



Spilyay Tymoo

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New year will see 25th Tribal Council

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Tribal members this spring will elect the Twenty-Fifth Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

Within the next several weeks, the membership of the three districts will nominate their candidates for the Council.

The current Council took office on May 1, 2007; so the new Council will take their oath of office around that same time this year. As stated in the tribal Constitution of 1938, the elected Council members serve terms of three years. The incumbent Council members are:

Simnasho District representatives:

Ron Suppah, Council chairman; Aurolyn Stwyer, Council vice-chairwoman; Councilman Rafael Queahpama; and Warm Springs Chief Delvis Heath.

Agency District representatives: Councilmen Stanley "Buck" Smith and Austin Greene, Councilwoman Bernice Mitchell; and Wasco Chief Nelson Wallulatum.

Seekseequa District representatives: Councilmen Wendell Jim and Wilson Wewa, and Paiute Chief Joseph Moses.

The Tribal Constitution and By-laws of 1938 established the Council as including one chief from each district (serving for life); three representatives from Agency and Simnasho, and two from Seekseequa.

There are currently 2,844 members

who are qualified to vote in the election.

Tribal members 21 and older, or married, have the right to vote in the election. Current voting data from the Vital Statistics Department reflects the youthful makeup of the Confederated Tribes. The data shows the number of qualified voters in each age group.

There are 127 qualified voters who are 21 years of age, the single largest group. Next largest is the 23-year-olds, with 123 qualified voters.

Third largest is the 25-year-olds, with 108 qualified voters; followed by 26-year-olds, and then 24-year-olds.

Council powers

The elections are "by secret ballot or prevailing custom, as desired by the people of the district," according to the

Tribal Constitution. Secret ballots counted by the Election Committee has been the means of election for the at least the past several Council elections.

The Tribal Council is the central governing body of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The Tribal Constitution defines the powers of the Council. Some of these powers are, for example:

To manage the economic affairs of the Confederated Tribes and to appropriate available funds for public purposes; and,

To charter subordinate organizations for economic purposes and to regulate the activities of all cooperative associations of members of the Confederated Tribes, among several other enumerated powers.

Police seek help with drug, gang enforcement

By Terri Harber
Spilyay Tymoo

The Warm Springs Police Department is pursuing designation of a High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, according to Police Chief Carmen Smith.

"I believe we're going to get it," he said. "I think it'll work for everybody."

Better known as HIDA, the classification would allow the tribe's police to better work with other tribes to gather and share information about drug and gang activity.

It would also pave the way for other cooperative law enforcement ventures among area tribes, and help the Warm Springs department boost its chances for obtaining grants to offset operation costs, he said.

This might include, for example, officer training on how to spot and safely avoid booby traps set near illegal marijuana growing sites, Smith said.

Keeping track of suspects and known offenders is crucial because, Smith said, these people tend to move from one tribal area to another "when things get hot."

The recent discoveries of marijuana farms and the increase in gang activity here on the reservation make obtaining this designation important, he said.

Four large pot-growing sites have been found on the Warm Springs Reservation since July 2007. The most recent discovery, in August 2009, was of a location where authorities found more than 1,600 plants, according to previous reports.

Though the focus is primarily on drug and gang activity, Smith believes the designation could also assist Warm Springs and other tribes' police forces to keep order during large-scale events, such as at multi-tribe pow wows.

Reservations have small law enforcement agencies because they police areas with low populations. Money to pay for borrowing officers as the need arises could be more easily found that it is now, he said.

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Hoops season under way

The Madras White Buffalo girls basketball season is under way.

The girls had an 8-2 preseason record, but then lost their opener last Friday to Summit. This Friday, Jan. 15, they play Pendleton at Pendleton, and then face Mt. View at home on Tuesday, Jan. 19.

In past years, girls from the tribes have been some of the key players on the White Buffalos, and this year is no exception. There are nine players who are tribal members or closely tied to the tribes.

