

## Museum: 'Kindred Spirits' by Lillian Pitt

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Edward Heath works at Forestry. He started taking pictures just a couple years ago.

He focuses on daily life and scenery of the reservation—images that people might pass by without noticing.

He came to the attention of the museum curator Natalie Kirk, who heard great things from people about his photography. *An Eye for the Rez* opens in mid April.

The main exhibit of 2016 will be *Kindred Spirits: The Artistic Journey of Lillian Pitt*. As the museum program reads:

*Lillian creates contemporary works of fine art that delight today's art lovers, and at the same time honor the history and legends of her people. Primarily a sculptor and mixed media artist, Lillian's lifetime of works in-*



Coyote and She Who Watches by Lillian Pitt



Reservation photography by Edward Heath, coming up in the spring at the museum.

clude artistic expressions in clay, bronze, wearable art, prints and glass.

*Her works have been exhibited and reviewed throughout the Pacific Northwest, nationally and internationally. She is the recipient of numerous awards and distinctions. This visually stunning exhibition will display the creativity and spirit of Lillian Pitt.*

This exhibit will open in June, followed by the Twenty-Third Annual Tribal Member Art Exhibit.

Some other items on the agenda this year are the Fourteenth Annual Honor Dinner, this year honoring Ted Kulongoski, Twanat Award recipient. The lifetime award recipient this year will be Dr. Creelman and the late Jeanie Thompson Smith.

The Youth Art Exhibit will open with a reception at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 28.

## W.S. Co-op business

by Gerald Danzuka, W.S. Community Action Team

Since early December 2013, a group of local artisans, crafters and businesspeople have been investigating the idea of starting cooperative businesses in Warm Springs.

A cooperative business, or co-op, is a type of business comprised of members who both own and make use of the services provided by the co-op.

Membership in a co-op provides a range of financial benefit to the user-owners of the co-op. In a co-op comprised of individual businesspeople, each user-owner earns more money by being a member of the co-op than they would otherwise.

Different kinds of business owners create co-ops for different reasons, depending on the type of business they are involved in. For example, one very successful cooperative started in Alaska, Oomingmak, is a cooperative made up of about 250 Alaska Native women living in remote villages.

These women knit products made out of musk ox under wool, or Qiviut. Each woman pays the co-op a yearly membership fee.

This fee offsets administrative costs, and each co-op member also receives Qiviut yarn and patterns as part of her membership. Each co-op member knits at her own pace and sells her product to the co-op. She also

receives part of the profit earned by the co-op at the end of each year.

Oomingmak is a marketing cooperative; thus, by being a part of the co-op, members gain the advantages of a larger marketing footprint and reduced marketing costs.

In this case, the women knitters gain access to an expanded market for their product.

Oomingmak sells its products online and in a store located in Anchorage, which provides a much larger market for these women who live in remote villages in rural Alaska.

By working together these women are able to earn more money than they would alone.

The Warm Springs co-op exploratory group is interested in forming a Native arts and crafts marketing co-op that might also operate a storefront.

A storefront would provide co-op members a dedicated buyer and a space to sell their products.

Co-op members might also have the opportunity to interact with their customers and tell the story of their work with dedicated on-site studio space.

The co-op exploratory group is holding a meeting at the Warm Springs Community Action Team office on January 26 from 12 to 1 p.m.

If you are interested in attending or participating, please call Gerald Danzuka or Leah Guliasi at 541-553-3148.

## Learning about business in Warm Springs

By Leah Guliasi  
W.S. Community Action Team

There are many opportunities for business owners and artisans in Warm Springs, and the Warm Springs Community Action Team is considering developing programs that can assist people in starting their own business.

Since 2013, WSCAT has been gathering information, both formally—through surveys and questionnaires—and anecdotally—by talking with small business clients at our office and in our Indianpreneurship classes.

The information gathering was to learn more about the hopes and aspirations of, and challenges and barriers confronting existing and aspiring entrepreneurs in the Warm Springs community.

In the last two years, WSCAT and its partners have conducted two surveys of prospective small business owners.

WSCAT and a five-person artisans co-op steering committee conducted the first study in late 2013 and early 2014.

We asked 49 local artisans what types of work they do, and whether they would be interested in forming a Warm Springs arts and crafts cooperative.

In October of this year, WSCAT conducted a study of 52 individuals in Warm Springs, including 36 current and prospective business owners.

The goal of this survey was to better assess the needs of all types of business owners in Warm Springs, understand the barriers they face, and determine how WSCAT can help businesses here succeed.

### W.S. arts, crafts business community

The 2013-2014 artisans survey taught us much about the arts community here.

Many people in Warm Springs make art products, with beading and jewelry being the most common.

Some of this art is traditional and some is contemporary. It is sold in many places, both on and off the reservation.

If an arts and crafts cooperative were to form, in-

dividual artists would be able to work together to increase their sales by lowering costs, increasing what they could buy, and increasing their ability to sell products online.

More than 77 percent of the 49 people surveyed in the 2013-2014 survey were interested in joining a co-op.

The biggest barriers to artisans were lack of time to do their work—primarily due to work and family requirements—, limited resources to purchase supplies, and lack of access to markets in which they could sell their products. These, and some of the other challenges they discussed, could be solved through participation in a co-op.

Many of those surveyed expressed interest in the co-op having a genuine retail space and storefront.

They liked that such a place could help them increase their sales, allow them to work part-time (just a couple hours per week), but not depend upon them to be in charge of the whole store.

They were enthusiastic about helping with upkeep of such a store, and most of those surveyed were willing to pay a small membership fee to ensure the smooth functioning of the co-op.

Some were also willing to help manage the shop, demonstrate their craft on-site,

help with marketing, and help with bookkeeping. While each individual's availability to assist in the store varied, there was widespread interest in working at the store.

### The larger W.S. business community

In the October 2015 survey, we learned in more detail about the wants, needs and barriers to business success in Warm Springs.

In a series of later articles, we will discuss these in deeper detail. In this article, we will focus briefly on a few points of interest:

When asked what types of businesses they would like to see on the reservation, the top responses were locally-owned businesses and restaurants.

While some were interested in chain stores, most felt that small business were much more important.

Other common responses on types of small business desired included a laundromat and a movie theater.

Many respondents wished for a business community that would allow people to use services on the reservation rather than going to Madras or Bend.

Infrastructure seemed to be the biggest barrier to business development in Warm Springs.

For a business here to suc-

ceed, respondents felt, it needs a strong foundation including a good business location, good roads with adequate signage, reliable utilities, a supportive business code, and support from the tribal government. An example of the latter would be making the insurance requirements less stringent.

Other barriers to business success included lack of start-up funding, geographic remoteness, challenges with staffing, challenges managing finances, and lack of demand.

### Opportunities for community members

Starting a business is not easy, but there are resources here in this community that can help you get started.

These include the Indianpreneurship classes, IDA accounts, loans from Tribal Credit or the CTWS Private Business Revolving Loan (PBRI) fund, and other resources.

There are also discussions in the community about creating a small business incubator, a food cart pod, and a youth entrepreneurship program.

Are you interested in joining a cooperative, starting a business, or learning more about these topics? If so, please call WSCAT at 541-553-3148 to see how we can help you get started.

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