



# Spilyay Tymoo

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## Parents, school board meet on Impact Aid

The need for greater Native cultural presence at Madras High School was a suggestion at the Jefferson County School District 509-J board meeting on Monday.

"Talking as a parent, the school doesn't reflect any Native American presence," said Warm Springs Academy teacher Gina Bluebird Stacona, whose daughter attends the high school. "I think that contributes to the dropout rate."

Some Impact Aid funding should be used to increase the Native American cultural aspects of the

high school, she said.

The school district once a year holds the Impact Aid hearing in Warm Springs. Impact Aid is money the federal government provides to school districts that have non-taxable lands, such as the Warm Springs Reservation.

Impact Aid to the 509-J district was about \$2.6 million in 2011-12; and about \$2.9 in 2012-13. For the 2013-14 school year the Impact Aid is currently at \$1.58 million. But the district is expecting to receive more of the funding at the completion of

an audit, said district superintendent Rick Molitor.

When that happens, the amount for 2013-14 is expected to be comparable to the previous years, he said.

For comparison: Property taxes for the district general fund in the most recent three school years was about \$3.8 million. This does not include taxes levied for construction projects, such as the Warm Springs Academy and Madras High School performing arts center.

The Confederated Tribes are

paying for half of the construction cost of the \$20 million Warm Springs Academy. And the tribes pay property taxes on off-reservation tribal property, such as the land at the Madras industrial park.

At the Monday hearing, the school district chief financial officer provided an analysis of school district direct expenditures for Native American students.

See **IMPACT AID** on 6

## Christmas Bazaar on Saturday

The Thirty-Ninth Annual Warm Springs Christmas Bazaar is set for this Saturday, Dec. 13, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Community Center gym and social hall.

Find those perfect gifts for the family, while enjoying the homemade goods. The bazaar is sponsored by the Recreation Department.

The Warm Springs **Elders Holiday Lunch** will be on Thursday, Dec. 18.

Warm Springs Recreation will present **Christmas Indian Night Out** on Monday, December 22 at the Community Center. Bring your favorite dish for a 5:30 potluck with the social dance and drummers Jam starting at 6:30.

The Warm Springs Presbyterian Church is holding their **Christmas bazaar** this Friday, Dec. 12, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Baked Goodies, Handmade Items and Gifts. Also food beginning at 11:30. Everyone is welcome.

The **Community Christmas Dinner** at the Warm Springs Baptist Church is at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Indian Head Casino in December is hosting a **toy drive on Mondays**.

You receive a \$10 bonus slot play if you bring a toy in between 9 a.m. and noon on a Monday, and \$5 bonus if you bring donate a toy between noon and midnight.

The toys will be given to Children's Protective Services.

KWSO radio and the Spilyay Tymoo are sponsoring a **toy drive** for Warm Springs kids this holiday season.

Donations are being accepted now through Friday, Dec. 19. You can bring donations to the Warm Springs Media Center.

## Student makes place on rugby team

Merlin Tom is working toward his Master Automotive Technician Certification at Central Oregon Community College.

When he completes the program, "I'll probably try to get on at dealership," Merlin was saying last week.

Earlier this year, Merlin became a student-athlete at the college, joining the COCC Bobcats rugby team.

Merlin played football at Madras High School. He was a lineman on both offense and defense.

His decision to try rugby was a little unexpected. His mother was concerned at first, as rugby is known as a rough sport. The players wear no pads or helmet like in football.

"It can get pretty rough," Merlin says. "And there is some risk of injury, mostly cuts and bruises."

He became interested in playing when friend Gabe Swazo



Photos courtesy of Gina Ricketts and the COCC Broadside



mentioned Merlin might be good at it. Rugby requires more all-around conditioning, where football often requires physical size, Merlin says. There are no breaks in rugby, as there between downs in football.

On the Bobcats, Merlin plays forward and loose head prop, mainly defensive positions. The team is part of the Pacific Northwest Small College Men's League.

During the fall they played teams such as Reed, OIT, Seattle, Gonzaga, the University of Puget Sound and Oregon State.

The Bobcats had a great season, going undefeated in league play.

Merlin is looking forward to playing when the next season begins in the spring.

He grew up in Warm Springs. He moved to Madras during his senior year at Madras High School. His mom is Mabel Jackson, and his dad Merlin Dean Tom. Since Merlin started playing rugby for the Bobcats, his family members have become fans of the game.

Merlin at the match against OIT (top); and the team after taking the win (left).

## Changes coming up at health care program

Some important changes are coming up in the area of healthcare coverage for tribal employees.

The Confederated Tribes are a self-insuring organization, and for the past several years have used Shasta Administrative Services as the third-party administrator in billing matters.

This is changing, as the tribes will be using HealthComp Third Party Administrators for this service.

The decision to change third-party administrators came after a lengthy and detailed evaluation process, said Elizabeth Asahi Sato, director of tribal Human Resources.

The decision was based on the best interest of the tribal employees and their families, she said. HealthComp is dedicated to customer service, the guiding principal

at Human Resources, Asahi Sato said.

### Enrollment deadline

Another important change coming up is the end of the rolling open enrollment policy.

The Confederated Tribes have allowed employees to enroll for health coverage at any time of the year. They could also disenroll at any time.

This is inefficient, and not the usual practice among tribes or organizations, said Asahi Sato.

For tribal employees, the last day this year to enroll for coverage will be December 17. After that, the next enrollment time will be in June.

There will be two enrollment times in 2015, in June and then again later in the year.

## Power & Water continues renewable search

With 2014 almost in the books, Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises continues to search for viable renewable energy projects.

One of the difficulties for tribes across the country is utilizing the incentives that are available, said Jim Manion, general manager of Power and Water Enterprises.

The current structure does not favor tribes when it comes to advancing projects on their lands, he said.

The federal and state tax credits are not useful to tribes: Tribes don't pay taxes, therefore a credit adds no value to tribally built project.

So the Power and Water has been working with developers who can utilize them.

"Ideally, we propose to structure the lease for the developer to build, and over time transfer the project to the tribe," Manion said.

Most utilities in the region have

satisfied their renewable energy requirements, as required by state laws. So the Power and Water is looking at the next cycle of requirements that will bring back the incentive.

"In Oregon the governor has made it clear he wants to see 25 percent of generating supply come from renewable sources by 2025," he said. "We think utilities will be looking for renewables to fill that need."

Power and Water has been exploring the wind resource on the reservation, and found the highest potential is in the Northeast corner, up near Mutton Mountains.

"The resource appears to be real close to a viable commercial scale project, Manion said, adding that there is plenty to do to get from potential to an actual project.

"We have been working with a large developer who is very experi-

enced wind developer," he said. "They want to install a few more monitoring towers in 2015 and verify wind data."

If positive, the findings would be presented to Tribal Council, with a proposal to advance to the next step. That step would a commitment to the developer that the tribes will advance, if all things clear the review.

There would be a community-wide review, environmental clearances, and cultural review. If findings are promising, the development could happen in 2016 or 2017.

### Geothermal

Power and Water has also recently been awarded a \$320,000 grant to continue the effort in exploring for geothermal potential on the reservation.

See **POWER & WATER** on 6



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