



Spilyay Tymo

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Referendum on July 10 to decide k-8 school

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymo

Tribal officials are emphasizing some important facts as the membership gets ready for the July 10 Warm Springs k-8 school referendum.

First, the tribal Senior Pension Fund and per capita will in no way be affected by the school referendum.

The pension and per capita were never considered among the funding options, said tribal secretary-treasurer Jody Calica. Instead, there are two main funding options, he said.

One involves the new Indian Head Casino. Last year, the tribes invested \$13.5 million in the gaming enterprise, in order to finance the casino construction. This was to be repaid in dividends to the tribes.

Now, after several months of operation, the casino has a track record regarding revenue, which could allow refinancing of the casino construction debt through a bank. This would free up the \$13.5 million for another use, such as for the school, said Calica.

The tribes would need about \$10 million to match the \$10 million commitment from the school district for construction of the new school.

A second funding option: The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a loan guarantee program, whereby the USDA will guarantee up to 90



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

At the Pi-Ume-Sha Traditional Parade, these students, recent fifth-grade graduates, gathered by the float sponsored by the Office of the Chief Operations Officer. The theme of this float was participation in the July 10 school referendum.

percent of the school loan.

This would greatly reduce the risk to a bank in providing a loan to the tribes for the school, Calica said. The guarantee reduces the interest rate; and there are now two banks that have expressed interest in participating in such an arrangement, Calica said.

"We have at least these two banks, and they both have a track record working with the USDA," he said.

The school referendum in May fell short by 374 votes of the minimum needed for a valid vote. Those who did vote were more than three-

to-one in favor. But the result of the May vote was inconclusive.

"It is very important for our members to vote," Calica said, "so we can get a sense of what they are thinking, and the value they put on education."

The quality of the school buildings communicates directly to the students the value the adults place on education, he said.

The existing Warm Springs Elementary School buildings are the oldest in the school district. And the school location by Highway 26 is a problem.

See REFERENDUM on page 7

Getting out the vote a top priority for school advocates

Too many students are missing school, or even dropping out, at an early age. A k-8 school in Warm Springs would help reduce truancy among students from the reservation, said Urbana Ross, tribal chief operations officer.

"If they can stay here, and go to school locally," she said, "they would miss fewer classes, and stay in school."

A local k-8 school would eliminate the long daily bus ride to Madras for middle school students. Parents could be more involved with the school, as it would be local.

Ross and others in the community have been and continue to work diligently at getting out the vote on July 10. T-shirts and lawn signs, family, district and General Council meetings are part of the effort to get out the vote. "It is a priority of Tribal Council to get a consensus on this question," Ross said.

If the tribal referendum passes on Tuesday, July 10, then the target date for opening the new school would be the 2014 school year, Ross said.

The building would be 80,000 square feet, about the size of the Jefferson County Middle School.

The Warm Springs school would be located on East Tenino Road, at the intersection with Chukar. There is a 20-acre parcel at the site designated for the school.

New school facilities would include approximately 26 classrooms, science, music and art rooms, computer lab, gymnasium, athletic fields, cafeteria, library, etc.

This is a roughly \$20 million project, with the school district and the tribes splitting the cost. The district would fund the operation of the school.

The school district voters passed a levy in May that includes the funds for the Warm Springs school, plus another \$16 million for a performing arts center in Madras and improvements at the district schools.

With a k-8 school in Warm Springs, middle school students would have the option of attending the new school or the middle school in Madras. "The district has open enrollment," Ross said.

School advocates are optimistic about the July referendum, as the one in May showed overwhelming support for the new school. (More on the referendum on page 12.)

Pi-Ume-Sha 2012

The rain cleared up just in time for Pi-Ume-Sha. There was serious rain as late as Saturday morning, but the clouds mostly cleared by the start of the parade and the powwow on Saturday afternoon.



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Parade, BBQ, fireworks for Fourth of July

The Warm Springs Fourth of July celebration will begin with the parade.

The parade preparation begins at 9 a.m., lineup and judging at 10, and the parade will start at 11.

The July 4 parade starts at the elementary school, ending behind the community center. The barbecue hamburger and hotdog lunch starts at 12:30 p.m. Family games start at 2, and there's also a horse-shoe tournament planned for 2:30. Sign up with Austin Greene. The fireworks begin at dusk on Wednesday, July 4.

Beaded Tapestries at museum

The Warm Springs Beaded Tapestries exhibit opened to a full house last Thursday at the Museum at Warm Springs.

The exhibit features an outstanding collection of beaded heirlooms from tribal members.

"The theme for this year is 'Feel the Spirit,'" Evaline Patt said. "We're very proud of the beautiful beaded items in our collection because it comes from our people."

The Beaded Tapestries display will be in the changing exhibit gallery at the museum until September 16.

The exhibit opened with a parade lead by Chief Delvis Heath. Community members displayed their horse regalia.

Travel Center considered along highway

Tribal Council has approved two locations on Miller Flat for a possible travel center along Highway 26.

The travel center would be a new tribal enterprise. A number of other tribes operate profitable travel centers, said tribal secretary-treasurer Jody Calica.

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians, for instance, operates the Seven Feathers Truck and Travel Center on Interstate 5 at

Canyonville. And the Umatillas own and operate the Arrowhead Travel Plaza off Interstate 84.

These and similar tribal travel centers are open 24-hours, seven days a week. They offer truck supplies and services, diesel and gasoline, tire service, convenience store, clean restrooms and private showers.

The Arrowhead Travel Plaza includes a McDonald's Restaurant. Seven Feathers has the Creekside

Restaurant.

The Arrowhead and the Seven Feathers are just two of several examples of tribally owned and operated travel centers, Calica said.

Council considered and approved two possible locations for a travel center on the Warm Springs reservation. One site is at milepost 93.5 on Highway 26, and the other is near the B140 road, on Miller Flat.

The tribes have had some initial

discussion with the BIA regional director regarding a loan guarantee for a travel center, Calica said.

The tribal economic development coordinator is working on an economic analysis of the project. "We're working on preparing documentation to possibly get BIA funding, maybe this year but more likely next year," Calica said.

— by Dave McMechan