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Coyote News, est. 1976

December 3, 2009 Vol. 34, No. 25

Warm Springs Transit to expand services

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

Warm Springs Transit, which has been in operation now for the past four years, will soon undergo major changes, according to Dave Conroy, acting director of tribal Social Services.

"We're looking at a major expansion of services, both in terms of hours of operation and areas which the transit will cover," said Conroy. "We've been working diligently with the Planning Department, our driver Evans Spino, and with the Vocational Rehab Program to make these changes happen."

Funded primarily through the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), the Warm Springs Transit makes one trip to Madras every Tuesday. However, Conroy has been working with Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council and Cascade East Transit to incorporate a schedule that would make a run from Warm Springs to



Duran Bobb/Spilyay

Don Howtopat is a frequent passenger of the Warm Springs Transit bus.

Madras up to three times daily.

"This would be especially helpful to people here on the reservation who don't have access to safe and reliable transportation," Conroy said. "They'll have access to transportation when they need to get to medical appointments, do their shopping, or just to use laundry services."

According to Conroy, Madras has become the transportation hub of Central Oregon. "Right now," he said, "we're very close to expanding our services so that people will be able to not only access employment opportunities, but other opportunities as well throughout the region."

The expansion of services could be

available by as soon as the end of December.

Warm Springs-Madras route

About 45 passengers per day take advantage of the current services offered by the Warm Springs Transit.

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Fish facility progress

The Confederated Tribes have joined the other three Columbia River Treaty tribes in forming a corporation that will oversee operation of a fish processing facility at the Columbia.

The \$4.5 million facility, located at White Swan, was constructed by the Corps of Engineers, with operation authority at the BIA.

The BIA needs an agreement with a corporation for the future operation of the facility, and the four Columbia treaty tribes have all taken steps toward forming the company, said J.P. Patt, of tribal Natural Resources.

Patt and Bruce Jim, of the Off-Reservation Fish and Wildlife Committee, last month presented the proposal to Tribal Council, which approved the idea.

The hope is to have the fish facility, which includes a flash freezer, cold storage and icemaker, in operation sometime next year, said Patt. Operation details, such as the number of employees and exactly what services will be provided, will be worked out in the coming months, said Patt.

Murals are enduring legacy of Native American Heritage Month

By Terri Harber
Spilyay Tymoo

Though National Native American Heritage Month is over, Warm Springs will benefit from remnants of the celebration.

The Culture and Heritage Center basement is awash in colorful interpretations of Native American culture. Local teens and a group of students from the Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland State University and Clackamas Community College created several murals during last month's Splish Splash Art Bash.

"Each mural represents the three tribes — our languages, our cultures," said Myra Johnson-Orange, director of the tribe's Culture and Heritage Department.

The Johnson O'Malley (JOM) Committee and the Confederated Tribes' Education Branch sponsored the mural project. It has several panels and runs across a long wall.

Many are nature-centered, with depictions of animals — and their places — in Native American values and philosophy. Even water pipes running along the wall were painted to blend in with the designs. Virtually all of the work was done on a Saturday, except for some planning.

A couple of the murals need minor finishing touches, but all came out very professional for such a tight work schedule, the college students and tribal officials have remarked.

"The idea is to get our kids who are interested in art enthused so they'll continue," Johnson-Orange said. "We hope they'll look at art as a skill to be developed."

To reciprocate, the teens will work on an art project with the Oregon art students in Portland.



Terri Harber photos

Tribal member students painted these murals with assistance from the Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland State University and Clackamas Community College.

People are welcome to come to the center and take a look at the murals during operating hours.

Plans are also in the works to continue the movie screenings that were held once a week during the heritage month. It won't be as frequent, just once a month, but Johnson-Orange expects it to be an offering that catches on.

"It's been really popular," she said of the movies, shown in the basement of the center. "People really enjoy it."

What is Native American Heritage Month?

A month of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the United States. Events are held throughout the U.S. It is held each November.

The Congress of the American Indian Association formally approved a plan concerning the celebration of an American Indian Day, in 1915. A proclamation declared the second Saturday of each May as an American Indian Day and contained the first formal appeal for recognition of Indians as citizens.

Various states set aside a day to celebrate the contributions of Native Americans. The earliest was New York state, 1916. Many states still hold day-long celebrations, often on Columbus Day.

The first official month-long celebration across the U.S. was declared in 1990.

The theme for this year's heritage month was "Pride in Our Heritage. Honor to Our Ancestors."

(From the Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs.)

Members discuss Impact Aid with school board

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

The Jefferson County 509-J school district board held the Impact Aid hearing and review in Warm Springs last week.

During the meeting, Louise Katchia, of the Warm Springs Education Committee, presented recommendations on how to use the Impact Aid funds. These included:

Continuation of an activity bus, creating an Indian Club at the middle school and high school, having a Native American advisor available at the high school, middle school tutoring, workshops to aid sixth grade students in the transition to the Madras schools, assistance for tribal members who do not qualify for sports waivers, and an annual report presented to Warm Springs accounting for the use of Impact Aid funds.

\$2.3 million in 2009

In 1950, the U.S. Department of Education designed the Impact Aid funding program to assist local school districts that have lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal property, or areas that have experienced increased expenditures due to the enrollment of federally connected children.

In the 509-J school district, students who fall into this category include children living on the reservation.

The 2010 Application for Impact Aid lists 740 eligible students from Warm Springs (K-12). Another eight eligible students live in the North Unit Irrigation District main canal right-of-way, also tax-exempt.

Currently, Warm Springs students make up about one-third of the student body in the 509-J School District.

In 2008, the school district received just over \$1.4 million for Impact Aid. In 2009, the school district received about \$2.3 million.

A healthy district

As the school district prepares to submit its application for Impact Aid for fiscal year 2010, the school board has expressed a desire to work with the Warm Springs community in coming to an understanding what Impact Aid is, what it does, and what the school district will do with the funds.

"I think the way the district looked at Impact Aid was different from the way Warm Springs looked at Impact Aid," said Lyle Rehwinkel, 509-J School Board Member.

"I think as we move through that, we're going to have to define what it is and what we're going to do with it. We have to do more communication. We need to come together and figure it out, so that our district can benefit."

The district as a whole should be financially healthy, he said. "If the Warm Springs Community part of that isn't healthy, then the district isn't going to be healthy," he said.

Service requirement, taxes

Education Committee member Katchia also said she was concerned that the community service requirement for students transcripts are limited to being performed in Madras only.

The Education Committee strongly insists that students should be allowed to fulfill this requirement in Warm Springs as well, she said.

"One tribal member honor student who was graduating in 2008 was not allowed to perform this requirement in Warm Springs," Katchia said. "That prevented him from being admitted to the National Honor Society."

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