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Harsh budget news for 2011-12

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Balancing the tribal budget this year and next year could require employees to take one unpaid day off per pay period. This would be similar to furlough days implemented by other units of government within the state.

The furlough-day proposal has been suggested by tribal staff during the past

two budget planning cycles.

Implementing furlough days is one suggestion that Finance presented last week to Tribal Council and branch and department supervisors. Council so far has taken no action on the suggestion.

Meanwhile, Secretary-Treasurer Jody Calica and Chief Operations Officer Urbana Ross are asking for other cost-saving proposals from department and branch supervisors to ensure that

tribal budget expenditures do not exceed projected revenues.

Part of the problem is that revenue from tribal investment has not come in as anticipated, due to the economy, said Finance Director Michael Collins.

Revenue from Power and Water Enterprises, and Forest Products Industries are also factors in the budget shortfall.

As a result, as Collins states in a July

5 memo to Secretary-Treasurer Jody Calica: "The current 2011 budget of the Confederated Tribes is in financial jeopardy and immediate action is needed."

Collins and Calica then presented a list of possible actions to Tribal Council: "One furlough day per pay period is taken (by tribal employees) to save the tribes \$33,935 per day..."

See BUDGET on page 7

Blaze burns over 1,300 acres

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

Officials are investigating the cause of the Upper Dry Creek fire, which burned over 1,300 acres and forced the evacuation of dozens of families from their homes last Thursday.

According to officials, 2011 has been Oregon's wettest spring in 117 years. Under the right conditions that means fuel for fires.

William Wilson with Fire Management said the cause of the Upper Dry Creek fire is not known, but a lack of recent lightning indicates it was human-caused. The fire started on the west end of Upper Dry Creek Road, pushed by 40 mph winds.

The emergency tone-out was sent over police radios at 1:10 p.m. Flames spread rapidly southwest through the Dry Creek neighborhood, endangering up to 30 homes. The first house in the fire's path belonged to tribal elder Maxine McKinley.

The family sat in their car at the end of their driveway and watched as their home was swallowed in thick smoke. They were evacuated for their own safety.

At 2:30 p.m. highways 3 and 26 were shut down as emergency personnel began back-burning.

As many as 250 firefighters battled the blaze, assisted by the Prineville Hot Shots. Concerned about the smoke hazard, fire chief Danny Martinez ordered an evacuation, and tribal offices were closed. The home that Forrest Tewee has lived in since the early 1980s burned in the fire. An abandon structure was destroyed. By 8 p.m. that evening, the worst was over and crews began mopping up.



The construction crew poured the foundation of the building last week and earlier this week.

Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Casino progress

Bit by bit, tribal members in hard hats are making progress on the site of the New Indian Head Casino along Highway 26 in Warm Springs.

Planners hope to open the temporary casino on January 1, 2012. Travis Wells is the project engineer for the

construction of the new facility.

The Job Creations Department is working with contractors to make sure that tribal members have the opportunity to be trained and placed into construction jobs. Tribal Council Chairman Buck Smith said the new casino, being

close by the highway, is expected to increase gaming revenue to the tribes. Kah-Nee-Ta's expansion into the community is expected to attract up to 75 percent of its business from visitors who drive within one hour of Warm Springs.

StoryCorps in Warm Springs

StoryCorps is recording interviews in Warm Springs through July 30.

StoryCorps is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to recording, sharing, and preserving the stories of Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs.

The StoryCorps MobileBooth is in Warm Springs through July as part of the group's cross-country tour.

The MobileBooth, an Airstream trailer outfitted with a recording studio, is parked next to Warm Springs Fire and Safety, 2112 Wasco Street.

Reservations for interviews can now be made by calling StoryCorps' 24-hour, toll-free reservation line at 1-800-850-4406.

Or visit storycorps.org.

StoryCorps has partnered with KWSO to record interviews in Warm Springs.

One-hundred and twenty interviews will be conducted with residents from the local community and Central Oregon area.

KWSO will air a selection of local interviews recorded in the StoryCorps MobileBooth, and create special programs around the project.

Segments of select interviews may also air nationally on NPR's *Morning Edition*. With participant permission, all StoryCorps interviews will be archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.



Erin Dickey and Virginia Lora of StoryCorps are in Warm Springs gathering stories through July 30.

Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Council reviewing investment practices

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

The Investment Advisory Committee for the tribes will meet in August to draft a new investment policy statement based on input and recommendations from Tribal Council. "This will be our marching order," said Secretary-Treasurer Jody Calica said.

The committee plans to search for possible ways to increase returns on investments.

The investment accounts include the scholarship, senior citizen pension, tribal pension, the BIA loan repayment, GNC, and revenue reserve funds.

In certain funds, the return was less than one percent. However, the IHS Deferred Revenue Account performed quite well over the last year, returning 7.8 percent.

"If we got that same return on the restoration funds, we'd have \$2.2 million," said Calica.

Low return on investment, due to the economy, is one reason why the tribes are facing serious budget cuts.

Revised strategy

Ryan Harvey and Nick Woodward, financial advisors from RV Kuhns and Associates, who manage

the funds for the tribes, had several recommendations.

For example, they believe that switching the scholarship funds from an aggressive to a more conservative portfolio with a more fixed income would remedy some of the problems seen in the past. US Bank advises on the trust fund account.

"What we've seen in the past," Woodward said, "is that siblings would receive vastly different amounts based on the market returns. If we ease the market transition to a more conservative portfolio, this should work much better."

He said, "Not too long ago, Tribal Council was asked to pass a resolution to move funds into a better management structure or a different portfolio in order to get a more positive return... At the current spending rate, we need to change the horizon from ten to seven years."

Tribal Council acts as the Investment Advisory Committee chair. Other members are Ken Smith, Scott Clements, Ventures CEO Jeff Anspach, and Jody Calica.

The committee will draft the investment policy statement and present it to Tribal Council in September.