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Spilyay tymoo

General Council meets on 2012 budget

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

Tribal Council presented the 2012 proposed budget to members at a General Council meeting held at the Simnasho Longhouse last week.

Council members, the chief operations officer, secretary-treasurer and staff were on hand for the presentation. About 100 other tribal members

were present.

Secretary-treasurer Jody Calica went through some recent changes that were made to the proposed budget. The changes were to be presented for Tribal Council consideration the following day.

At the General Council meeting, tribal member Randy Smith asked about the operating budget for Warm Springs Ventures.

Finance officer Mike Collins ex-

plained that as of January 1, Eagle Tech Systems would be taken out of Ventures, and would return into the tribes as a department once again.

"The reasoning behind that," Collins said, "is Eagle Tech has been costing the tribes by having them (Eagle Tech) provide service to us. The tribes were actually subsidizing them to provide a service at a cost. So it would save us to bring them back under the tribes."

Revenue issue

Calica said the tribes are working on a list of projects which could possibly raise revenue. "We have to stop talking and figure out how we're going to make the ideas work," he said. "There has been one working session and another one is planned for December to get some of these ideas launched."

See GENERAL COUNCIL on page 7

Drone project has potential

Over the past year, Jeff Anspach, chief executive officer for Warm Springs Ventures, has been working on the feasibility of conducting unmanned aerial systems test flights on portions of the reservation.

On a map showing Federal Aviation Administration restricted airspace, the reservation has relatively few areas where air traffic is prohibited.

"That's unusual for such a large area that is relatively close to a metropolitan market," Anspach said. "It really gives the tribes a competitive advantage. There is no doubt that we are geographically relevant as it pertains to the unmanned industry."

Anspach went on to say that these unmanned aerial systems, or drones, have very little impact over areas of flight. At an altitude of 500 feet, the systems are barely detectable.

One step which needs to be taken is to recruit a public entity to sponsor a flight on tribal lands with the Department of Defense.

Twenty other states are looking at similar projects, Anspach said.

The next step in the process is to begin tribal member outreach.

— by Duran Bobb

Casino Update

Dedication day set in February

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Tribal Council heard an update last week on various aspects of the gaming enterprise.

The Council met with new Indian Head Casino general manager Ken Billingsley, and the newly-hired general manager of Kah-Nee-Ta, Carlos Smith.

Construction of the casino is progressing as planned, and the gaming board announced that February 4, 2012 will be the dedication day for the new casino. A grand opening will happen later in the month.

Tribal Council then toured the building with Billingsley, Smith and other staff.

New GM

Billingsley comes to Warm Springs from Phoenix, Ariz., where he was working as the regional director for the National Indian Gaming Commission. He held that position for the past 11 years.

Billingsley grew up in the Warm Springs area. He has spent half of his working life in the casino industry. His responsibilities have included overseeing compliance with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) of 1988 for over 55 casinos.

He has worked closely with 33 different tribes in the Southwest region. He is a member of the Lakota



Council members and staff toured the new casino with Indian Head general manager Ken Billingsley and Kah-Nee-Ta general manager Carlos Smith.

Sioux.

Billingsley stated his commitment to employing tribal members at the casino. The final goal, he said, is to have 100 percent tribal employees at Indian Head. Currently, the tribal members are 50 percent of the Kah-Nee-Ta and Indian Head staff.

Billingsley said his approach to making the casino profitable begins with customer service. A good quality experience for the customers is the main thing that will keep them coming back, he said.

See CASINO on page 7



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

School video makes bold statement

When the Jefferson County School District 509-J recently released a video designed to generate pride among teachers and staff, it unexpectedly went viral on the Internet.

The short film, titled *Believe it or Not*, features teachers, staff and students from various grade levels solemnly reciting some of the uncomfortable stigmas that have been tied to the rural school district.

Their statements are punctuated with written captions scrolling along beneath.

Midway through the video, the captions begin scrolling in reverse, and they are re-stated by teachers, staff and students to take on an entirely different meaning: The result is a dramatic and surprising flip that portrays a positive picture of education in Jefferson County.

"We didn't initially intend for this video to be public," said Melinda Boyle, director of curriculum. "We've been showing it to select audiences and the response has been so amazingly positive. It seems to have taken on a life of its own."

The Jefferson County School District 509-J has historically faced challenges with state test scores and academic performance. As a result, the district has battled some difficult stigmas—sometimes within their own communities and often from those in surrounding areas.

Improved test scores

While the district recognizes there is still a lot of work to do, dramatic improvements in academic performance have taken place over the past several years.

Last year, 509-J launched a program to support students who were not meeting state benchmarks in reading and math. This year, students' reading grade levels across the district are higher than they've been in five years.

See VIDEO on page 4

Council economic development discussion

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

Tribal Council earlier this month participated in an economic development session at Kah-Nee-Ta.

Jim Manion, manager of Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises and member of the Business Investment Revolving Fund committee, reminded the group of the critical reasons for these discussions.

"Tribal Council believes something needs to be done," he said. "This meeting was convened as a result of those discussions."

Manion explained how the tribes are now starting to see some of the benefits of entering into a partnership with PGE for ownership and operation of the Pelton-Round Butte facilities. In the

near future, he said, the biomass project should also see some activity.

"We hope by the middle of next month we'll be ready to bring final agreements to Tribal Council, and bring that project forward," he said.

The Business Investment Revolving Fund (BIRF) has had good and bad comments, Manion said.

"BIRF is working in a number of ways," he said. "It's bringing the managers together, so each knows what the other is up to. There's an opportunity for dialogue."

Manion went through the figures on what has gone out of the BIRF fund to the casino, into equity investments, and the teleco. He informed Council that payment has also come back into the BIRF fund.

Clint Jacks, economic stewardship advisor, went through the policy and

procedures a tribal member would need to follow in order to utilize the revolving loan fund. "The fund is supplemental to both the CDFI (Community Development Fund Institution) and tribal Credit fund."

"People who see another person running a business can think it's easy to be successful and make money," Ted Brunoe said. "They want to start their own business and make money. One of the things we're doing is starting a facilitator for the process. That facilitator will identify if the individual is sincere about starting a business."

"In my mind," Councilman Raymond Tsumpti said, "we're trying to get members who are looking for an opportunity to get started. I'm not trying to downplay existing businesses. However, I think some sort of priority thinking here needs to be applied.

If we start helping existing business, then we're losing the confidence of the members who would like to go into business for themselves. It's the same old thing: Who you are, what your last name is."

The economic development team then heard a presentation on several ideas which included the Bear Springs project; an unmanned aircraft and other unmanned vehicles center of excellence; and an idea for a motorsports arena.

In other recent tribal economic news, Kahseuss Jackson met with Council to discuss his new position as coordinator of the Economic Stewardship program. This is a key position in implementing the stewardship plan.