alternate members are Mike Clements, tribal Human Services director; and James "Jay" Henry, chief executive officer, St. Charles Medical Center.

The staff who have provided help through the process are Roberta Queahpama, Community Health director; Cassie Katchia, Joint Health Commission officer; Dayle Tufti, Joint Health Commission office secretary; Robert Boffin, commission staff assis-

tant; Lonnie "Rosie" Tom, contracts and grants; and Janice Clements, chairwoman of the Health and Welfare Committee, and committee members Urbana Manion, Earlylne Squiemphen and Frank Charley.

The commission members and staff were recognized during the inaugural commission meeting last week at Kah-Nee-Ta. The commissioners were sworn in at the start of the first meeting.

"We have high hopes for a long and productive relationship," said Stwyer-Pinkham.

"We see this as a milestone," said Mike Clements. "The tribes want to be involved in providing health care on the reservation." IHS has a trust responsibility to the tribes, he said, "and we look to your expertise and knowledge." The Joint Health Commission will provide vision and guidance of health care matters for years to come, Clements said.