The White Buffalo girls varsity basketball team players are: (back row left to right, name followed by grade) Rachel Simmons (11), JoElla Smith (11), Marissa Ahern (12), Abby Scott (10), Klesia Plazola (12), Cheyenne Wahnetah (11), and Karlen Yallup (12); (front left to right, name and grade) Merima Made (12), Krisit Olney (12), Kali Kalsukis (12), and Mallory Smith (10).



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Police weigh benefits of non-lethal weapons

Tribal Council asks for information about use of less dangerous devices

By Terri Harber
Spilyay Tymoo

The Warm Springs Police Department may add some new weapons to their arsenal, specifically devices that are less deadly than firearms.

The Tribal Council requested information on the viability of having police officers use non-lethal weapons and heard about the subject during a meeting on Jan. 5.

A taser can be "a very effective weapon" because it can reduce resistance to arrest, which, in turn, would reduce injuries to officers and suspects, said Jim Soules, branch general manager of public safety for the tribe.

"I'd imagine we'd want to do P.R. work before we introduce it," said Council Chairman Ron Suppah. "They'd be shocked - pardon the pun!"

"If we do bring it, it won't be popular with the people who'd get it used on them," Soules replied.

Residents will be made aware of the addition of any new weapons before officers start using them in public, he emphasized.

Using a taser instead of a gun can have drawbacks, however, especially when a suspect continues to fight after being hit once with a 50,000-volt shock. Suspects heavily under the influence of alcohol and drugs often require multiple shocks because they're more likely to struggle. And the more shocks someone receives, the more likely the weapon will cause physical harm, he said.

Suspects with severe mental problems, specifically psychosis, also try to fight through taser shocks, he said.

No suspect apprehended at departments where he's worked during his career died from taser shock. And worldwide, death by stun guns is "a rare thing," he said.

"It's not as lethal as a gunshot."

Other possibilities would be rifles that shoot beanbags and pepper ball guns, Soules told the council.

A test of the safety and effectiveness of pepper ball guns was expected this week...

"The whole purpose is to make people safer," he said of potential additions to officers' toolkits.

Each weapon has specific purposes and situations where it might work best. Tasers, for instance, are electric guns with probes that produce a shock that would incapacitate most people, but not cause them permanent harm. The weapon is best suited for a shooting length of up to 25 feet, Soules said.

And each type of weapon "has different applications and carries some potential hazards for side effects," he said.

According to news reports, pepper and beanbag projectiles have killed people on occasion, particularly when used improperly or when trying to control crowds. Both types of these arms

are sometimes referred to as "riot guns" and are usually designed to work best from a distance.

A traditional firearm might not be appropriate for officers to use when a suspect is highly despondent and armed. The person could be talking about committing suicide while holding a gun or knife and randomly turning it toward himself or herself, at police, or at anyone else nearby, for example, Soules told the council.

An array of armaments would "provide us with more options," he said.

Warm Springs officers currently carry pepper spray, baton, handcuffs and firearms. The department also has a dog that goes out on patrol and tracks suspects, among other duties.

A test of the safety and effectiveness of pepper ball guns was expected this week, Soules added.

No tests or demonstrations of other non-lethal weapons are scheduled.

Miss W.S. Pageant on Jan. 22

The Miss Warm Springs Pageant is set for the evening of Friday, Jan. 22 at the Agency Longhouse.

Contestants can turn in their entry forms to the Tribal Council office. The deadline for entering is this Friday, Jan. 15 at 5 p.m.

Interested applicants must be 18-24 years old at the time of the pageant. The applicant must never have been married, cohabitating or have dependents.

The applicant must be drug and alcohol free, an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and a resident of the reservation for at least one year, although school is taken into consideration.

Also, the applicant must maintain residency on the reservation for a year after winning the title, although school again will be taken into consideration.

For details, call the Tribal Council office at 553-3257.