



Spilyay Tymoo

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Biomass energy plant talks continuing

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

Northwest Energy Systems Company out of Bellevue, Wash., is proposing a biomass plant to be located just south of the Warm Springs landfill.

Biomass renewable energy is produced by burning wood waste in a boiler, creating steam that powers a turbine which generates electricity.

The wood material to be burned in the plant would come from reservation and off-reservation lands. The 38-megawatt plant would produce enough electricity for 35,000 homes. Construction would cost an estimated \$150 mil-

lion.

"Our discussions right now are structured in order to allow them to come in and construct the facility, own it, and to operate it for a number of years," Jim Manion, general manager for Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises said. "Then over the course of time, the tribes will have the ability to own the facility."

As of today, Tribal Council has not taken action to give final approval of the project.

Chief Delvis Heath said "Tribal Council began considering biomass renewable energy several years ago when we realized there is a fuel load building in the forests on our reservation. And this could also bring a much needed

Some members are concerned about traffic and air quality issues...

economic boost to our community. It would also allow us to go in and harvest dead trees."

Northwest Energy Systems Co. (NESCO) would be required to finance and construct the plant.

The reason it has to be structured this way is that the tax credit for the renewable energy project requires that the developer have a federal tax that can be used. The tribes do not have that federal tax liability.

In order to utilize tax credits, the plant is required to be operational by Dec. 31, 2013.

"We're in discussions with NESCO now," Manion said. "We have indicated an interest on how we get our tribal members trained to have some of these employment opportunities."

If the project goes forward as planned, the biomass plant would generate many jobs during construction, and up to 25 family wage jobs at the facility upon completion.

In addition to jobs at the plant, there would be up to 75 fuel collection positions made available to collect the fuel.

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Pipeline project on hold

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

Last week, LNG withdrew its application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a gas pipeline that would have been partly on reservation.

The 220-mile-long Palomar pipeline would have run down the Willamette Valley, crossing over to Molalla, making its way through the Cascades, and over reservation lands on its way to join a larger pipeline near Shaniko.

Palomar General Manager Michael Burke gave a number of reasons for withdrawing the application, originally filed in 2008.

First, the partner company, NorthStar, filed for bankruptcy in the spring of 2010. Then, demand for compressed liquefied natural gas has dropped during the recession. Also, the terminal at Bradwood which would have been used to process the gas, was terminated.

Gas industry analyst Ken Zimmerman said the Palomar project is the latest in a string of proposed pipelines in Oregon that have fallen victim to the recession and decreased demand.

"I'm not saying Palomar is totally dead," he said. "But it's going to take a little more growth."

Details are being negotiated between Palomar and its new partner, Williams Northwest Pipeline Company.

Palomar recently received permission to route a portion of its pipeline through the reservation. With a new route, Palomar would be able to avoid national scenic areas near Maupin and in the Mt. Hood National Forest by up to 30 percent.

"Palomar has indicated that they would like to continue discussions with us about projects that may be developed in the future," Jim Manion, general manager of Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises, said.

"They've officially pulled the request to FERC regarding the pipeline project. However, the indication is that they might want to maintain the agreement for the corridor on the reservation for future use."

At this time, Manion said, those discussions haven't begun.



N'Chi Wanapam

The N'Chi Wanapam Canoe Family opened the 2011 season with a dedication ceremony on March 26 at Indian Park.

Representatives attended from several canoe families: Cherokee, Tulalip, Snoqualmie, ChicKasaw, Quinalt, Puyallup, Muckleshoot, Chehalis and the Cowlitz tribes.

The WS Canoe Family in July will take part in the Paddle to Swinomish in July. During April, the team is doing community outreach. They'll be root-digging this Saturday.

For information on the family, or to participate, call Jefferson Greene at the Museum at Warm Springs, 541-553-3331.

The canoe team (above) arrives at Indian Park. The ceremony included Washat services (right).



Duran Bobb photos/Spilyay

Board approves grant application for elementary school

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

The Jefferson County 509-J School District Board of Directors voted Monday evening to submit an improvement grant application for the Warm Springs Elementary School.

The 509-J board met in the elementary school library to hear comments regarding the application.

Several teachers attended, stating their support for the approach that the school and the district are taking with the application.

The stated conditions of the grant do not match the situation at the elementary school, and for this reason the grant application process has been

a problem.

"It's been a horrible experience for many people here," said first-grade teacher Ronica Comingore.

The elementary school became eligible for grant money through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The federal law sets student performance standards that apply to all schools in the U.S.

Schools that do not meet standards after three years are eligible for grant money to help them better meet the goals.

But the law includes a limited number of options that schools can choose from in order to qualify. The four options are:

Close the school; hire a private company to run the school; replace half the

There may be a way to comply with the grant conditions while not disrupting the elementary school...

teachers; or replace the principal.

Clearly, none of the options apply to Warm Springs Elementary School.

And yet the grant money, about \$4 million over three years, would be helpful in addressing some needs at the school.

Some additional English language mastery programs, for instance, could be helpful in meeting the state stan-

dards, said elementary school Principal Dawn Smith.

So the school teachers and staff developed an approach that they say is acceptable: Their application says that there will be a transition period of three years, after which time the school would have a new principal. Principal Smith would take on some new title at the school.

This may be a way to comply with the conditions of the grant while not disrupting the elementary school. The board members said the district would not pursue the grant if it means creating problems at the school.

During public comment, Delson Suppah said that the grant process already has harmed the school. The teachers have been distressed by the

process, which carries over in to the classroom, he said.

Lyle Rhoan asked why there had been no public notice of the meeting. This reflects how the district treats Warm Springs, he said.

School district superintendent Rick Molitor said the district would know perhaps in early May whether the grant application is accepted by the Oregon Department of Education, as submitted.

More likely, he said, the department would have suggested changes to the application.

Molitor also emphasized the district would not pursue any approach that was against the opinion of the teachers and staff at the elementary school.