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Construction starts on new casino

The Confederated Tribes began work this week at the Highway 26 casino construction site. A large crowd turned out for the ground-breaking ceremony on Tuesday afternoon.

Tribal Council Chairman Buck Smith said the casino project will bring new jobs to Warm Springs. The new casino, being close by the highway, is also expected to increase gaming revenue to the tribes, Chairman Smith said.

The casino will be housed in a 40,000-square foot building beside the plaza. There will be 500 slot machines, and eight blackjack tables; plus a restaurant with seating for 120, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. The building will house a snack bar with seating for 30, and a gift shop. The casino will be open 24-hours, employing 280 people.

During the ground-breaking, Councilmen J.P. Patt and Scott Moses commented on the tribes' need for this enterprise. Chief Delvis Heath gave the blessing, and the Quartz Creek dancers and drum group performed. The tribes' gaming board members and many guests were on hand for the event.



Tribal members and guests gather for the ground-breaking ceremony by the building site.

Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Review team at Head Start

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

A Head Start review team was in Warm Springs last week, observing the operation of the Warm Springs Head Start program.

The five-person review team arrived at the request of Tribal Council.

Each member of the review team focused on a particular area, or federal standard of the Head Start program.

Areas of review include fiscal management, education, health and nutrition, transportation, family and community partnerships, mental health and disabilities. The review team spent four days observing the Warm Springs Head Start operation.

Their final report will take about 60 days to complete. "We'll be very interested in hearing the results of the review," said Tribal Councilman J.P. Patt.

Council members emphasized that Head Start has to operate in the best interest of the children. The program should have the goal of preparing the children for kindergarten and first-grade, said Paiute Chief Joe Moses.

Meanwhile, tribal management is in the process of hiring a new Head Start administrator. The situation is further complicated, as management is also in the process of hiring an Education Branch general manager.

Warm Springs Head Start and Early Head Start receive about \$1.13 million in federal grant money per year.

A review team observes the program once every three years, as a condition of the grant. Council felt the review last week, which was unannounced, was needed to resolve any present issues that may exist with the program.

If some areas of non-compliance are identified, a review team may return as follow-up to determine whether the situation has been corrected.

Wascos meet on the role of chief

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

About 75 tribal members gathered last week to discuss their ideas of the role of the next Wasco chief.

"There are so many people who want to represent us," Wana Calica said. "And they're all good people... We need to hear what everybody has to say."

It has been decades since the Wasco people had to choose a chief, moderator Mike Clements said. "Our great chief was in that position for 50 years, and that's a great accomplishment."

After recent meetings the elders began to compile a list of qualifications, as names of potential candidates were brought forward.

Leona Ike asked that a crowning ceremony be honored. "Our medicine society came together and war-bonneted my brother, Derek Tasymp."

Ike gave her family lineage and history back to Tasymp, an original treaty-signer.

Next, Anita Jackson said that she didn't agree with the voting process. "It's against our traditional ways. It turns this into a popularity vote and a

political vote. The next chief needs to listen to all of the Wasco people."

Marcia Minthorn said, "I've been looking for a chief with a spiritual mind. A chief who showed up when our people lost someone, to comfort and give them strength. I have never seen a chief at any time my heart was broken. When I celebrated a name-giving or another joyous event in our culture, I have never seen a chief standing there in all his regal dignity. The next chief is going to be there for the rest of his life, you can't throw him out if you don't like him. They speak for us.

Or against us."

"A chief is a servant," Faye Wahenka said. "He works for you. He listens to people. He doesn't have to go to college, the wisdom is in their head. I look around in here and I don't see a chief, because I don't see these people here coming to the longhouse in a time of need."

Clements suggested it was time for all of the candidates to gather on their own and find a way to move the process forward.

"It will take the spirit of unity to get this done," he said.



Seniors at Madras High School are getting ready for graduation: The ceremonies are set for 3 p.m. on

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Honor Seniors Day on May 13

The Confederated Tribes and the Senior Citizen Program will host Honor Seniors Day on Friday, May 13.

Honor Seniors Day is one of the most popular days of the year on the reservation.

The gathering happens at the Agency Longhouse, and lasts throughout the day. Last year there were about 700 guests who attended Honor Seniors Day.

Some years have seen even more guests, but last year saw an increase in the price of gasoline, which can discourage people from traveling, said Wilson Wewa, who is master of ceremonies at Honor Seniors Day.

Still, the guests arrive from through the Northwest region, and beyond.

This year, for instance, the tribes will host 12 guests from Moenkopi pueblo in Arizona. They will be flying in to Portland, and the Seniors program bus will pick them up.

As in past years, there will be surprise entertainment that this year should prove to be very entertaining, said Wewa.