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Tribes celebrate Indian Head opening

Dedication day of the new Indian Head Casino was a momentous occasion, with a tremendous public response. The casino was packed during the evening of the dedication, Saturday, Feb. 4.

Parking lots at the casino and museum were full, with cars eventually diverted to the parking lots at administration, the community center and longhouse, where shuttles were on hand to bring the visitors to the casino.

Hundreds of people waited as the dedication ribbon was cut and the doors opened. Then, by 6 p.m. when Indian Head opened to the general public, the casino floor was standing room only. Tribal Council Chairman Buck Smith explained during the dedication ceremony:

"The casino is not the centerpiece of our tribal economic development, but it is a beginning," Smith said.

The new casino has already brought new jobs, and will make other, small businesses possible, he said.

Councilman Scott Moses, who has served on the casino project team, commented on the timeline of the development. A year ago the project was still just an idea, he said, "but we wanted this to happen at the speed of business, not the speed of government."

From the ground-breaking in May



A large crowd entered as the doors first opened at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 4.

2011, to the opening in early February, construction moved forward quickly, with some of the finishing touches ap-

plied just before the opening. And by all accounts the unique architecture and interior design of the 40,000-square-

foot building are to be commended.

The master of ceremonies at the dedication was long-time friend of the

tribes, former Gov. Vic Atiyeh. Tribal Councilman J.P. Patt, also of the casino project team, commended all those who have helped with the project.

Congressman Greg Walden, and Oregon Secretary of State Kate Brown congratulated the tribes on the new casino; as did former Congresswoman Elizabeth Furse, who is now on staff at Portland State University, and Deepak Sehgal, who is chair of the Warm Springs Casino and Resort Expansion board.

Indian Head Casino is now open 24-hours, employing about 280 people. Seventy to 80 people work in the Cottonwood Restaurant, which is open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays, and 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends.

The tribes are hoping the new casino will triple or quadruple the revenue that Indian Head generated while located at Kah-Nee-Ta. The eventual plan is still to build a casino at the Gorge, at which time the Indian Head Casino building could be used for something else.

Meanwhile, Carlos Smith, general manager of Kah-Nee-Ta, is weighing different options for use of the space at the resort that once housed Indian Head.

— Dave McMechan

New era for communications

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Welcoming the membership to its dedication and open house, the Warm Springs Telecom made clear its mission on the reservation: State of the art telecommunications, helping economic development, and improving education, health care and public safety.

Soon, the W.S. Telecom will make available high-speed Internet and telephone service to tribal households and businesses.

The company is expecting to offer Internet service by the end of this month, and telephone service by the end of March, said Javin Dimmick, customer service representative. Seven people are currently using and testing the Telecom internet service.

Tribal members can stop by the Telecom office and fill out a customer information form, giving their address and phone number, and how the Telecom could serve their household. "Everyone is welcome to come and visit, and view



Miss Warm Springs Chloe Suppah cuts the ribbon dedicating the Warm Springs Telecom.

the demonstration area," said Dimmick.

The Telecom grand opening saw a large turnout of members interested in touring the facility, which includes the remodeled offices and conference room, and state-of-the-art telecommunications equipment.

Master of ceremonies for the opening was Sal Sahme, Telecom board

chairman. Tribal Council Chairman Buck Smith and secretary-treasurer Jody Calica gave welcoming comments on behalf of the tribes. Calica commented that the Telecom will be especially helpful to tribal member veterans, through advanced telemedicine opportunities.

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A night with WSPD

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

Tribal police are a constant presence on the reservation. Recently, with certain changes to state law, Warm Springs Police may even be a presence off-res. As tribal officers, their oath is to serve and protect. There is a hidden side to WSPD that many may not see.

Dispatch

At the heart of the police department is dispatch.

Seated amidst an array of monitors and radios, a phone and a mic, dispatch brings a new meaning to the word multi-tasking.

On one screen, one of the dispatchers logs each call the police department receives. She also logs every traffic stop, what officers are doing, and the outcome of each event.

On another monitor, she keeps track of each holding cell within the correctional facility to make sure the inmates are safe. Another screen allows her to open and lock the doors anywhere within the facility. Another screen provides her with information officers on patrol might need to find a certain residence. On another monitor, the dispatcher keeps track of fire and medic emergencies.

"We also have to watch the window when guests come in," she said. "Sometimes we monitor Jefferson County's frequency during mutual-aid calls."

Dispatch can be on a 9-1-1 call, communicating with officers, logging information, and dealing with an emergency within corrections at once.

"A shift runs ten hours," she said. "We have four dispatchers. There's no breaks, no lunch. This is an important duty, to make sure people are safe, so someone has to be here at all times."

The dispatcher says the first time that her job really got to her was when she was fresh out of the academy.

"There were shots fired back then. Part of my job is to make sure all officers check in are okay. Not all of

them responded."

She turns to check on the inmates in their cells. "We get a house count every day. It varies. Right now I have to keep track of 27 males and 10 females."

It has been a slow night so far, she says. On the busiest nights, she can receive as many as fifty 9-1-1 calls.

On patrol

One sergeant explains right away that officers highly value their privacy, understandably.

"It's true," he said. "When my guys stop people, they can sometimes get mouthy. I'll pop up on the other side and tell them, calm down! We'll all get out of here if we can just do a bit of communication. They'll apologize to my officers. I'm treated differently than some other tribal officers. I've dealt with a lot of people. They call me by name. I have to know who they are. Sometimes I know them by their nicknames only."

The sergeant makes his way through the reservation's neighborhoods; constantly aware, making sure back yards are safe as most people are asleep.

The streets are calm for the time being. At the Community Center, the parking lot is packed as a basketball tournament is preparing to wind down. The sergeant communicates with officers, letting them know that it might be a good idea to do a walk-through at the event.

On one section of road, the sergeant comes upon a herd of horses standing just off the shoulder. "These things are all over," he said. "I almost drilled one a couple of times."

A Nissan flies past, going in the opposite direction with one headlight, and the sergeant is right on it.

Once his patrol unit lights are activated, the driver comes to a stop. The windows are tinted and filmed over from the recent harsh weather. And yet the sergeant approaches the vehicle with a smile on his face, cautiously.

See WSPD on page 7

School board approves measure for May ballot

Voters in the Jefferson County School District 509-J will vote this spring on a proposed \$26.6 million bond measure. The school district board of directors agreed in January to put the bond proposal—which includes funding for a new k-8 school on the reservation—on the May ballot.

The bond would fund half the \$18-20 million construction cost of the school. The Confederated Tribes would fund half, according to the development plan. Tribal Council is working on a referendum regarding the new school proposal that will be presented to the membership, said Councilman Ron Suppah.

The plan envisions construction of a school at Greeley Heights. The main building would be 80,000-square-feet, about the size of the middle school.

The bond that funded construction of the middle school will be paid soon; so approval of the May bond would result in no tax increase to district property owners, as the new bond would replace the previous one. This is a reason why the timing of the measure this May is opportune, said Rick Molitor, district superintendent.

The school district bond proposal would fund other improvements, including a 600-seat performing arts center in Madras, which would cost about \$7.9 million. The Warm Springs school

would be the single biggest item funded by the measure.

The current Warm Springs Elementary School is old, and is not in an ideal location for a school. There has been talk for several years now of replacing the elementary school.

Another benefit of a local k-8 school would be reduction of the long bus-ride required of the middle school students from the reservation. Registered voters of the reservation will see the school district bond measure in May, as all of the reservation is within the district.

— Dave McMechan